



Supervisor NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program
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Managing Your Team's Strengths – And Weaknesses

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It may sound obvious, but no one employee is good at everything. As a manager, it often falls on you to uncover your team's strengths and weaknesses. While these may not be immediately apparent, identifying and maximizing employee potential begins with a few simple steps.

Be honest and direct.

Sometimes there's a tendency to be vague—how can an employee get upset if they aren't sure what to be upset about? Being vague may prevent your employee from improving. Try to point out specific areas for growth—give examples, ideas, and encouragement. It can be a mark of respect to tell an employee you want more from them. It's ok to cheer your employees on and congratulate them wherever they deserve it.

Improve your observation skills.

Sometimes an employee may be let go for issues they didn't see coming. Straightforward communication can help prevent surprises. If your employee has issues they need to work on, be transparent. They deserve a fair chance at correcting the issue and clear communication can avert such misunderstandings.

Ask employees about their interests.

Some managers like to conduct performance reviews "on the fly." However, simply copying and pasting last year's goals can leave a negative impression on your employees. Unless you've spent a lot of time with your

employees, this approach may not produce the best outcome possible. Take time to prepare in advance so you can offer concrete, actionable suggestions.

Remember the buddy system.

You meet with your employees, fill out paperwork, and then forget the most important part: *follow up*. The point of a performance review isn't just to address issues, but also to build strategies for moving forward. Designating time to check in on the progress of your employees' goals sends the message that their development is important to you.

Provide frequent feedback.

Most employees spend a lot of time thinking about their career: *where they are or where they want to be*. Central to a leader's role is the ability to help others succeed. A simple way to get started is by asking employees where they see themselves within the organization or beyond (the answer may just surprise you!). This can lead to a more meaningful conversation and strengthen trust between manager and employee.

Allow for setbacks.

If you're going to push people into new areas, understand that it takes time for them to become fully proficient and recognize that early work product or performance might not fully meet expectations. This can be minimized through active coaching and acknowledgment of the learning process. This will give your employee job security and increased confidence, all while providing room for future growth and success.

Your manager's handbook isn't big enough to cover every topic, but that doesn't mean you aren't up to the task of identifying what other managers haven't. Working to maximize what your team does well, and shoring up what they don't, will help you build a workforce that can handle anything thrown its way.

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