humans at work LLC

Agenda and Detailed Notes
Session 6: Keeping the Team Strong

Ver. 1.1, updated 6 October 2008

Contents

These are **teaching notes.** They are written from the program leader's perspective, as if the program leader is speaking. They are detailed but not comprehensive. My goal is to give you all the concepts and tools of the program, along with a flavor of my teaching style. You should find here enough information to evaluate whether the program is useful for you, or enough detail to develop it for your own organization.

You'll also find teaching tips or clarifications shaded in gray.

These teaching notes make more sense if you've already read the **Program Overview and Setup** document. It's also best to read the session documents in order, because later sessions build on the work of earlier sessions.

Session 6 Topics

- Manager interview reports
- Big scary management moments
- Do you have the right people on the team?
- Behavior-based interviewing
- Bringing new people onto the team
- Keeping people growing and motivated
- Dealing with bad performance
- Giving performance reviews and talking about salary

Session 6 Key Concepts

- It's your job to keep the team strong. Too many managers neglect the work of proper interviewing, onboarding, motivating and reviewing people.
- Behavior-based interviewing and a detailed onboarding and training plan will help assure that you add the right people to the team in the most effective way.
- Your performance reviews should be thorough, timely, use a transparent process, and include no surprises. Focus on developing strengths rather than picking at weaknesses.
- Deal with performance issues by using specific examples and making specific requests. Remember that anyone can have a performance issue, even your best performer.

These concepts are essential underpinnings of the Humans At Work℠ program. Do not substitute other concepts unless you are prepared to reconfigure the entire program accordingly. If you are not familiar with these concepts, don't lead this session. These skills should be introduced and demonstrated by expert practitioners who can model the behavior as well as describe it.

You'll find basic handouts for all sessions in the Tools and Materials document.

Homework assignments due for this session

1. Company manager interview and write-up.
2. Draft your orientation speech.
3. Develop a schedule to begin your team-building process.
4. Select a project and begin drafting a project statement (due before Session 7)

5. Read **Difficult Conversations** (pp.85-108), "Behavioral interviewing Strategies for Job-Seekers" by Katharine Hansen and "Why Your Employees Are Losing Motivation" by David Sirota, Louis A. Mischkind, and Michael Irwin Meltzer.

Session 6 Agenda

9:00	**6.1**	**Open session (see notes)**
9:05		
9:10	**6.2**	**Manager interview reports (see notes)**
9:15		
9:20		
9:25		
9:30		
9:35		
9:40	**6.3**	**Session manifesto: Big scary management moments (see notes)**
9:45		
9:50	**6.4**	**Do you have the right people on the team? (see notes)**
9:55		
10:00		
10:05	**6.5**	**Behavior-based interviewing (see notes)**
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10:25		
10:30		***BREAK (10 minutes)***
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11:30	**6.6**	**Bringing new people onto the team (see notes)**
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12:00		***LUNCH (1 hour)***
1:00	**6.7**	**Keeping people growing and motivated (see notes)**
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1:40	**6.8**	**Dealing with bad performance (see notes)**
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2:50		***BREAK (10 minutes)***
2:55		
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3:15	**6.9**	**Giving performance reviews and talking about salary (see notes)**
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4:30	**6.10**	**Summary remarks, final questions and comments (see notes)**
4:35		
4:40		
4:45		
4:50	**6.11**	**Wrap up (see notes)**
4:55		
5:00		***Session ends***

Session 6 teaching notes

6.1 Open Session

A. Brief review of Session 5 outcomes
B. Session 6 goals

6.1 A -- Review Session 5

In our last session, we looked at the fundamentals of building teams – making decisions about the team structure and culture, and using team agreements to put a framework into place.

6.1 B Session 6 goals

Having that framework – ground rules, defined roles and responsibilities, clear evaluation standards and shared expectations about team culture – will be of enormous value to you in tackling some of a manager's most stressful and important moments:

- Interviewing and integrating new members into the team
- How to help people develop and grow
- Giving performance reviews and talking about salary
- Dealing with bad performance.

6.2 Manager interview reports

Group discussion of homework assignment: How did your interviews with managers go? What did you learn that will benefit you as a manager?

If you are working with a larger group (8 – 10 participants), have them discuss in their table groups rather than full groups.

6.3 Session manifesto: Big scary management moments

Please read the Manifesto section in the Program Overview and Setup for more guidance about the session manifestos.

Put the manifesto in your own words. Testify. And remember that your purpose is to show participants how today's concepts and ideas are related to each other, to the work of previous sessions, and to good management in general. This is where you bring it all together.

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Start every manifesto with a personal story.

Today's story should be about one of the big scary moments, and how you or a manager in your experience handled it well or badly.

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Today we're talking about things that make employees enormously vulnerable.

Someone wants a job. You hire them and then have to integrate them into the team. You have to talk to them about their career hopes, their performance, the money they make. Or you have to talk to them about why they're currently doing a bad job. These are some of the most stressful workplace moments for both the employee and the manager.

Managing is behavior, it's relationship, and in moments like the ones we are addressing today, management is power. You can change the course of someone's life by the way you handle these moments. You can give them a livelihood and you can take it away. You decide how much money they take home. You make it possible for them to learn and grow, or you don't. When they are doing a bad job, you tell them in the clearest, most effective way possible – or you don't.

These can be hard moments. Dealing with people's hope, fear, confusion, disappointment, anger is rarely easy and never fun.

And so many managers bail out. They hire the first warm body, leave them to sink or swim on their own, delay their reviews and ignore the performance issues. This hurts everyone – the person, the team, the company, and the manager who has just created even more of a mess to clean up later.

Or, some managers become robots. They sacrifice authenticity and transparency to distance themselves from the awkward human feelings across the table. And that sends the message to the team that in a pinch, their manager will treat them like numbers on a page, not like human beings.

Don't hide from these moments. Avoiding only makes them worse. And you have all the tools you need to handle them skillfully on both the corporate and the human level. You have agreements about team structure and culture. You have specific roles and responsibilities. You have the commitment to be clear, to be transparent and to be authentic, and you have the communication skills to support that commitment.

Now to this mix, add <u>courage</u>.

You are the manager. You have more power in these moments, and therefore you have more responsibility for how these conversations go. You have to clearly communicate the business aspects of the situation while being authentic about the human part of the experience. You have to keep the focus on work while talking to the human being across the table.

In these moments, no one cares how scared <u>you</u> are, how sorry you are, or that you're really a nice person. **These moments are not about you.**

It is in these moments that your team sees what you're made of. Do you have the stones to tell someone the hard news clearly and accurately, one human being to another? Or are you too scared of conflict, or too scared of being disliked, to really take care of your team?

If you're like most of us, you <u>are</u> scared of these things. But if you are making management choices based on your own fears, you're doing a bad job. So have a clear process and use it. Trust your values and your skills. And be brave.

6.4 Do you have the right people on the team?

You can be the best manager in the world. You can have clear accountabilities for your team and well-defined roles and responsibilities for every team member. You can have team agreements in place. And when you do all this, you may find that some of the people on the team aren't a good fit.

Any good employee can go through a bad patch -- we'll address that later today. What we're talking about now are people who:

- Lack essential job skills
- Lack essential team skills
- Don't support the team's culture
- Just don't want to be here.

It's part of your job to constantly monitor the composition of your team. Does the team have the skills to get the work done, and the willingness to support the team culture you are trying to build? Or do you have people on the team who are consistently not contributing the way they are supposed to?

There are many options when someone doesn't fit: coach them, get them more training and support, move them into a different role, move them off the team…. But the first step is to recognize the issue.

Thinking about whether people are a "good fit" brings us to the concept of diversity.

Select a participant to facilitate the following group discussion. Coach them as they work. The goal is to make sure that responses are specific, and to record key concepts on the flip chart.

Group discussion: what is diversity? What's good and bad about it?

Summarize before moving on, making sure to include the following points.

- The most important diversity at work is diversity of thinking and diversity of workplace skills and strengths.

- Simply having diversity of age, sex, race, culture etc. does not guarantee you'll have the more important diversity of thinking, skills and strengths. If you hire people who look different but all think the same, or all have exactly the same skills, you are not helping your team.

- Good managers are not personally threatened by diversity of thinking, skills and strengths. Good managers will hire people who are smarter than they are, better looking, or better at skills that the manager considers part of their own personal identity. Don't fall into the trap of building a team that you are "comfortable" with at the expense of what's truly good for the team.

- Building a team where people are truly diverse – in perception, experience and thought, in how they approach problems – is one of your challenges as a manager**.** Difference makes people grate against each other. That's why clear team agreements are so helpful – they mandate a <u>common set of standards for behavior</u> regardless of people's individual differences.

When you look at whether you have the right people on the team, make sure you are not confusing "That person's style is different from mine" with "That person is not a good fit." Stay focused on job skills, team skills, and whether the person is on board with the team culture.

6.5 Behavior-based interviewing

A. Prepare for the interview
B. Conduct the interview
C. Evaluate the candidate
D. Follow up
E. Additional interviewing strategies

Getting, developing and keeping talented people is one of your most important responsibilities. Your team is only as good as the people on it – and that starts and ends with you.

Let's talk now about the start – interviewing.

Group discussion: what's wrong with how companies interview? Why do so many companies seem to make "bad hires"?

Select a participant to facilitate this discussion. Coach them as they work. The goal is to make sure that responses are specific, and to record key concepts on the flip chart.

Keep this brief, and be prepared to point out the differences between this list and the characteristics of behavior-based interviewing as you go through this section.

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Behavior-based interviewing is grounded in the idea that what people have done in past work situations demonstrates the skills, attitude and behavior they will bring to future work situations.

Traditional interviews use hypothetical questions -- what would you do in a particular situation? The answers are typically vague and buzzword-heavy, and they prove nothing except that the candidate knows how tap dance.

Behavior-based interviews ask the candidate to tell specific stories of their own experience in real-life situations: not "what would you do" but "what did you do."

Refer participants to the samples in their program notebooks (see Tools and Materials). It's helpful to pull these out and refer to them as you talk through the process:

- Job Description
- Interview Rating Sheet
- Interview Questions

Here's the overview of how behavior-based interviewing works:

- You identify the essential job skills and the essential team skills that will make a person a good fit for the team

- You develop specific interview questions to reveal whether the candidate has those essential skills

- The interview is conducted by 2 – 5 people who take detailed notes. It is also possible to conduct a one-on-one behavior-based interview, but the general approach is to use a panel.

- The group rates the candidate in each skill area immediately after the interview, arriving at a consensus for each rating.

- Depending on circumstances, you either make an offer to your highest-rated candidate, or bring yin the 2 or 3 most highly-rated candidates for a second round of interviews.

The beauty of this approach is that you make decisions about a candidate based on specific data about how they've applied their skills in other work situations. You don't have to take their word for what they would do – you can look in depth at what they <u>have</u> done, how they did it, and what values are reflected in that behavior. And then you can decide if those things match with the job that needs doing, and with the team.

This approach also creates a paper trail – a clear record of the skills you are evaluating and the interview data that backs up your evaluation. If someone questions the integrity of the process, you don't have to rely on your memory or defend your "gut instinct."

The challenge of this approach is that it is a lot of work and takes a lot of time. Deal with it. If you're not willing to spend the time up front to find the best people you can, how can you expect your team to be successful? Taking the time to hire correctly and effectively will save you time, money, mess and stress down the road.

<u>6.5 A -- Prepare for the interview</u>

When you've decided to open a job for interviews, you need:

- A detailed job description
- An Interview Rating Sheet that identifies the essential job skills and team skills you are looking for

- Interview questions
- An interview panel

Detailed job description

You should already have a detailed roles and responsibilities document for the position. If it's a new position, develop the roles & responsibilities document before advertising. Add the skills, experience and educational level you require for the position.

I like "you" language for this (e.g. "you will lead marketing projects for Brand X"), but some companies prefer more formal language ("the candidate will lead…").

This process should be as clear and transparent as possible to candidates. That starts here. Include the detailed job description in your announcement of the job opening, or make it available to candidates in advance the interview. Make sure they know coming in what specific skills and experience you are looking for. (Note: do <u>not</u> give them an advance copy of your interview questions or rating system).

If you can avoid using resume-reading software to screen candidates, please do. There's no substitute for a human being reading a resume.

See sample Job Description in Tools and Materials.

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Interview Rating Sheet

Although you use the Interview Rating Sheet at the end of the interview process, you should work on it first when you are developing your interview materials. Defining what you specifically want to evaluate in the interview will help you develop the best questions.

The Interview Rating Sheet lists seven general categories of <u>performance skills</u> to evaluate. Following that, you'll find Category Definitions. You'll see from the definitions that the skills categories are intended to be broad. Don't worry about making them more specific – the questions you develop will narrow the focus.

You also have space on the sheet to identify specific types of technical knowledge and previous experience. Here's the place to get specific. If you're filling a public relations position, you should be interviewing for public relations experience. That may seem like a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised how many people with poor technical skills get hired because the interview process didn't specifically address their experience. Or maybe you wouldn't be surprised.

When you've decided what skills, knowledge and experience you need to evaluate, proceed to developing specific questions.

See sample Interview Rating Sheet in Tools and Materials

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Interview questions

Develop a list of questions that elicit stories of the candidate's skills, experience, behavior and values in the essential skills areas.

This step takes thought and work, but it's the heart of the process. Good questions will give you good results. It's far better to do the work up front than to have to clean up the mess at the back end; hiring someone who's not right for the team is damaging for everyone. Please don't be careless with this step, or decide that it's not convenient to take the time.

Behavior-based interview questions generally begin with "Tell me about a time" or "Give us an example of a time." It's also fine to ask questions that require a candidate to describe their values (such as "What's your definition of good teamwork?")

Make sure you end the questions by asking if the candidate has any questions for you.

Make sure you use the same questions with each person interviewing for the job. It's very important, both for the evaluation process and also to protect the company from claims of discrimination in the interview process.

See sample Interview Questions in Tools and Materials

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Interview panel

Put together an interview panel of 2 - 5 members, including you and anyone else the candidate would be working closely with.   The panel may be only members of your team, or you may invite members of other company teams to participate, depending on the position.

Make sure the interview panel understands the process ahead of time, and has a chance to review and provide input on the interview questions.

Schedule a minimum of 1.5 hours for each interview, plus time afterwards for evaluations. It's best to evaluate right after the interview, when the information is fresh in everyone's mind. If you must delay, don't put off the evaluation longer than 24 hours.

Behavior-based interviewing can be conducted solo if you have good reasons. For example, if you're hiring for a high-level position, you may wish to have some one-on-one time with candidates. In such cases, however, I recommend using panel interviews on a first round, and then using one-on-one interviews only for candidates who make it to the second (or final) round of selection.

In general, having even one other person on your interview team deepens the evaluation experience, because each member of the interview panel will have a slightly different perspective of the candidate and will remember different details. For this reason, I believe using an interview panel is a much stronger approach to interviewing

6.5 B -- Conduct the interview

1. Make sure everyone on the interview panel has a copy of the questions and rating sheet. Do not give these to the candidate.

2. Welcome the candidate and introduce the interview panel (in other words, enter on the human level).

3. Explain to the candidate that you'll be asking them to tell stories about their previous work experience in order to assess whether they're a good fit for this position. Let them know that you'll be taking notes, and that members of the interview team may ask follow-up questions to make sure the team has all the information it needs. Let them know it's fine to take their time with each response.

4. Make sure the candidate is clear on the process before you continue. Provide an example of a "story response" if necessary.

5. Make sure the candidate has seen the Job Description.

6. Describe your team's accountabilities and how the position fits into your team structure.

7. Panel members take turns asking questions. Make sure to ask every candidate the same questions.

8. Everyone on the panel should take detailed notes of data that sticks out for you. Try to capture the candidate's own words whenever possible (key phrases, not a complete transcription). When evaluating someone it's important to know what they said, not what you think they meant.

9. It's fine to ask follow-up questions to clarify or deepen a response, but don't ask new topic questions.

10. When the interview is over, let the candidates know the next steps. Give them a deadline by which they can expect a response. Thank them for their time.

Give candidates a little time to get used to this structure, as it will be new to many people. Advise your interview team to be comfortable with silence while the candidate thinks about a response. Resist the urge to "help" the candidate answer a question!

If a candidate tries to answer a question hypothetically ("Well, what I would do is…."), interrupt politely and explain that you would like them to tell a story of a time they actually dealt with a similar situation.

If anything about a candidate's response is not clear, or raises a red flag for someone on the interview team, ask follow-up questions ("You said you threw a punch at him…. can you tell us more about that?")

Some people will not have stories of their experience to tell. That can be an awkward and uncomfortable moment for everyone. Again, resist the urge to help the candidate or change the process. If they cannot answer your questions, you need to know that about them in deciding whether they fit your job needs and your team.

This is not a process just for hiring executives or managers. <u>Everyone</u> has stories of their experience, even people coming into entry-level positions or positions that snobs consider "unskilled" (mailroom, cleaning or janitorial, dishwashing, etc.).

If you're hiring for the kind of job that attracts first-time workers, make sure the candidate knows they can offer stories of school or life experience to demonstrate equivalent skills.

6.5 C -- Evaluate the candidate

The group should evaluate the candidate as soon as possible after the interview. Never wait longer than 24 hours.

The group works through the rating sheet and comes to agreement on a rating for each skill category based on the evidence from the notes they took. It's fine to get granular on this if it helps (give a score of 3.5 or 3.75, for example).

In some cases, the discussion will be very short – it will be clear that the candidate has strong or weak skills. In some cases, you'll need a fair amount of discussion to determine an overall rating. This is where having an interview team benefits you enormously – you get a group memory and the perspective of people who would be working with the candidate in a variety of ways, and therefore have different sensitivities. It also makes a big difference if everyone takes good, detailed notes.

Designate one person to record the final tally on each candidate..

Then look at the final scores. Sometimes it's clear that one person stands out. More often, you will identify 2 – 3 people that seem strong candidates. These people may have similar strengths, or different but equally compelling strengths.

You have two choices when this happens. You can have a second round of behavior-based interviews that use a new set of questions and dig deeper into particular areas. I believe this is the better option, in spite of the time it takes. An additional interview helps you nail down your impressions of a candidate, and allows you the change to see if they are consistent in their responses. We'll talk more about this in a few minutes.

If you feel you do not have time for another round, then you'll need to have an in-depth discussion with the interview panel about the top candidates 'strengths, weak areas, and your overall sense of how they will fit with your team culture.

Do not underestimate the importance of fitting into your team's culture. In the right environment, people can improve their job skills. However, the most "qualified" person in the world can ruin the work of a team by being a bad fit for the culture. Don't be afraid to hire diversity – but trust your gut instincts on whether someone will respect and support the culture of the team.

Everyone's interview notes and the final tally sheet should be kept on file in case there are any questions about the interview and evaluation process.

6.5 D -- Follow up

Too often, no one follows up with an interview candidate. That's rude. It's easy to point fingers at Human Resources, but you as the hiring manager should take responsibility for making sure that everyone who interviews gets a phone call from HR. Or you should make the call yourself.

It is difficult to tell someone that they didn't get the job. Remember your communication skills: state your headline right up front. A good opening is, "I'm calling with some disappointing news. We've offered the job to another candidate and they've accepted." Or, "I'm calling with some disappointing news. We're moving on to a second round of interviews, but we aren't including you in that pool. We identified other candidates that we felt were a better fit for the position."

You may wish to consult with HR in case your company has strict policies about what you may or may not say to a rejected candidate.

Be prepared for disappointment and possibly anger. Let the candidate know that you can make an appointment to discuss with them the specifics of their interview and identify how they could have improved their responses. Do **not** let yourself be drawn into discussion of the winning candidate. This is not a conversation about comparisons, it's about the fact that this person didn't get the job.

Do not apologize for your decision. It's fine to say, "I know this is disappointing and I want you to know how much we appreciate your time and energy in the interview." It is not fine to say, "I'm so sorry it didn't work out." This is not the moment for you to try to bond emotionally with the candidate – that's a strategy of insecurity, of wanting the candidate to still think you are "the good guy." But this isn't about you.

6.5 E -- Additional interviewing strategies

These are useful if:

- you have two or three high-rated candidates and are having trouble choosing one
- the job you're filling is complex, sensitive, or high-level.

Strategies include:

- Two-stage interview process
- Skills demonstration
- Ask the candidate to solve a real problem
- Informal interactions

A two-stage interview process uses the first-stage interview round to identify two or three high-ranking candidates. Then prepare a new set of second-round questions designed to dig deeper into whatever makes this job complex, sensitive or high-level.

Yes, it's a lot more work. It is also an additional chance to make the best decision. It is better to make the right decision up front than to save time now and clean up the mess later.

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An additional way to evaluate candidates (at the first round or second round) is to ask them to demonstrate specific skills in the interview. For example:

- Review an important memo or press release and suggest revisions
- Facilitate a conversation or brainstorming session with the interview team
- Roleplay a conversation with a difficult client.

In all cases, the point is not for the candidate to give the perfect response, but to talk through their thinking and give you a window into their process, priorities and level of expertise. Make sure to explain this to the candidate before you begin this part of the interview.

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You could also ask the candidate to come into an interview prepared to tackle a real-life company problem related to the particular job.

This is a strategy developed by headhunter Nick Corcodilos for interview candidates to stand out in a traditional interview process by showing how they would actually contribute to the interviewing company. It's a good strategy, although from an employer's perspective I would always couple it with a general behavior-based interview to dig more deeply into the candidate's work experience and team behavior.

Visit http://www.asktheheadhunter.com for more information on this technique.

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Finally, you can choose to give candidates a chance to interact less formally with your team and others in the company. Two good approaches are to have a team member take the person on a tour of the company (including introducing them to people along the way), and to schedule a group lunch at a local restaurant. Afterwards, the team members involved can give you their subjective impressions of the person.

I've found all three of these additional strategies especially helpful when filling positions that require a lot of cross-company contact. It's surprising what people's behavior during a 40-minute lunch or a walk around the building can reveal about them.

Finally – if you do a series of interviews and you don't have any strong candidates, consider carefully whether to "just hire the best of a bad lot." It's your call – but it may well be worth it to widen your search and start the process again.

I've had candidates tell me the behavior-based interview process is grueling. I've never had anyone tell me it is unfair or ineffective. I've had candidates who were rejected from one position apply for another down the road because they wanted to be part of a team that hired this way, and that treated them with respect and dignity throughout the process.

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Group exercise: Participants take turns answering behavior-based interview questions, to see what it's like on the other side of the chair and to begin understanding how much information you can get from a behavior-based response.

The participants acting as the interview panel should practice making notes on the responses.

Have several sample questions prepared that either address the participants' various departmental responsibilities, or that are general "team performance" or "job performance" questions. Suggestions include:

- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a team member, and how you resolved it.
- Have you ever had an outside accounting audit find mistakes in your work? What happened and how did you deal with it?

- Tell us about the marketing campaign you've led that most excited you. What did you enjoy about it?

- Tell me about a time you've had to give someone disappointing or bad news at work.

6.6 Bringing new people onto the team

A. Before the new person arrives
B. The first day of work
C. The first week of work

6.6 A -- Before the new person arrives

There's some planning you need to do before the new person arrives.

- Create an onboarding and training plan

- Line up volunteers from the team to show the new person where their desk is, where the bathroom is, how to use the phone and email systems, and to take them to lunch the first day

- Contact the new person and tell them:
  - What time to be at work the first day, and to check in with you or your proxy
  - Someone from the team will take them to lunch the first day

- Make sure the new person's space and equipment are ready for them (working computer, phone, cubicle or office, furniture, and basic supplies)

- Check with Human Resources about the process for getting an employee handbook and filling out any necessary paperwork

- Arrange for a keycard, ID, or other security credentials
- It's nice to have a small welcoming touch waiting on the new team member's desk -- a card, a plant, candy, etc.

Onboarding and training plan

This will take some time, but once you've created it, it becomes a template for any new member of the team.

The onboarding and training plan should include:

- A brief orientation to the company, either in print or online (this may be available on your company's intranet). Many companies do formal orientations – that's fine, no need to duplicate effort. But make sure your new person gets some kind of general orientation.
- Review team accountabilities
- Review team ground rules
- Review manager ground rules
- Give the new person a copy of their roles and responsibilities (in the "I" language format we discussed in Session 5)
- 90-day goals (or, if your company has a formal probationary period, conform to that schedule). Structure the goals to answer the question, "How will we know that you've learned the basics of your job and are fully contributing as a team member?"
- The exception to this is if you've hired the person specifically to undertake an urgent project – in that case, set up very specific goals.
- A training plan for key team processes, specialized software, etc.
- A schedule for meeting key people outside the team that they will work with. Some of these may be formal meetings that you set up, and some may be informal "drop-ins."

You won't deliver all the information and training in this plan on someone's first day. However, you should have it completed within their first week. This means you'll need to schedule people ahead of time to help them with training, etc. Plan ahead.

Also, please deliver the information in a logical order – it may be confusing to start training someone in a key process when they aren't sure yet what the team accountabilities are, for example.

See Tools and Materials for a sample Onboarding/Training Plan and sample 90 Day Goals

6.6 B -- The first day of work

- Make sure you are available at the appointed time to welcome them to the team, or designate a proxy.
- Have the volunteers show them their desk and the bathroom, etc. and arrange a time later that morning to review the use of the phones and email, and how to order supplies.
- Take them around and introduce them to other team members. Do this before any training or orientation starts, if possible.
- Review with them the onboarding and training plan, and let them know roughly what the schedule will be over the week.
- Make sure they know who is taking them to lunch.
- Turn them over to the phone/email training person.
- At this point, you'll proceed with the onboarding/training schedule you've already set up. You may see a lot of the new person the first day because you are reviewing team agreements, etc. Or you may not see them because they are filling out paperwork and getting their photo taken. Try to make sure their first day is full – don't abandon them to sit at their desk sorting paper clips because they don't know what to do.

- At the end of the day, check in with them and see how it went.

6.6 C -- The first week of work

- Make sure they complete the onboarding and training plan
- Check in with them several times during the week to make sure they are getting the information and support they need.

6.7 Keeping people growing and motivated

A. Employee development
B. Cross-training
C. Rewards and recognition

6.7 A -- Employee development

Some people are happy to get a job down and just keep doing it. They find satisfaction in control and routine. That's great. You need those people on your team. But even these people need to grow and learn in response to changes in the team or the business.

And many people are only happy when they are growing.

Employee development is a given of today's corporate culture. People expect opportunities to learn new skills – that's one of the traditional steps to moving into more responsible positions.

As a manager, you need to decide how much development you are willing to support. What's your value? My value is that a good leader is always willing to help people grow, even if that means growing them off the team. This was hard in particular for my last team. We constantly helped team members grow into other parts of the company, and the interviewing process to replace them was time-consuming for the rest of the team. But it also meant that we put people with great skills into other parts of the company – people who had the same basic values about communication, clarity, sharing information, process management, etc. This is positive turnover.

Your value may be different. You may be willing to support skills-related learning that benefits the team only, or you may support a certain amount of personal development that's not related to career. It's your choice, but you need to decide and then apply that decision consistently across the team.

Although you can mandate team learning ("Everyone needs to use the new timekeeping system"), you should also be willing to work with people on **individual development plans**.

Select a participant to facilitate the following group discussion. Coach them as they work. The goal is to make sure that responses are specific, and to record key concepts on the flip chart.

Keep this brief, 5 -7 minutes.

Group discussion: What ways can you think of to help people develop and grow?

Add any of the suggestions below as necessary:

- Team training on topics of interest
- Team members develop and conduct short training programs for the rest of the team
- In-company training programs
- Outside seminars and workshops
- Cross-training (see below)
- Assign special projects for team members to manage
- Find mentors for people in areas of their interest
- Take people to meetings with senior management and expose them to this level of discussion and decision-making
- Team members assist in your presentations or lead presentations to senior management

When it comes to individual learning, don't push people in a direction you think they should go. It's fine to make suggestions, but it's their life and their learning –

let them choose. Allow them to change their minds. Accept that they will sometimes make choices that confuse or disappoint you. Be supportive without being controlling. Follow through on the development promises you make. And don't take it personally if they choose to learn from someone other than you, or if they aren't interested in what you have to teach.

Be clear about what kinds of learning and growth you will support, and them support them.

6.7 B -- Cross-training

Cross-training is a great way to help employee development and directly benefit the team. By rewarding team members for learning each other's jobs, you give them an opportunity to grow and, if there's an emergency workload crunch or an unplanned absence, you have people who can step in and get priority work done.

Cross-training should focus on priority jobs or projects on the team – things which if not done could harm the team's ability to meet its goals, or harm the company business. For example: payroll, public relations or crisis communication, management of key brands, IT and network management, processing sales and shipping orders, giving the pitch to potential investors, etc.

When selecting team members for cross-training, make sure that the skills or knowledge of the two jobs match. It's reasonable to ask an Accounts Payable person to learn how to process payroll, but don't expect him to learn how to debug someone's computer. It's reasonable to ask a project manager for a girl's toy brand to take on emergency responsibility for a boy's sports brand, but don't ask her to write the brand marketing plan.

You can structure your team so that some cross-training is built into the team's organization, or you can make it voluntary. Either way, show your team members how this training is directly tied to their ability to make more money. By cross-training and stepping in when necessary, they make themselves more valuable to the team and the company. They acquire new skills or product knowledge, which benefits them throughout their career. And they know that someone has their back in case of emergency.

6.7 C -- Rewards and recognition

Don't discount the importance of ongoing rewards and recognition. It motivates and satisfies people to be recognized, and it also helps to make clear to your team what your standards of success are.

It's important to recognize success when it happens, not just once a year in a salary review. It's important to recognize ongoing dedication and hard work, and also to acknowledge special occasions (birthdays, births, etc,) There are plenty of ways other than salary to do this.

Select a participant to facilitate the following group discussion. Coach them as they work. The goal is to make sure that responses are specific, and to record key concepts on the flip chart.

Group discussion: What strategies can you think of to reward and recognize people?

Add the following suggestions to the list if necessary:

- Personal handwritten notes
- Memos to their personnel file
- Verbal praise in person or in a team meeting
- Coffee cards, dinner gift certificates, etc.
- A team party or outing
- Use your imagination – a "success icon" they keep on their desk for a week, a crown, a T-shirt….

Unless you have the coolest product in the world, please do not give company product as a special reward. And please do not give "marketing knick knacks" like pen holders with the company logo as rewards.

Praise and recognition should always be specific and authentic. Tell people exactly what you are praising them for, and tell them what their success means to you and the company. And thank them for doing it.

However you choose to reward and recognize people, do it consistently. Make sure that your system is easily understood and feels fair – the important thing is that it feel fair even if you give different rewards to different people.

The best way to know if you are doing a good job of this is to ask your team if they are happy with the way rewards and recognition are handled, or if they would like something different.

6.8 Dealing with bad performance

A. Reasons to raise a concern
B. What to say
C. Terminating someone

6.8 A -- Reasons to raise a concern

A conversation that begins, "I'm concerned about your performance" or "I have a complaint from someone about your performance" is serious business. It is the first step down the slippery slope to firing someone, although usually the point of the conversation is to rescue the situation before it gets that far.

Learn to distinguish – for yourself and for your team – the difference between an informal conversation about, "You seem distracted this week, are you okay?" and a formal meeting in which you say, "There's a trend of mistakes in your work that concerns me."

There are three general reasons to have a formal conversation about performance concerns with a team member:

- You have measurable data that suggests a trend of lower quality or quantity in their job output.
- You have personally observed repeated behavior issues that contravene either team agreements or company rules.
- Someone complains to you about a team member, expressing specific concern about one of these areas (results or behavior) and providing specific examples to back up their concern.

The big exception to this rule is if you witness anyone in the company physically assault, verbally abuse or sexually harass another person. You must intervene immediately. Take the attacker to a private location and call human resources, or call security if necessary. As a manager, you have a legal responsibility to put a stop to that behavior.

Don't have a formal "concern conversation" with a team member on the basis of a general complaint, a rumor, or a single mistake. If someone makes a bad mistake, you may wish to have a conversation about how that mistake might be prevented in the future, but that is not the same thing as telling someone you are concerned about their overall performance.

6.8 B -- What to say

If you need to have a conversation about performance concerns:

- Do not put it off
- Gather specific data
- Involve Human Resources
- Have the conversation
- Set 30-day goals for improvement
- Document the conversation
- Follow up
- Meet again in 30 days.

Do not put off the conversation.

It never helps. A real performance problem does not go away simply because you ignore it.

***

Gather specific data before the conversation

Gather the measurable data you have about the person's productivity, results, error rate, or whatever data reflects your concern. If the issue relates to a complaint, talk with those who have complained and document their concerns. Document the behavior you've witnessed. Roll everything into a document that you take with you into the meeting.

Be prepared for this conversation.

***

Involve Human Resources

It's generally best to let HR know that you have a concern and are planning to handle it "internally" to the team. If your company has policies about addressing concerns, now is the time to find out. Let HR know that you will document the conversation.

Whether you choose to put this on your employee's company record with HR is a conversation you and HR should have together. You have to evaluate whether this is the tip of a larger iceberg (you anticipate other issues arising), or a one-time issue (for example, someone is going through a divorce and their work is suffering).

***

Have the conversation

Enter on the human level but state your headline <u>immediately</u> and <u>specifically</u>.

Here is a model to use:

> "Thanks for meeting with me. (Take a breath.) I have a concern. (State it specifically and clearly). I'd like us to talk about it."
>
> Example: "Thanks for meeting with me." (Take a breath.) "I have a concern. I've received several complaints from the Marketing Director about your delivering work late to her team. I'd like us to talk about it."
>
> Example: "Thanks for meeting with me. (Take a breath.) "I have a concern. In the last four weeks your numbers are down and other team members report that you've been short-tempered and withdrawn. I'd like us to talk about it."

Don't skip the human level opening even though you may be nervous about the conversation. Now more than ever, your employee needs to know that you see him as a human being.

Take a breath to prepare yourself, and also as a body-language cue to your employee that you are about to begin a serious conversation. These cues will help him.

Don't let your headline get away from you. Don't start with, "I've had several complaints about you" or, "You're really off your game, aren't you?" The first is too vague, and the second is more appropriate for an informal "wow, you just made a mistake" conversation.

After you state your headline, give the team member a moment to take it in. Your next sentence should be something like, "Do you agree that this is happening?"

Your team member may respond with silence, defense or anger. From here, it's up to you to keep the conversation focused on whether the team member perceives a problem, and how the two of you will work together to solve it.

It's fine to empathize with a team member's distress – to say, "I know this is a hard conversation" or "I know it's upsetting to have people unhappy with your work." <u>Do not apologize for having the conversation.</u> It is your job to bring this issue to their attention.

If the team member argues that the data you have is not true, check it out again. If you know the data to be true (e.g. you have numbers or direct observation), then refuse to be derailed. "Doug, I've seen this behavior in you myself twice this week, and I'm concerned about it."

Stay clear, transparent and authentic. <u>Clarity is especially important</u>. Stay focused on the specific issues and data, and on the purpose of the conversation (which is to identify the issues and improve the performance).

Be open and direct. The employee may be upset. It's not your job to control that. It is your job to make sure the employee understands clearly what the issues are and what kind of improvements you expect.

A word about authenticity: have your feelings, but do not express all of them at the expense of the conversation. Do not let yourself be drawn into your employee's anger or distress.

It's fine to be authentic about the following:

- your respect and support for the team member
- their value to the team
- your absolute willingness to do whatever you can to help
- that you know this is a hard conversation and that you appreciate what a good job they are doing of staying engaged with it
- that you can see they are upset and do they need to take a break?

<u>It is not fine to be authentic about your personal insecurities</u> about having the conversation. Do not say, "This is really hard for me too" or, "I feel really bad about having to tell you these things." No one cares about your problems right now. It's not about you.

It is neither true nor fair to reassure the employee that everything will work out, or that it's no big deal, or that the complainer is probably just a jerk. Do not undermine the clarity and focus of an important conversation just because you can't stand delivering bad news.

***

Set 30-day goals for improvement

The next step in the conversation is to let them know that <u>you want to help</u>. "I want to help you resolve this and get your performance back on track. What do you think we can do to make that happen?" It's important to get your team member to work with you on this.

Work with your team member to set 30-day goals for improvement (or whatever the company policy may be in this regard). Make these goals specific, measurable and achievable. Relate them directly to the issue at hand.

If the issue is one of results, set results goals. Examples might include error rates, productivity goals, arriving at work on time every day, etc.

If the issue is one of skills, set skills goals. Examples might include training, practice, or working with a more skilled employee on a particular project.

If the issue is one of behavior, set behavior goals. These may include feedback from those who have complained, since often that is the only way to measure a change in behavior. Examples might include:

- If you begin to feel overwhelmed, let me know immediately so that I can help you prioritize. I don't want to hear you yelling at anyone again when you get frustrated.

- When someone requests a change in the schedule, do not automatically tell them no and refuse to have further conversation. I want you to tell them, "Let me think about it and get back to you in an hour." Then I want you to think about whether the change is important enough to make. If you aren't sure, ask me.

- In 30 days, I will ask the Logistic Team for feedback on their interactions with you. I want to hear from them that your communication has been professional and polite, with no personal remarks.

If the team member refuses to provide input to goals (because they are upset or angry), then you should set the goals yourself in the meeting and ask them to agree to the goals.

When the meeting is over, thank the team member for working with you on this. Reiterate that you are there to help them be as successful as possible, and that you are available to talk further if necessary. Then let them leave.

***

Document the conversation

It's very important to keep a detailed paper trail of performance conversations.

Your document should include:

- the issues or complaints
- the fact that the team member agrees or disagrees that these issues are happening
- the 30-day goals
- the support you will offer
- that you will meet again in 30 days to review their progress

Give a copy to your team member and keep one in their personnel file.

***

Follow up

Check in with your team member a day or two later (a general "How are you doing?" is fine), and then as necessary.

Do not avoid the person. Do not act embarrassed or defensive when you next see them. Treat them as if the conversation is over and the relationship has moved forward. Treat them the way you would wish to be treated.

***

Meet again in 30 days (or as mandated by company policy)

Do not skip or delay this meeting.

At the meeting, review the team member's progress toward the goals.

If you are satisfied with their progress, tell them so. Thank them for working on it. Tell them it's done, and if they find themselves getting into trouble with it in the future, you hope they will let you know up front so you can help them deal with it before it becomes an issue.

If you are not satisfied with their progress, then you have to decide whether to extend the goals another 30 days, or to start down the road of removing them from their job. That all depends on the specific situation – how serious it is, and how far the employee is from compliance.

If you decide to extend 30 days, tell the employee you are unhappy with their improvement. Extend their improvement period 30 days with specific goals and a warning that this is the final extension.

If you decide to terminate, do not say so at this meeting. Tell the employee you're unhappy with their lack of improvement and that you do need to consider your response to it. End the meeting and consult with Human Resources about the situation and the company's process for dealing with it.

6.8 C -- Terminating someone

Terminating an employee is the hardest conversation you will ever have as a manager.

It's also where managers bail out the most, turning it from a difficult human interaction into a car crash. Being fired is hard to get over. Being fired poorly makes it worse for everyone, including you.

Terminating an employee:

- Understand and follow your company process
- Prepare a termination document
- Review all options with HR and plan the meeting
- Terminate in person, in the presence of your HR representative

Understand and follow your company process

When you decide to terminate, go to HR and discuss the situation. Make sure you understand the company's process clearly.

Never fire an employee without consulting HR. You can call security or the police, or order someone out of the building if necessary, but don't terminate employment without involving HR.

Your company's process may take longer than you wish. There are generally good reasons for this. If you think the process is not a good one, you can sometimes shorten it by having excellent documentation from one or two performance concern conversations with 30-day goals that have not been met.

***

Prepare a termination document

Whether it's required by HR or not, I suggest you prepare a termination document that rolls up the entire situation:

- The original concerns or complaints
- The performance concern discussion(s)
- The 30-day goals
- How the goals have not been met
- Any specific instances of new poor performance or behavior since the initial discussion
- A statement that failure to meet the improvement goals means the person is failing to meet the accountabilities of their role and responsibilities, and that this is unacceptable.

Prepare this ahead of time and allow your HR rep to review it before the meeting.

***

Review the options with HR and plan the meeting

Meet with your HR representative to discuss your company's termination options.

You may choose to offer the person a chance to resign rather than be fired. You may also offer them some kind of skills training or job search assistance if your company has these programs in place. Or you may offer the chance to move into a different position on the team, or elsewhere in the company.

You should also plan the termination meeting with your HR representative – agree on what information you will give the team member, and who will speak at various points of the meeting.

Document these agreements. It's important you and HR have a clear, wellplanned approach to this important meeting.

***

Terminate in person

Terminate your team member in person. **Do not fire someone through email**.

Do it yourself. You should have your HR representative present, but don't weasel out on this and make HR do the talking. You are the manager. Firing someone is your decision and your responsibility.

State your headline up front: "Doug, you can no longer continue in this job. Your employment with our company is terminated effective _________. We're here to talk about your options and the next steps."

At this point, you or the HR rep should present the options or the details of the termination process.

Ask if the employee has any questions to ask or anything they want to say.

At any point in the conversation, the employee may express grief, anger, bitterness or confusion. They may make unkind remarks to you. Deal with it. You don't have to accept abusive language, personal insults or threats, but if they are saying that you're a lousy boss you need to just suck it up and say, "I understand that you're angry with me. I get it. And I also need us to stay focused on making sure that you understand all your options so you can make the best decision." If you must respond to accusations, say something like, "Your performance continues to be unacceptable. We've had a number of conversations about this, and now the company is terminating your employment."

As with a performance concern conversation, <u>do not apologize</u> for the decision or the situation. It's fine to say, "I see how upset you are. This is a tough situation." It is not fine to say, "I'm sorry we had to do this."

Maintain your boundaries. Do not get drawn into your team member's distress. Do not try to make them feel better. Do not seek reassurance from the team member that they understand your position. <u>This isn't about you</u>.

When the conversation is done, let it be done. Do not try to "make it okay." It's not okay. Let the employee leave with dignity. Don't put them through the hell of having to reassure you that everything's okay and that you are still a nice person. That's a lousy thing to do to someone you manage.

***

Group exercise: Role-playing/brainstorming to practice performance concern discussions.

Ask participants what specifically intimidates them about the idea of having these discussions. Answers might include an employee crying or yelling, an employee becoming aggressive, an employee pleading for another chance, etc.

Improvise a role play around this specific occurrence. Have the participant who raised the issue play the manager, and another participant play the employee. Assume they are already in the conversation at the point where the issue comes up. Instruct the "employee" to react believably but not over-the-top, and the manager to respond. Then have all participants offer coaching/brainstorming about how the manager can respond to control the situation.

6.9 Giving performance reviews and talking about salary

A. General thoughts about reviews and salary discussions
B. How to prepare the review
C. What goes into a good written review
D. How to deliver the review
E. Let your team review you
F. Talking about money

6.9 A -- General thoughts about reviews and salary discussions

Select a participant to facilitate the following group discussion. Coach them as they work. The goal is to make sure that responses are specific, and to record key concepts on the flip chart.

Group discussion:
- What's the worst performance review experience you've ever had?
- What worries or intimidates you about giving someone a review or discussing their salary?

Performance reviews and salary discussions are one of the most feared and loathed experiences in most people's professional lives. It's a time when the power between manager and employee is at great imbalance: the manager has the authority to judge the employee's performance and determine the course of that person's salary and career.

Even between people who trust each other, these are scary moments. Very few people can receive criticism without some feelings of upset and defensiveness, even when all parties are committed to constructive criticism and improvement.

You can't control what fears and vulnerabilities you or your team members bring to the table. But you can make sure that your evaluation standards are consistent, your process is clear and transparent, and your team members have as much input and participation as possible.

This is one management activity where having a formal process is not only a legal protection for you and the company, but also really helps minimize the chance for miscommunication – as long as it is managed with clarity, transparency and authenticity. Your responsibility is to make sure it is managed that way, regardless of the specific process your company uses.

Most companies have a formal review process. Get familiar with it ahead of time. Plan for reviews and do them on time. It is poor management to throw together a performance review document at the last minute with no forethought, or to consistently delay someone's review.

I hate numbers-based rating systems for performance reviews. Good reviews are not about numbers. They are a conversation (and hopefully an agreement) about how people are meeting expectations, how they can improve what they are doing, and what new responsibilities and challenges they can prepare to meet.

The most important point: No matter what process you use, there should be no surprises in a performance review. If someone is doing a good job, they know it because you have rewarded and recognized them, and because they trust that you would alert them to any problem. If someone is not doing a good job, you as an effective manager have already raised your concern and developed a plan to address it.

A performance review should be a review, not a revelation. It is not the forum for raising first-time concerns – that's the hit-and-run technique of a poor manager. Don't do it.

6.9 B -- How to prepare the review

1. Familiarize yourself with your company's process and paperwork

2. If your company uses only a numbers rating system, plan to supplement it with written reviews (see Section 6.9 C).

3. If your company process does not provide employees a chance to evaluate themselves, plan to ask for self-evaluations. See Tools and Materials for a sample self-evaluation.

4. About a month out from the review period, remind your team that reviews are coming. Describe the review process for your team. Make sure everyone understands what kind of review they will be getting (numerical, written, both). Ask if anyone has questions or concerns. Ask them to schedule a 30-60 minute appointment with you for their review.

5. Post a self-evaluation form in your team email folder (voluntary or mandatory, your call). Give your team a deadline for turning the self-evaluation in to you.

6. If you feel it's appropriate, ask the key relationships of an employee for feedback on their performance. This can be formal or informal.

7. Prepare each employee's review.

6.9 C -- What goes into a good written review

See Tools and Materials for a suggested review format.

A written review should include:

1. A clear summary statement of how the team member is doing in the job and on the team.

2. A specific assessment of their performance in meeting goals from the last review (skip this step if this is your first written review of the employee).

3. Highlight accomplishments, skills, improvements, and strengths. In other words, say what's good.

4. Address any concerns you have, one at a time, in specific detail. Begin with a statement of the concern. Give at least one specific example of it. Provide suggestions or action steps for addressing the concern.

   Make sure you indicate either general agreement with the team member's self-evaluation, or be specific about areas where you differ. If you don't, you risk sending the message that you didn't consider the self-evaluation. You don't have to address their self-evaluation in detail unless there are things you want to specifically acknowledge or disagree with.

   Many people believe that a review is not "real" unless it focuses on improvement, and that the meat of a review is the concerns and criticisms. I dislike this approach – it's demoralizing for people to be doing a generally good job, but have a review focus primarily on the negative. It sends a mixed message.

   I believe in general that it's best to manage to an employee's strengths as opposed to trying to bolster their weaknesses. In a review, you should focus on any "weakness" that is getting in the way of an employee's strengths.

   Sometimes jobs that we mostly have the skills for also include elements that we have to work harder at. There's a difference between a learning curve and an actual weakness – an inability to master an important skill or behavior. A true weakness is a concern, a learning curve is not.

If you have legitimate concerns about someone's performance, you will have already expressed it to them, and you will revisit it in this review, along with an action plan.

If you don't have legitimate concerns, but you do have suggestions for how they can improve in an area of weakness or increase a strength, then call them "next steps in your development" and let go of the need to manufacture a "concern."

This is not permission to minimize poor performance. This is a way of differentiating between poor performance and the inevitable mistakes that even the best performers will make.

5. If you have no performance concerns, say so in writing, and move on to suggest some next steps in development. Again, be specific. Take into account the employee's individual learning plan, if that's part of your development process.

6.9 D -- Deliver the review

1. Enter the review on the human level.

2. Briefly explain the process for the review meeting:
   - You will deliver your review.
   - The team member can ask questions at any point.
   - You'll make note of any questions, clarifications or disagreements.
   - Once you've agreed on changes, the team member will sign the review.
   - You'll deliver a signed copy to the team member as well as putting one in their personnel file.

3. State your headline immediately:

   - "You're doing a great job. I want to review some of the highlights and then talk about next steps for you.
   - "You're doing a great/good job in general. I want to review the highlights of your accomplishments and then talk about some areas that I'd like you to focus on."
   - "You're doing a good job in many areas, and there are also areas that I think you can improve. I want to review your strengths and accomplishments first, and then talk through the areas for improvement."
   - "I'm disappointed in your performance right now. You've had some accomplishments that I want to recognize, but I also have a number of areas of concern to discuss."

4. Talk through the review. Be alert for interpersonal gap cues (body language, etc.), and use all your communication skills. Reviews end up being something between a pronouncement and a conversation, but try to keep it as conversational as you can.

   However – the bottom line is that this is your review of the employee's work. If you and the employee cannot come to agreement on it, take whatever steps your company requires to document the disagreement.

   If you use your listening skills and believe your employee is making good points, be willing to incorporate them into your review. But do not be pushed into changing your considered opinion (based on clear evaluation criteria, feedback, and the roles and responsibilities agreement) if you believe that you are correct.

5. Follow up with the final copy of the review as soon as possible.

6. A week or two after all the reviews are completed, ask the team to give you feedback on the review process.

6.9 E -- Let the team review you

During this process, you should also offer your team an opportunity to review you. Let them know in advance that you will do this.

Ask for their feedback on specific questions about your performance as a manager. The questions are up to you, but should include:

- Am I living up to team agreements and manager ground rules? If not, which ones do you think I am not doing well at?
- What am I doing well as your manager?
- What do I need to improve as your manager?

Tell them the feedback is due after their performance review is completed. That way, everyone knows that positive feedback does not affect their review, and they will not be "punished" for negative feedback in their review process.

Summarize the feedback, decide on your response, and deliver all the information at a team meeting. Then publish your notes to the team.

Sound scary? It can be. But one of the best ways you can build credibility and trust with your team is to solicit their feedback in this way, and then make changes in your own behavior if you need to.

6.9 F -- Talking about money

Talking about money is also difficult. It's an area where people's needs for economic security and their ideas of self-worth (literally, how they are valued by the company) collide with company budgets and business realities.

To make these conversations more effective:

- Understand how your company regards compensation. Understand what your discretion and authority is in developing these budgets.

- People doing comparable jobs should be paid comparably, with adjustment for extraordinary or disappointing performance. If you are allowed to, you can take into account the "added value" that people bring to the team in terms of cross-training or special skills – as long as you are willing to do this consistently.

- Do not make a salary decision that you aren't willing to justify to the entire team.

  We don't openly compare salaries in this culture – but if the idea of publishing everyone's salary to the team makes you cringe, take a closer look and figure out why. If you aren't being fair, then suck it up and rework the numbers.

- If your company has formulas, guidelines or caps for raises or bonuses, let your team know as far ahead as possible before raises are announced ("The company has put a 5% cap on raises this year.")

  Be transparent about this to the best of your ability – even the calmest people can get twisted up about money, and having information early gives people time to adjust to the business realities.

- Have the conversations in person (face-to-face or telephone), not by email.

- Be prepared to tell the person how they can make more money in the future, especially if they are disappointed in their current raise or bonus. If they cannot make more money (because they have reached the salary range limit for this job, for example), be clear and honest about it.

- Again, remember – this isn't about you.

  Performance and salary discussions are where managers are often tempted to be unclear (because they haven't done the preparation, or don't have clear evaluation criteria, or are unwilling to be honest).

  It's uncomfortable to deal with someone's hurt or disappointment. Most of us want to be the good guy and the hero. But the best thing you can be is clear and transparent.

6.10 Summary remarks, final questions and comments

There's a lot for you to take away and think about today. These are some of the most important and difficult conversations you will have as a manager.

- Above all else, you must be clear and prepared in all these interactions.
- Doing these things the right way takes more time – except it doesn't, because if you do them poorly, you will pay in terms of mess, lost business, bad feelings and the loss of your team's confidence and trust.
- Adding the wrong people to your team can prevent your team from meeting its accountabilities, and can set team culture back or even knock it off the rails.
- Use the behavior-based interview process to help identify whether people are a good or bad fit based on their previous behavior, not on their ability to talk about a hypothetical situation.
- When you find the right person, make sure you make it as easy as possible for them to start successfully. Have an onboarding and training plan that ensures they have the equipment, supplies, information and resources they need to meet a clear set of 90-day goals.
- It's tempting to let people who are doing a good job roll along while you concentrate on people whose skills need improving. Don't lose sight of the importance of employee development for everyone, including your stars.
- Cross-training is a great strategy for development and for ensuring the team isn't caught short by unexpected workload or absence.
- Reward and recognize success, hard work and special occasions.
- When you have to deal with performance concerns, make sure to prepare, document, and follow a clear process that includes setting 30-day improvement goals.

- When you must <u>fire</u> someone, make sure to prepare, document, and follow a clear process.

- When you are giving <u>performance reviews</u>, make sure to prepare, document, and follow a clear process, including a comprehensive w<u>ritten review</u>.

- Allow your team to <u>review your performance</u>.

- In any situation we've talked about today, you must be clear, transparent and authentic in your communication. You're dealing with human hopes and fears.

- When the conversations are difficult, it's important that you acknowledge the human feelings in the room without allowing them to derail the conversation. The conversation is not about feelings, it's about behavior and consequences (improvement or termination).

- Remember – especially when you are having the hard conversations and making the hard decisions – that this is about your role as the manager and your responsibility to support your team. It's not about whether you are a good person. It's about whether you are a <u>good manager</u>.

- Remember to listen.

Questions or comments about what we've covered today?

6.11 Wrap up

A. Preview Session 7
B. Review homework assignments for Session 7

<u>6.11 A -- Preview Session 7</u>

In Session 7, we will focus on managing conflict and managing change.

Conflict and change are two fundamental characteristics of business. They're often necessary, and they're never going away. So it's your job to learn how to navigate them and use them effectively.

We'll look at how to have effective business conflict; how to address interpersonal conflict; and how to help your team deal with change.

6.11 B -- Homework for Session 7

Refer participants to homework sheet in their notebook. See Tools and Materials section for homework sheet and all worksheets.

1. Shadow the company manager you interviewed after Session 5.

   If it's appropriate to the activity, and you have the permission of everyone involved, consider using a voice recorder to capture the experience so that you can pay complete attention without having to take notes. Otherwise, take notes.

   After the experience, either have an information conversation with the manager, or send them an email. Thanks them for their help, and asking if there are any points in particular that they suggest you take away from the experience.

   Please write about the most important learning points that you've taken from the experience, as well as any thoughts about managing, team building, team culture, communication, management style, etc.

   Please post this to the group before the next session.

2. Write a performance review of the worst manager you've ever had. You do not have to use a specific format, and you do not have to include a job description or any numeric evaluations. Just write it as if it were a draft of the comments you were going to include in a review document.

   Speak plainly.

This is not a rant or a revenge letter (and it's not intended to be shown to the manager or otherwise published). It's a chance for you to practice being clear, specific and objective about someone's performance. It's also a chance to take a clear look at the behavior that characterized the poor performance.

In the review, identify their <u>three</u> most important challenges as managers, and recommend improvement steps and goals. Limit yourself to three challenges – you're also practicing being concise.

Also, identify at least one strength they already demonstrate, with suggested steps to help them develop that skill.

Please post this to the group before the next session.

3. Divide participants into groups of have 3 - 5 members.

   Give each <u>participant</u> a photocopy of pp. ix-15 of **Managing Transitions**. Make sure that you block out the bottom half of p. 15 when photocopying, so that the first few Test Case Answers are not visible.

   Give each <u>group</u> a sealed envelope with a photocopy of pp. 15-20 (Test Case Answers) inside.

Read these pages of **Managing Transitions**. Then meet as a group to develop answers to the Test Case included with the pages. You may think individually ahead of time about your answers, but your assignment is to come up with a group response.

Once you have finalized and recorded your responses, then open the sealed envelope. Review and discuss the author's answers.

Please make sure a member of the group records the group answers, and also records any key discussion points.

4. Remember that your Draft Project Statement (described in Homework at the end of Session 5) should be posted to the program group email list in time to allow for response before the next session.

   If you've already posted your draft statement and have received feedback, it's fine to begin revising your statement.

   Everyone will be expected to have a final project plan by Session 8.

5. Readings:

   - **Becoming a Manager**, pp.149-173 and pp.271-282.
   - **Difficult Conversations**, pp.111-146 . Also, please refresh your memory on the previous readings and any notes you took.
   - **"**How Management Teams Can Have a Good Fight**,"** Eisenhardt et al, *Harvard Business Review* (in program notebook)
   - "Want Collaboration?" Weiss and Hughes, *Harvard Business Review* (in program notebook)