

Advice and
tools you need
to deliver results!

Results Rule!®

with Randy Pennington

Positive Performance®
Leadership Pack

randy@penningtongroup.com
www.penningtongroup.com





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trust Factors @ Work

TRUST– it's difficult to earn, easy to lose, and critically important for your organization's success.

- Employee mistrust will be a leading cause of turnover as the job market revives.
- Employees who do not trust their managers and organizations focus on protecting themselves at the expense of the commitment, productivity, and cooperation organizations need to compete.
- Mistrust makes it more difficult to create a compelling culture that provides a sustainable competitive advantage.
- Managers and organizations can significantly reduce mistrust by providing open, honest, and frequent communication.
- Follow-through on commitments and promises may be the single most important behavior in preventing employee mistrust.

These are just a few of the conclusions from the Trust Factors @ Work study conducted by Pennington Performance Group in partnership with IRI Consultants to Management and Pilat NAI.

The negative effects of mistrust in the workplace are widely accepted. But, investigation into the exact behaviors and performance that reduces trust between an organization and its employees has been minimal until now. The Trust Factors @ Work study was initiated to identify the causes of employee mistrust and its effect on both people and organizations.

HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

Trust, for the purpose of this study, was defined as the belief that management is willing and able to act in a way that fulfills our expectations of them (both stated and implied) in terms of:

- the treatment of others
- balancing the interests of individuals, groups, the business, and society
- leading the organization toward shared goals
- honoring commitments (both stated and implied)

Approximately 5,000 individuals representing a cross-section of job classifications and demographics from around the world were asked to complete four open-ended questions utilizing IRI's proprietary ASK-THEM™ feedback process. One hundred thirty-four individuals (2.68% of invitations) responded and provided over 1,100 thematic responses. The response rate represents a valid sample from which to draw conclusions. Responses were evaluated against the ASK-THEM database of over 800,000 employee responses and catalogued to create a new trust taxonomy.

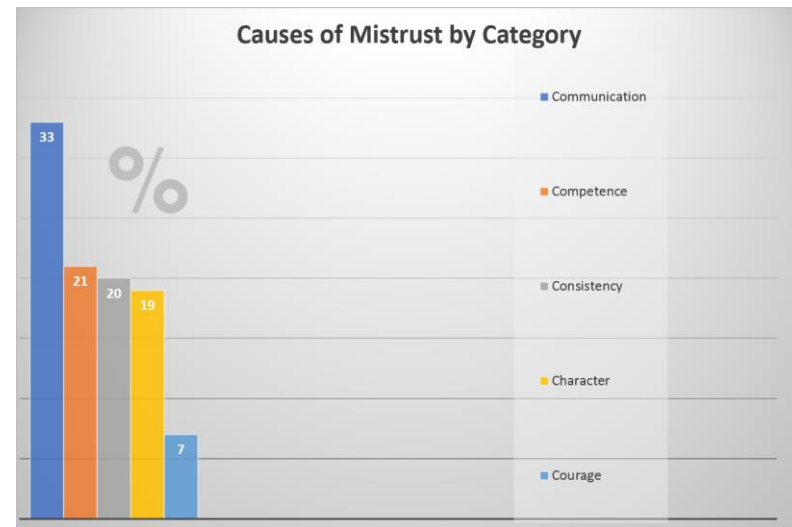
STUDY LIMITATIONS

The Trust Factors @ Work study does not assess the following:

- The state of mistrust in today's workplace. Respondents were invited to share opinions about what managers and organizations do to cause mistrust. No information about employment status was gathered. In addition, respondents were not asked to identify their current level of mistrust. Other studies have addressed this issue, however. Aon Consulting reported that only 49% of employees surveyed indicated agreement with the statement, "I trust the leaders of my organization."¹ Other studies support this conclusion that employee trust continues to be a challenge worthy of every organization's attention. Watson Wyatt's 2002 WorkUSA™ survey indicated that less than 39% of employees trust the senior leaders at their companies.
- The specific financial and productivity impact of mistrust in organizations or industries. Responses were obtained from a diverse group of organizations, industries, and job classifications. As a result, it is impossible to place an exact cost on mistrust in an individual workplace or industry. Considering that mistrust leads to lower productivity and increased turnover, it is reasonable to assume the cost is significant.

CATEGORIES & BEHAVIORS

Responses fell into five general categories: character, communication, competence, consistency, and courage (See Attachment A). Specific behaviors were identified within each category. Non-specific or non-recurring comments were classified as *General* in each category. Seventeen specific behaviors emerged as important contributors to mistrust (See Chart below and Attachment B).



MAJOR THEMES

Communication is everything.

Communication issues represented the largest overall category of responses (32.69%). Employees want managers and organizations to keep them informed; listen to their ideas and expertise; be open; and not avoid the tough questions. The volume of responses in this category indicates that trust will diminish in the absence of communication meeting these criteria.

Do what you say you will do.

Consistency issues were identified in 20% of responses related to causes of mistrust. The inability and unwillingness to follow-through on commitments was the number one behavior that causes mistrust (approximately 13% of all responses). Respondents cited examples ranging from violating promises to not following established guidelines to actions that violate stated values.



Be good at your job and understand how I contribute.

Competence appeared as a cause of mistrust in 20% of responses. Being knowledgeable of job responsibilities for oneself and others ranked fifth among the top fifteen specific causes of mistrust. Making good decisions ranked fourth. The highly competitive business environment has made competent leadership a high priority. Employees realize that the success, and in many cases survival, of their enterprise depends on leadership competence.

Likewise, respondents indicated a strong desire to have their contribution understood and valued. A cause and effect argument can be made that employees who do not feel their contribution is appreciated are less likely to add value to the enterprise. This study did not assess respondent's actual job performance. However, a perception that *my manager listens to me* has been identified as an important factor in employee satisfaction. It is reasonable to assume that managers and organizations have considerable room for improvement in this area.

Character counts.

Character related issues appear in 18.88% of responses about the causes of mistrust. This number could be viewed as low considering the corporate scandals dominating the headlines since 2001. However, Watson Wyatt Worldwide reports that 72% of employees surveyed believe their immediate bosses behave with honesty and integrity. That number drops to 56% when considering top management.² An assumption is made that responses to this study are reflective of immediate experience rather than an acceptance of questionable character.

Respondents were clear that they expect a high degree of moral and ethical behavior, however. Honesty and self-serving behaviors were in a virtual tie as the most evident character issues representing a combined 64% of responses in this category. Dishonesty and the evidence of self-serving behaviors ranked sixth and seventh respectively on the list of top causes of mistrust.

Stand up for yourself and others.

“Don’t be a wimp” was the message from just over 7% of responses. Respondents want to know their managers and organizations will stand behind them and up for themselves. Providing support for employees, especially standing up for them in the face of criticism, ranked in the top ten causes of mistrust. To a lesser degree, respondents cited leaders who refuse to stand for their own beliefs and do not accept responsibility for their own actions as behaviors that diminish trust.

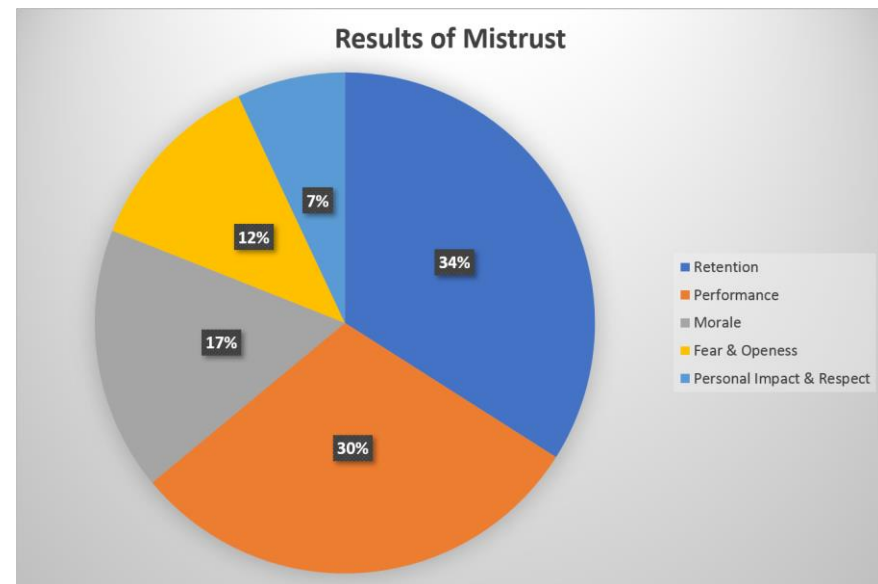
THE RESULTS OF MISTRUST

Analysis of responses indicates that a lack of trust has a direct correlation to employee retention, performance, and morale. (See Chart below and Attachments C and D).

Over 33% of responses about the results of mistrust cited reduced loyalty and the ability to find and retain qualified workers. One quarter of responses described reduced loyalty as a specific outcome of mistrust.

One sub-set of retention-related responses identified a challenge that could emerge in the future. Approximately 6% of responses alluded to individuals feeling “handcuffed” in their job and unable to leave. Age and proximity to retirement were the primary reasons for this feeling. An aging workforce creates the potential for a significant number of individuals who tolerate an undesirable situation rather than leave. A logical conclusion is these employees could choose to do the minimum to get by, thus affecting the organization’s performance and the morale of younger workers.

Approximately 31% of responses indicated that mistrust contributed to a lack of effort, motivation, commitment, and productivity. Thirteen percent indicated that they are fearful of retribution and blame and are less open in communication as a result of mistrusting their manager and/or organization.



CONCLUSIONS

- Restoring and maintaining trust must be a high priority for organizations facing increasing demands and competition. Performance, productivity, and profitability are potential casualties of mistrust.
- Organizations that want to retain high-performing staff must pay special attention to the issue of trust. Good employees will have multiple employment options when the labor market expands, and surveys indicate an alarming percentage of employees are already planning their exit. Employees will be cautious, however. The lure of an attractive compensation package may not be the motivator it was in the past.
- Organizations should not generalize about the causes of mistrust that exist across the enterprise or within a single work group. One factor or behavior cannot define trust. Honesty and ethical behavior are universally associated with trust. This is especially true when scandals make the news on a daily basis. Open, honest communication and honoring commitments ranked at the top of the causes of mistrust in this study, however. Seventeen specific behaviors were identified as significant based on multiple responses, and others were classified as “general” in nature. Trust in the competence of direct managers and organizational leaders accounted for almost 21% of responses. To assume a single cause or adopt a “one-size fits all” response could exacerbate the problem.
- Building and maintaining trust must be a coordinated and concerted effort at the front-line manager and senior executive levels. Strong relationships with one’s immediate supervisor are a critical component in employee retention. In addition, responses to this survey indicate that employees will consider the organization’s overall performance – especially related to competence, character, and communication – when determining trust levels. Organizations must design a strategy for building and maintaining trust that is fact-based and individualized to the needs of the group.
- There is good news. Any study of mistrust runs the risk of becoming a gripe session. It must be noted that individuals freely shared positive examples of trust-building behavior as well. While these represented a minority of the total responses, it is heartening to know that there are individual leaders and organizations that value the effects of work relationships built on trust.

ATTACHMENT A: FIVE CATEGORIES OF MISTRUST

Responses fell into the following broad categories:

	Example behaviors	Percentage of responses
Communication: Behaviors that reflect the individual's and/or organization's commitment to share and receive information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount or availability of information • Listening and valuing others' opinion • Openness • Style 	32.69%
Competence: Behaviors that reflect the individual's and/or organization's ability to perform responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and knowledge of the job • Decision-making • Lack of direction or vision • Micromanaging 	20.80%
Consistency: Behaviors that reflect the individual's and/or organization's ability or willingness to maintain agreement between word and deed; and the ability or willingness to respond in like manner to similar situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following through on promises and commitments • Fairness and playing favorites • Providing consistent direction 	20.28%
Character: Behaviors that reflect the individual's and/or organization's moral strength.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps confidences • Takes credit • Honesty • Acts in a self-serving manner 	18.88%
Courage: Behaviors that reflect the individual's and/or organization's willingness to stand up for principles, take unpopular positions, or provide support in the face of resistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and being an advocate for staff • Standing up for one's beliefs and principles • Being assertive in the face of conflict 	7.34%

ATTACHMENT B: SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS THAT CAUSE MISTRUST

(ranked from most responses to least*)

Cause	Example behaviors	Percentage of responses
1. Lack of follow-through	Makes promises that are not kept; Say one thing and do another; Changing plans for no apparent reason	12.74%
2. Openness of communication	Withholds information: Pretend to share information; "Dances around" questions; Becomes defensive when questioned	11.34%
3. Amount and availability of communication	Failure to provide clear direction or instructions; Does not share information in a timely manner; Lack of face time with staff	11.17%
4. Incompetent/Poor decisions	Failure to develop good plans; Takes unnecessary action; Reluctant to make decisions	7.68%
5. Incompetent job performance	Unprepared for meetings; Does not keep projects on track; Lack of attention to operational details; Repeats mistakes	6.28%
6. Dishonest	Failure to be honest and straightforward; Is not truthful	6.11%
7. Self-serving	Looks out for self to the exclusion of the team; Chooses expediency for his/her own gains	5.94%
8. Unfair decisions	Lacks objectivity; Plays favorites; Promotes individuals without merit	5.58%
9. Failure to provide support and advocacy for others	Does not support employee decisions; "Shoots messengers"	4.71%
10. Communicates in a demeaning style	Talks down to individuals; Criticizes people in public; Abusive or disrespectful	3.84%
11. Does not listen	Doesn't listen or respond to needs; Does not seek out expertise or involve employees; Does not value the opinion of others	3.66%

Cause	Example behaviors	Percentage of responses
12. Lack of direction	Failure to provide a direction for the enterprise; Lack of certainty in the appropriate path to success; Direction changes on a regular basis	3.32%
13. Micromanages	Does not empower employees who are capable of performing; Does not allow employees to perform their jobs	2.62%
14. Takes credit	Takes credit for the work of others; Does not share credit for the contributions of others	2.10%
15. Lack of assertiveness	Does not stand up for personal beliefs; Does not voice opinions	1.92%
16. Does not keep confidences	Repeats things told in confidence; Acts on confidential information without informing others involved; Talks behind other's back	1.40%
17. Accuracy of communication	Information is provided in a timely manner but it is incorrect; Consistent errors in communication	1.40%

*General comments related to a specific category and single comments that could not be classified into a behavior category are excluded. These accounted for 7.33% of responses.

ATTACHMENT C: THE RESULTS OF MISTRUST

Responses fell into the following broad categories:

	Example Behaviors	Percentage of responses
Retention: The ability to attract and retain employees including those who feel trapped.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyalty of current staff who either are or will be looking for a job • Ability to attract desired staff • Employees who feel handcuffed because of age, tenure, etc. 	33.86%
Performance: The impact on cooperation, productivity, commitment, and profitability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowered commitment and productivity • Lack of cooperation • Reduced effort and doing the minimum to get by • Adopting a crisis-driven work style 	30.22%
Morale: General motivation, satisfaction, and demeanor of the individual or work group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of personal motivation • Reduced commitment levels • Lack of teamwork • Reduced satisfaction and enthusiasm for the job 	16.59%
Fear & Openness: Withholding information and operating out of a sense of self-interest to the detriment of the organization or task.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning of every interaction • Devotes energy to protecting oneself from retribution or blame • Dishonest in selected communications • Avoids interaction 	12.53%
Personal Impact & Respect: The effect of mistrust on the individual both on and off the job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of respect for leaders • Personal stress • Loss of personal balance • Feeling that the organization is not people-oriented • Reduced desire or opportunity for advancement 	6.58%

ATTACHMENT D: SAMPLE COMMENTS ON RESULTS OF MISTRUST

(ranked from most responses to least)

	Example Behaviors
<p>Retention: The ability to attract and retain employees including those who feel trapped.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If the job market were better, 80% of my co-workers would already be working someplace else – we have lost faith.” • “And as they say, a dissatisfied customer tells 10 people where a satisfied customer tells 3-4. The same works with employees and recruiting the elite talent pool of employees can be difficult.” • “I am also a part of upper management, and I do think that for younger employees it does play a significant role in them staying around.”
<p>Performance: The impact on cooperation, productivity, commitment, and profitability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There is constant crisis management.” • “My day-to-day performance now includes a ‘water cooler’ discussion with my team of what is going on in the company and who can be trusted and who is worthy of their position.” • “I find it harder to be energized about doing a good job.” • “I go in my office and close my door and try not to talk to anyone.”
<p>Morale: General motivation, satisfaction, and demeanor of the individual or work group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Because of the nasty behavior and ill will generated by some of the senior managers within my organization, I sometimes feel very demotivated.” • “Causes me to have a compliance mentality.” • “It sucks my morale dry.”
<p>Fear & Openness: Withholding information and operating out of a sense of self-interest to the detriment of the organization or task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You walk on eggshells most of the time, and God forbid you had a creative idea, because you would be shot down.” • “Makes me feel that I should always have my guard up and look out for myself and basically I’ve come up with my own agenda as to why I want to stay.” • “As a result, more time is spent in trying to plan contingencies as a result of reduced trust in the individual.”
<p>Personal Impact & Respect: The effect of mistrust on the individual both on and off the job.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Although I am nearing retirement age, and I have a great salary and benefits, I wonder what the cost is to my health working under these unhealthy conditions.” • “I’ve been unemployed almost nine months; however, ethics and principles matter more than money.” • “My overall view of ‘corporate America’ is pretty jaded.”

RESOURCES

¹“United States @Work, Eighth Edition.” Aon Consulting, 2004.

²“WorkUSA® 2004: An Ongoing Study of Employee Attitudes and Opinions.” Watson Wyatt Worldwide.



Leadership Effectiveness Self-Assessment

Leaders that bring out the best in their people share specific behaviors and characteristics that increase their effectiveness. Our experience and research for the past 25-plus years have identified the following 25 as being crucial for your success. Please evaluate yourself based on your honest assessment of how your employees would respond.

	Seldom	Sometimes	Almost Always
1. I set and communicate clear expectations.	1	2	3
2. I provide opportunities for continuous growth and training.	1	2	3
3. I expect people to succeed and actively help them do so.	1	2	3
4. I take time to develop strong relationships built on trust.	1	2	3
5. I break down barriers that prevent individuals and teams from succeeding.	1	2	3
6. I recognize people for doing a good job and making a consistent effort.	1	1	3
7. I solicit ideas from individuals and teams.	1	1	3
8. I provide freedom to do the job once it is assigned.	1	2	3
9. I give others credit for their success.	1	2	3
10. I listen and try to understand employee issues and concerns.	1	2	3
11. I provide employees visibility with my superiors.	1	2	3
12. I view employees as partners.	1	2	3
13. I provide specific, timely, and regular feedback.	1	2	3
14. I can be trusted with confidential information.	1	2	3
15. I encourage employees to improve and learn.	1	2	3

16. I use honest mistakes as a learning tool.	1	2	3
17. I provide information about the organization's goals and plans and the impact on employees.	1	2	3
18. I hold people accountable for results.	1	2	3
19. I act as a buffer to protect my team.	1	2	3
20. I communicate change in advance and provide the reasons for decisions.	1	2	3
21. I am an advocate for the resources that employees need to succeed.	1	2	3
22. I provide latitude based on ability.	1	2	3
23. I help individuals achieve their professional goals.	1	2	3
24. I create an environment where individuals and teams can excel.	1	2	3
25. I am a positive role model.	1	2	3

TOTALS:	_____	_____	_____
OVERALL SCORE:	_____	_____	_____

Analysis:

- An overall score of **64-75** indicates that you are an excellent developer of talent. Your team is very likely to see you as an effective leader.
- An overall score of **53-63** indicates that you are a good coach and developer of talent, but need to be more consistent in several ways.
- An overall score below **53** indicates that you need to improve as a leader and coach. You should develop a specific game plan to improve your effectiveness.



Areas where I need to improve:



Opportunities to leverage my strengths:



Remember: If you are stuck, you can reach out to schedule a one-hour coaching call with Randy or discuss having him work with your team either in person or virtually.

**Contact:
Info@penningtonroup.com
800-779-5295 (U.S.)**

Team Creation Self-Assessment



Introduction:

Our 25-plus years of research and experience have identified five key functions leaders master to develop an effective, high-performing team. This self-assessment is designed to give you a snapshot of areas where you excel and those where you and your team can improve.

Please rate your team's performance on each of the following areas using the following scale.

- This does not exist on my team
- This exists to a minimal degree; not everyone demonstrates this
- This exists most of the time but we can do much better in this area
- This exists most of the time and we have only occasional lapses
- This exists all of the time on my team

Responsibility	Requirement	Rating
Establish the foundation	There is a shared purpose among all team members	
	There is a clearly understood set of values that guide how the team operates	
	The roles and responsibilities for everyone on the team are clear and well established	
Create the environment	The team openly communicates and shares information – information is not hoarded	
	Everyone on the team has the competence they need to be effective in the job and is committed to the team's success	
	Team members trust each other	

Responsibility	Requirement	Rating
Manage team performance and progress	There are clear processes for how the team operates	
	The team manages and keeps its agreements and commitments	
	When conflict occurs, it is constructive and focused on helping everyone succeed	
Promote accountability	The team has high standards on which everyone agrees	
	Team members own their individual and collective goal, situation, response and outcome	
	Team members are willing to provide feedback to each other	
Celebrate results and learn for the future	There is a shared acknowledgement of contribution among team members	
	Team members freely give recognition to each other	
	The team makes a conscious effort to evaluate and improve its performance	

Analyzing your results:

- It is rare for a team to be perfect in all areas. Even the best teams recognize the opportunity for improvement. When analyzing your results and developing the action plan for your team, consider these factors:
- If the foundation and environment are off everything else suffers or is at least more difficult. It is common for a team to score higher in areas such as Promoting Accountability even though they rate themselves as lower on establishing the foundation and creating the environment. This usually indicates that the team's success is due more to the individual commitment and expertise of the members than a systematic approach to success.
- Managing team performance and progress and promoting accountability are the areas that drive consistent execution. When scores are high (4 and 5) in these areas, the team is freed to focus on executing the work rather than on worrying about how the work will be completed.
- As a rule of thumb, you want an honest assessment in each area of at least a "4." Work on the foundation and environment first then focus on improving any area you rated as a "3" or less.



Remember: If you are stuck, you can reach out to schedule a one-hour coaching call with Randy or discuss having him work with your team either in person or virtually.



25 Ways to Provide Recognition

A personal, credible, and sincere **"Thank You"**.

A personal letter to the individual with a copy to their personnel file.

Take them to lunch or another meal – or better yet, let them go out on you.

Recognize the individual in front of the group if it is appropriate and doesn't embarrass them.

Give them the day or afternoon off.

Send them to a special conference or training session.

Provide a special parking spot close to the building.

Personally wash their car. If it is a team, personally cook them lunch and serve it.

Create a **"Shout Out"** wall in your office so you and others can post messages and comments when people do a great job.

Give them a gift certificate to their favorite retail store.



25 Ways to Provide Recognition

Provide movie tickets, museum tickets, concert tickets, sporting tickets or something else the person would value.

Send an email or memo to your boss or your boss's boss about their performance.

Nominate them for your company's award/recognition program.

Create an award that is only reserved for and given by your team – the “_____” Award for Outstanding Performance.

Provide an on-the-spot cash award, gift card, etc.

Write a personal letter to their spouse, partner, or significant other telling them why you appreciate the individual.

Fill their car up with gas.

Create a “**Wall of Fame**” and post pictures of employees who have provided exceptional performance.

Send flowers.



25 Ways to Provide Recognition

Provide the opportunity to work from home.

Provide a special assignment or opportunity to develop a new skill/competency.

Celebrate milestones with a party (birthday, anniversary on the job, project milestones, holidays, etc.)

Give them a piece of the action by sharing a portion of the savings or profits from their ideas.

Create a system for earning points so that employees can take responsibility for earning and choosing their own recognition –provide a catalog from which staff can choose their awards.

Provide a bonus because at the end of the day, a little extra cash never hurts!



Bonus Idea:

***Make work fun –
create an environment where people can
have fun – show a sense of humor.***

GUIDELINES FOR GIVING EFFECTIVE RECOGNITION -----

Define the situation

- Review of the situation to ensure that you understand what happened and why it is worthy of recognition.
- Review notes or any other documentation about conversations with the employee regarding this performance or developmental issue.
- Complete the Recognition Discussion Guide to get ready for the discussion.
- Ask the employee to join you in your office or other private area.

Conduct the conversation

- Describe the situation in specific terms, citing the expected and current performance, and how it has a positive impact on the team and our clients.
- Review any previous conversations or development plans about this situation with the employee. Reinforce improvement if this performance follows a coaching, counseling, or corrective action discussion.
- Ask for the employee's input. Listen for opportunities to reinforce the employee's satisfaction with his/her performance.
- Encourage the employee to continue this level of performance.
- If recognition follows a previous discussion to improve or correct a performance issue, gain the employee's agreement to continue to honor his/her commitment.
- If recognition is a single incident of exemplary performance, discuss how continued excellent performance will benefit both our clients and the individual.
- Describe how you will be documenting the employee's good performance (Letter, Note to Personnel File, something special, etc.)
- Close by expressing
 - ✓ *your appreciation for the excellent performance*
 - ✓ *your confidence that the employee can continue to succeed*
 - ✓ *the value the individual contributes to the success of the work group*



Close the loop

- Make a note about the conversation so you will remember that it occurred and can consider it on the employee's next performance review.
- Document the conversation and performance in a memo to the employee if it is appropriate to do so.
- Follow-up and observe to reinforce continued good performance.
- Reinforce continued excellent work or improvement.

RECOGNITION DISCUSSION GUIDE

General Information

Employee Name: _____

Employee #: _____

Department: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Define the situation

Brief description of the performance to be recognized:

Date(s) of previous positive discussions(s):

Expected performance:

Actual performance:

Organizational benefit from the positive performance:

Individual benefit if performance continues:

Other factors to consider or that made this performance worthy of recognition:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> length of service | <input type="checkbox"/> skill level or training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overall work record | <input type="checkbox"/> barriers to performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recent discussions about this or other issue | <input type="checkbox"/> significant changes to environment |

This conversation is intended to be

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Merit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Commendation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Written note to file | <input type="checkbox"/> Special recognition |

Explanation of Special Recognition _____

COACHING DISCUSSION STEPS

Define the situation

- Conduct a thorough review of the situation.
- Review notes or any other documentation about conversations with the employee regarding this performance or developmental issue.
- Complete the Performance Discussion Guide to get ready for the discussion.
- Ask the employee to join you in your office or other private area.

Conduct the conversation

- Greet the individual. Communicate the situation in a clear and concise manner by citing the expected and current performance, and how the behavior is directly affecting the organization and/or the citizens.
- Review any previous conversations or developmental plans about this situation with the employee. If this is a follow-up conversation, review actions that were to be taken prior to this meeting.
- Ask for the employee's input. Listen without judgment and respond to the employee's comments. Share your own interpretation. Watch for nonverbal clues revealing the performer's emotions. Remain objective and avoid getting defensive about responses.
- Establish agreement with the performer on the exact nature of the issue or developmental challenge being discussed and any problems that must be resolved. Ensure the employee takes ownership for his/her performance. Obtain the employee's commitment to resolve the situation or take on the developmental challenge.
- Generate possible solutions and action steps through brainstorming. Allow the individual to generate most of the ideas. Discuss each alternative.
- Ask questions to help the employee analyze potential solutions. Select the best solution. Accept a piece of the action plan as appropriate but keep the responsibility to change on the employee.
- Express consequences (positive and negative). Tell the employee the desired outcome of the conversation and the action plan. Establish rewards (if reinforcement is the goal) or review organizational and individual consequences as appropriate if dealing with a behavior that must be redirected.
- Define next steps. Create a plan for implementing the agreed-upon changes. Establish concrete dates for implementing the plan and follow-up discussions. Ensure that shared responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly understood by all parties, including you. Address any concerns raised by the performer.
- Close by expressing the following:
 - ✓ *your confidence that the employee can succeed at the action plan developed*
 - ✓ *your willingness and commitment to help him/her reach the agreed upon goals*
 - ✓ *the value the individual contributes to the success of the work group*
 - ✓ *the importance of his/her continued commitment*



Close the loop

- Make a note about the conversation if it is appropriate to do so.
- Follow-up and observe to ensure performance has improved or that development plans are being followed.
- Reinforce improvement or take the appropriate next step.

PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION GUIDE

General Information

Employee Name: _____

Employee # _____

Department: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Define the Situation

Brief description of performance:

Date(s) of previous discussions(s) about this issue:

Is employee currently in an active level of corrective action? _____ yes _____ no

_____ Action Plan _____ Decision Making Day and Final Notice which was administered on _____ (date) for _____ (reason)

- Expected performance:

- Actual performance:

- Organizational consequence/effect if performance continues:

- Individual consequence/effect if performance continues:

Other factors to consider in evaluating this issue:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> length of service | <input type="checkbox"/> skill level or training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overall work record | <input type="checkbox"/> barriers to performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recent discussions about this or other issue | <input type="checkbox"/> significant changes to environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> need to discuss with others for
consultation/approval | |

This conversation is intended to be

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> 1st Level Notice |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Level Notice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Level Notice |

COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Define the situation

- Conduct a complete and thorough investigation of the situation.
- Review notes or any other documentation about conversations with the employee regarding this performance problem.
- Complete the Performance Discussion Guide to get ready for the discussion.
- Ask the employee to join you in your office or other private area. Follow your organization's guidelines about notification and representation during a disciplinary conversation if this is a represented employee.

Conducting the conversation

- Describe the problem in specific terms, citing the expected and current performance, and how it is directly impacting the team, the organization, and our citizens.
- Review any previous counseling sessions, coaching conversations or development plans about this performance problem with the employee.
- Ask for the employee's input. Listen without judgment and respond to the employee's explanation.
- Explain that you need for him/her to take ownership for his/her performance and ask the employee's agreement to solve the problem and meet expectations.
- Gain the employee's agreement to take ownership for his/her performance.
- Discuss actions to resolve the problem.
- Ask the employee if he/she has questions about the action being taken or the performance that is expected.
- Close by expressing
 - ✓ *your confidence that the employee can correct this problem*
 - ✓ *your willingness to help him/her succeed*
 - ✓ *the value the individual contributes to the success of the work group*
 - ✓ *the importance of his/her commitment to meeting expectations*

Close the loop

- Make a note about the conversation if it is appropriate to do so.
- Follow-up and observe to ensure performance has improved and expectations are being met.
- Reinforce improvement or take the next appropriate action based on the individual's performance.



PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION GUIDE

General Information

Employee Name: _____

Employee # _____

Department: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Define the Situation

Brief description of performance:

Date(s) of previous discussions(s) about this issue:

Is employee currently in an active level of corrective action? _____ yes _____ no

_____ Action Plan _____ Decision Making Day and Final Notice which was administered on _____ (date) for _____ (reason)

- Expected performance:

- Actual performance:

- Organizational consequence/effect if performance continues:

- Individual consequence/effect if performance continues:

Other factors to consider in evaluating this issue:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> length of service | <input type="checkbox"/> skill level or training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overall work record | <input type="checkbox"/> barriers to performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recent discussions about this or other issue | <input type="checkbox"/> significant changes to environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> need to discuss with others for
consultation/approval | |

This conversation is intended to be

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> 1st Level Notice |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Level Notice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Level Notice |

CORRECTIVE ACTION GUIDELINES

Pre-meeting preparation

- Conduct a complete and thorough investigation of the situation.
- Review notes or any other documentation about conversations with the employee regarding this performance problem.
- Discuss the situation with the appropriate individual(s) to make sure you are on track.
- Complete the Pre-meeting Preparation Worksheet to get ready for the discussion.
- Ask the employee to join you in your office or other private area. Follow your organization's guidelines about notification and representation during a disciplinary conversation if this is a represented employee.

Conducting the meeting

- Describe the problem in specific terms, citing the expected and current performance, and how it is directly impacting the team and our customers.
- Review any previous counseling sessions, conversations or development plans about this performance problem with the employee.
- Ask for the employee's input. Listen without judgment and respond to the employee's explanation.
- Explain that you need for him/her to take ownership for his/her performance and ask the employee's agreement to solve the problem and meet expectations.
- Gain the employee's agreement to take ownership for his/her performance.
- Discuss actions to resolve the problem.
- Explain that this is a formal notice as part of the company's Formal Corrective Action Process. Describe the active period and the documentation to follow if those have been formally established and communicated.
- Ask the employee if he/she has questions about the action being taken or the performance that is expected.
- Close by expressing
 - ✓ *your confidence that the employee can correct this problem*
 - ✓ *your willingness to help him/her succeed*
 - ✓ *the value the individual contributes to the success of the work group*
 - ✓ *the importance of his/her commitment to meeting expectations.*



Post-meeting activities

- Document the conversation and action in the manner described by your organization's policy.
- Distribute copies of the documentation in the manner described in your organization's policy.
- Follow-up and observe to ensure performance has improved and expectations are being met.
- Reinforce improvement or take the next appropriate action based on the individual's performance.

DECISION MAKING DAY (FINAL NOTICE) GUIDELINES

Pre-meeting preparation

- Conduct a complete and thorough investigation of the situation.
- Review notes or any other documentation about conversations with the employee and/or previous formal corrective action activities regarding this performance problem.
- Discuss the situation with the appropriate individual(s) to make sure you're on track.
- Complete the Pre-meeting Preparation Worksheet to get ready for the discussion.
- Make sure coverage is available in case the employee is unable to return to work after the meeting.
- Ask the employee to join you in your office or other private area. Follow your organization's guidelines about notification and representation during a disciplinary conversation if this is a represented employee.

Conducting the meeting

- Describe the problem in specific terms, citing the expected and current performance, and how it is directly impacting the team and our customers.
- Review any previous counseling sessions, conversations, formal corrective action activities, or development plans about this performance problem with the employee.
- Ask for the employee's input. Listen without judgment and respond to the employee's explanation.
- Explain that you need for him/her to take ownership for his/her performance and make a decision about his/her desire to continue employment with the organization.
- Explain that he/she is to spend time thinking about his/her desire to remain with the organization and meet performance expectations or resign.
- Reinforce that the decision is the employee's to make. Remind him/her that you hope he/she will choose to stay, but that you will recommend discharge if he/she fails to meet and maintain acceptable performance in any category of performance.
- Tell the employee this is a Decision Making Day—the final level of the Formal Corrective Action Process. Describe the active period and the documentation to follow.
- Tell the employee to report at the beginning of his/her shift the day after tomorrow. He/she will be asked to announce his/her decision and agree to meet his/her responsibilities.
- Ask the employee if he/she has questions about the action being taken or the performance that is expected.
- Close by expressing
 - ✓ *your confidence that the employee can correct this problem*
 - ✓ *your willingness to help him/her succeed*
 - ✓ *the value the individual contributes to the success of the work group*
 - ✓ *the importance of his/her commitment to meeting expectations*
 - ✓ *the seriousness of the situation and importance of his/her decision.*

Post-meeting activities

- Make notes about important or relevant issues raised during the meeting.
- Communicate with appropriate management levels if needed.

Return meeting activities

When the employee returns:

- Welcome the employee and ask him/her the decision about continuing employment.
- Listen without judgment and respond to the employee's decision.
- Clarify any questions you have and review the time period and expectations of the Final Notice.
- Ask the employee if he/she has questions about the action being taken or the performance that is expected.
- Tell the employee that you will be summarizing his/her decision and your expectations in a memo. Set a time for you and the employee to meet and review the contents of the memo.

Post-return activities

- Document the action in the manner described by your organization's policy.
- Meet with the employee to review the memo. Provide the original to the employee.
- Distribute copies of the documentation in the manner described in your organization's policy.
- Follow-up and observe to ensure performance has improved and expectations are being met.
- Reinforce improvement or take the next appropriate action based on the individual's performance.

PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION GUIDE

General Information

Employee Name: _____

Employee # _____

Department: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Define the Situation

Brief description of performance:

Date(s) of previous discussions(s) about this issue:

Is employee currently in an active level of corrective action? _____ yes _____ no

_____ Action Plan _____ Decision Making Day and Final Notice which was administered on _____ (date) for _____ (reason)

- Expected performance:

- Actual performance:

- Organizational consequence/effect if performance continues:

- Individual consequence/effect if performance continues:

Other factors to consider in evaluating this issue:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> length of service | <input type="checkbox"/> skill level or training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overall work record | <input type="checkbox"/> barriers to performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recent discussions about this or other issue | <input type="checkbox"/> significant changes to environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> need to discuss with others for
consultation/approval | |

This conversation is intended to be

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> 1st Level Notice |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Level Notice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Level Notice |

CLOSE THE LOOP

Post-meeting notes

Date/time of discussion: _____

Location: _____

Company representative(s) present: _____

Employee representative present (if applicable): _____

- employee agreed take ownership
- employee did not agree take ownership
- employee did not recognize that there is a problem

Employee action plan: _____

Significant issues raised during the discussion: _____

This conversation was a

- Counseling conversation
- 1st Level Notice (use this information to craft your letter to the employee)
- 2nd Level Notice (use this information to craft your letter to the employee)
- 3rd Level Notice (use this information to craft your letter to the employee)

Additional comments: _____

Follow-up plans and dates: _____

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

***This guide is to help supervisors prepare for performance discussions and to document formal levels of corrective action. Use this sheet to prepare a letter to the employee. Post-meeting notes are intended for use with corrective action only and should not be completed for coaching or counseling.**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Harry Smith
FROM: Jane Doe
DATE: April 15, 2019
SUBJECT: First Level Notice — Attendance

This memorandum confirms our First Level Notice conversation this morning about your failure to return from breaks on time.

On January 24, you and I met for an informal counseling session about your overstaying breaks. At that time, you had returned late four times since December 10. At that meeting, you said that you understood the problem and agreed to return from breaks on time every day in the future. We had a second counseling session on March 3, after you returned late two more times between January 24 and March 1. You again promised to correct the problem.

Harry, you have returned late more than five minutes on two additional occasions (April 7 and April 14) and I gave you a First Level Notice of the need to immediately improve your performance in our meeting this morning. I explained the reasons why returning on time was critical and how it affects customer service. I also told you that if the problem continued, a logical outcome would be further corrective action. You gave me your commitment to improve and said that you would pay closer attention to the time while on your break.

I'm confident that you can correct this problem, Harry, and I'm counting on you to do so.

cc: Personnel file
others based on your organization's policy

MEMORANDUM

TO: Susan Adams
FROM: John Becker
DATE: December 15, 2018
SUBJECT: Second Level Notice —Work Performance

You were given a First Level Notice during our conversation on September 23 about your job performance not being up to our expectations. You had assured me that you would bring your performance up to standards.

Unfortunately, your performance has not improved. In our meeting yesterday, I described the following problems that have occurred since our meeting on the 23rd:

- one occurrence of making personal calls from your station
- you failed to backup your computer on December 12 causing the loss of a week's worth of work when your hard drive crashed

Susan, you apologized for failing to live up to your commitment and promised to do so in the future. During our conversation, I told you that I was issuing a Second Level Notice about the need to improve job performance. I am confident that this will be the last time we address this matter. Susan, it is important that you accept responsibility and ownership for maintaining acceptable job performance. If you should fail to do so, further corrective action will be the logical outcome.

cc: Personnel file
others based on your organization's policy

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tony Beach DATE: February 16, 2019
SUBJECT: Third Level Notice FROM: Charles Brown

In our discussion on February 14, we reviewed your performance over the past year. On July 25, 2018, you received a Second Level Notice for not meeting performance standards. Another Second Level Notice for not adhering to the dress code was issued on January 29, 2019. In each of these discussions, you promised to meet expectations and improve your performance.

Unfortunately, during the last two weeks there have been two verified customer complaints about the quality of your service. We reviewed expectations and how poor service affects the organization during our conversation on February 14.

At the conclusion of our meeting, I asked you to decide whether or not you really want to continue your employment with the company. I also advised that you need to be sure you can commit to maintaining your job performance. Failure to do so could result in your termination.

When you returned to work after your Third Level Notice, you told me that you wanted to keep your job and would work to maintain your total performance at acceptable standards. We talked about an action plan that would help you implement your good intentions, and I am confident you can meet our expectations.

I'm pleased that you've decided to continue your employment. However, it is important that you live up to your decision because failing to do so could lead to discharge.

cc: Personnel file
others based on your organization's policy