

8 PITFALLS TO AVOID – FOR SUPERVISORS

1. AVOIDING THE PROCESS

Many supervisors, managers, and leaders avoid performance and development conversations. However, regularly checking-in with your team members to see how their work is progressing, giving them on-going feedback and recognition, discussing their development and career aspirations, are among the most important tasks a leader performs; avoidance means that you are avoiding your leadership responsibilities.

2. TREATING IT AS A STAND-ALONE PROCESS

Speaking with individuals about their work, how they are doing, and how they are developing is more natural when it is part of your everyday interaction, part of the work you are doing together. Nonetheless, individuals do like to set aside time to speak with their supervisor on a more formal and scheduled basis; the Performance and Development program encourages you to set up a series of scheduled check-ins throughout the year.

3. MAKING IT ALL ABOUT THE FORM

The forms are simply a record and summary of a series of conversations. The forms are intended to provide the maximum amount of flexibility, while providing some consistency across the University; please adapt them to suit your needs.

4. SUGAR COATING YOUR FEEDBACK

Feedback should be balanced. Employees want you to recognize their strengths and efforts. They also want to hear how they can be better; be sincere.

5. BEING UNNECESSARILY CRITICAL

Performance and development conversations can help motivate employees to grow. Your feedback should not be overly critical; comment on positive contributions as well as areas where there are developmental opportunities. Base your feedback on real examples which you have observed, not critical judgments.

6. TALKING ABOUT SELF

Lack of experience, silence or nervousness may lead a supervisor to talk about her/himself excessively during the conversation. Focus on the individual's work, strengths, motivations and development opportunities by asking questions and allowing for some silences. People need time to think during these important conversations; don't overtake by talking about yourself or filling silences.

7. NOT ASKING QUESTIONS

Questions show an interest in the person – not asking questions and simply providing advice or direction can make an individual believe that there is no real conversation.

8. NOT SEEKING HELP

Many supervisors fail to seek the help they need. Coaching, giving effective feedback, offering the right support are all skills which can be learned and definitely get much better with practice.