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Annual Reviews Lower Employee Engagement



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Stuart R. Levine, Contributor

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Employees don't want annual reviews. They want more coaching



Managers rarely have the training and tools they need to become effective coaches.

Prepare your employees to be coached and your managers to become effective coaches. Employees don't want annual reviews. They want more coaching  , feedback and talent development focused on their strengths. A culture of engagement starts at the top. When senior leadership commits to move from backward looking performance evaluation to forward-looking performance development, they commit to increasing engagement and the results are significant. Integrating this approach into your organization will be one of most important investments you can make.



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But why is this easier said than done? Managers rarely have the training and tools they need to become effective coaches. 🐦 Employees are too often passive recipients of feedback that is then disregarded. An effective coaching conversation with an employee requires thoughtfulness, planning, a certain level of knowledge and enough time to do it well. But managers never seem to have enough time and don't consider this to be part of their job responsibility. Even with the right coaching skills, managers may not regularly undertake this effort unless they are being held accountable for it. Too many CEOs are not holding their management accountable for increasing engagement or providing them with the training to do so. Gallup's dismal statistic shows that only 33% of employees at U.S. companies feel engaged at work. This fact indicates a lack of senior leadership focus on and commitment to this important performance improvement tool.

With the commitment, focus, and support of leadership, managers can learn to coach and be coached. The annual performance review should give way to more

Once your team is equipped with the needed skill set, managers are in a position to plan and execute coaching conversations. First of all, the manager and employee must both be clear and agree on the employee's roles and responsibilities; the job description must reflect the employee's actual work. There is a great opportunity for improvement in this area, when Gallup reports that only 41% of employees strongly agree that their job description aligns well with the work they are asked to do. The alignment of job responsibilities with accountability will directly serve to enhance engagement. An employee is 2.5 times more likely to be engaged when they strongly agree that management expectations for their work aligns with their actual work responsibilities.

Managers need to learn how to develop their employee's skills and coach them on behaviors that will support their success. By focusing on what needs to be done differently in the future rather than on past mistakes, manager can impact employees in a positive and thoughtful way. Preparation is required that includes simple, direct, candid, and actionable dialogue aimed at developing employees strengths and driving performance.

Here are just a few helpful ideas to begin thinking about:

- Managers should identify two or three things that the employee does well, should keep doing and build upon.
- Be clear about things that the employee needs improve, do differently or stop doing.
- Plain examples should be provided for each of the behaviors --both the strengths and the weaknesses, in order to help employees see themselves through these honest descriptions.
- Discuss and identify the elements that the employee will address moving forward. Jointly check in on a consistent basis, reconfirming and clarifying priorities and expectations.

When obstacles exist, identify solutions together. When learning is needed, develop a plan to bring it about. When things appear to be off track, feedback should immediate, forward looking and performance oriented.

In this two-way conversation, employees have a voice. This collaborative approach aligns expectations and priorities of both the employee and the organization. Gallup reports that when there is this level of alignment, when "my goals" become "our

goals”, there is a 3.6 times greater level of engagement than when the goals are not so aligned.

These ongoing, encouraging, purposeful and rewarding conversations celebrate achievements, reduce defensiveness, eliminate surprises and build trust. As organizations shift their approach to employee development, they see real improvements in performance as the Gallup’s data proves.