



## **Retaining Valued Employees with Disabilities: The Importance of Performance Coaching and Management**

The changing landscape of today's workforce offers unique opportunities to reimagine employee roles. Companies spend a lot of time and money on recruiting and hiring, and may not put forth equal efforts to ensure retention of their current employees. This approach could be impacting their bottom line. The cost of replacing just one employee can range from one-half to two times the employee's annual salary, not to mention the staff time required to hire and train a replacement.

Providing effective coaching and performance management is a retention strategy that helps advance employees' careers while addressing barriers to their success. However, some managers exclude employees with disabilities from honest performance dialogues, perhaps because they are uncomfortable with or worried about engaging in these conversations. All employees, including those with disabilities, benefit from effective coaching and management, and continuous feedback on work performance. Avoiding these important conversations can put employees with disabilities at a disadvantage because they are not receiving similar feedback as their colleagues.

As employers seek to increase retention rates, an important first step is empowering leadership to engage in effective performance coaching and management dialogues by providing education and training to managers.

## 5 Tips for Effective Performance Coaching and Management:

### 1 Plan for the Conversation

Before meeting with an employee, managers should list what the employee is doing well, as well as areas for improvement and growth. Develop the list further by identifying areas where the employee may benefit from training, professional development opportunities and/or guidance.



#### Forms should include:

- ✓ Employee name
- ✓ Date
- ✓ Three Accomplishments
- ✓ Three Areas for improvement
- ✓ Notes

### 2 Have the Conversation

To ensure the conversation is successful, find a comfortable meeting place with limited distractions and opportunities for interruptions. Remember to respect the employee's privacy and refrain from leaving documents and materials with personal information out in the open.



#### Tips for having the conversation:

- Find a quiet, comfortable space to meet
- Bring two copies of any documents—one for the manager, one for the employee
- Leave time at the end of the conversation to answer any remaining questions

### 3 Set Goals

Goal setting is a critical part of performance management. Set these goals with the employee as part of the coaching process. Use the employee's current level of performance to set achievable targets. Without clearly defined objectives, success is difficult to measure.

#### Do...

- ✓ Schedule at least 30 minutes to meet
- ✓ Give the employee an opportunity to give their managers feedback
- ✓ Listen and take notes

#### Don't...

- ✗ Rush the conversation
- ✗ Send emails or take phone calls
- ✗ List criteria for the employee without offering explanations



**S**

G

**Specific**

**M**

O

**Measurable**

**A**

A

**Attainable**

**R**

L

**Relevant**

**T**

S

**Time Based**

#### 4 **Schedule Consistent Check-ins**

Formal and informal check-ins with employees are beneficial to track progress. Set timelines to discuss updates. During these opportunities, managers and employees can create an open channel of communication to discuss successes and potential areas of concern.



#### **Check-in Examples:**

- Monthly meetings
- In person check-ins
- Virtual check-ins
- End-of-month feedback

#### 5 **Provide Feedback**

Just as managers should give their employees feedback, employees should have the opportunity to provide feedback to their manager. Having an honest, productive, two-way dialogue is key for growth and advancement.



#### **Examples of Feedback:**

*"The way you completed this assignment showed me that you listened to the comments"*

*"I gave you last time. I appreciate how you applied my feedback."*

*"You're a great team member and I want you to succeed. Let's chat weekly to clear up any misunderstandings so these mistakes don't happen again."*

*"I noticed you missed our team meeting this week. Let's discuss a plan to be sure you attend next time and share your notes with the group."*

*"I saw you tried that strategy we discussed. How did you feel about it?"*

*"I know meeting those benchmarks wasn't easy. I'm impressed by your perseverance."*

## Resources

### EARN RESOURCES

- [Including Neurodivergent Workers: Evaluation](#)
- [Inclusive Retention: Applicable Laws & Regulations](#)
- [Management, Peer Training and Mentoring](#)
- [Measure Success: Accountability & Self-Identification](#)
- [Performance Management](#)
- [Professional Development](#)
- [Retention Strategies](#)
- [Working Together: Ensuring People with Disabilities Feel Welcome and Included in the Workplace](#)

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Applying Performance and Conduct Standards to Employees with Disabilities](#)
- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\): Performance Management and Employees with Disabilities](#)
- [JAN: Management Training](#)
- [Northwest Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Center: Performance Management](#)