

HOW TO HAVE BETTER CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES



Understanding, acknowledging, following up and showing transparency can help create better conversations.

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Daily conversations can be a powerful tool when it comes to finding out how the people in your team feel. As their manager, you have the power to influence the way they think, and catch challenges that they face early on in order to help them through the difficulties they face. If you do that, you are able to improve the overall performance of your team, and therefore contribute to the greater good of the organisation. To help you in this, we put together this short resource to help you achieve better, deeper, more meaningful and fruitful conversations.

Keep in mind:



Assume your team members have interesting stories and perspectives to share



Sometimes you listen to give a solution, but sometimes you listen to just empathise or coach



Don't push your own perspective



Prompt deeper to understand better



Talk about things that are interesting to them



Share something personal yourself



Listen with the intention to understand and make things work



Ask for their opinion

Areas you can touch on

Remember that what keeps people engaged at work may be affected by a variety of dimensions. In your daily conversations, try to understand how your people think in these different areas. Vary your questions, themes, topics of conversation to cover all these over the course of the month:



Happiness



Recognition



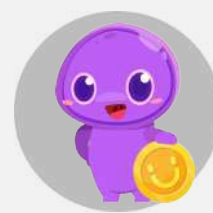
Feedback



**Relationship with
Manager**



Introspection



Satisfaction



**Company
Alignment**



**Relationship with
Colleagues**



Wellness



**Personal
Growth**



Ambassadorship

Get great conversations going

A big part of having great conversations relies on how you initiate them and then how you sustain and deepen the dialogue. When initiating conversations, try to ask questions that will nudge your team members to think deeply, and provide a response that is meaningful and valuable to both of you. Here are some ideas, and remember to cover in similar ways all the different dimensions in the previous page.

As a company, are we good at learning from our mistakes?

Do you find the career opportunities here attractive?

What did you do recently that you are proud of?

Do you feel you understand the direction of the organisation?

Is our team working effectively together?

What would you like to see improved in our team / company?

Are there any projects you'd like to be involved in outside our team?

What's going well for you / us?

What's stopping you from reaching your goals?

What help do you need from me to reach a goal?

What can I do differently to support you better?

Acknowledgement and digging deeper

So you are initiating the conversations! Great! Some times, offering acknowledgement to indicate that 'you hear them' and you understand their concerns, suggestions and ideas is enough. Sometimes, you may need to provide an explanation on some action that you are planning to take based on the feedback you have received, and update on the progress later on. These are important as they indicate that their ideas and opinions are not falling on deaf ears. It is important to be transparent and explain what you are doing about it to your team so they understand what is happening.

Some times you may listen to what your team has to say, but have reasons that cannot allow you to implement – be it that it is not the right time, or simply you really don't see how it can work. In this case, either straight away or after letting them know you need some time to explore, find out more, speak to some other people, etc, you may explain the reasons why this cannot be done, and then get a commitment to stick to the current way.

Example statement / response by team member.

"I think we need to relook at the way we approach X part of the process as it is tedious, time consuming and does not add value."

Example responses from manager to reject idea:

- I thought about your suggestion and explored a few different alternative scenarios. In the end I found that for X and Y reasons, this is a critical step in the process and therefore we need to keep it. Is there a way we can improve on it? / Which aspect in particular causes issues for you?
- I spoke to XY department and found out that by taking this out the implications are YZ. We cannot afford to risk that at this point in time. Perhaps we can revisit in 6 months (remember to bring it up then).

Some times, you may need to dig a little deeper though, in order to continue the conversation, depending on what your team members are sharing with you. This takes a bit of prompting! Here are some examples of how you can enhance your understanding, make them feel valued, and continue the conversation to make it impactful for all:

Example statement / response by team member.

"I don't find the motivation to complete the tasks that I am working on".

Example responses from manager.

- Is there a particular part you are struggling with?
- Is this because of work-related reasons, or personal?
- Is there anything I can help you with?
- Changes can be hard – I know we've had to deal with a lot of structural and people issues lately. Remember the bigger picture OR, is there a particular issue that you are really battling with? How can I help?

Example statement / response by team member.

"I find it hard to make sense of this specific task that I am working on and ensuring it all goes well".

Example responses from manager.

- Is there a particular part you are struggling with?
- Do remember to look at the XX location for examples of how we did this before / Let me share with you an example of how we did it before.
- Why not try to connect with X person? They did a similar project in the past and you may benefit from learning what worked and what didn't in that case.
- Let me know if you would like me to go through certain parts with you.

Final thoughts...

There you have it! As a manager, you are in a unique position to make an impact to your organisation by ensuring the productivity and high quality of your team, and to your team members, by making them feel valued, heard, and cared for. And having great, insightful conversations with your team members is a great way to contribute to both of those. Remember to listen with the intention to understand, acknowledge, follow up and show transparency along this process. It may seem like a lot of effort, but the results are really worth it. We hope this guide starts you on this journey.

Give us a shout if you think we can help in any way!





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