

Have you modernized your employee review practices?

Traditional business practices are being shaken up. Many companies are reviewing their long-held traditions in favor of more agile, responsive ways of managing workers. Some of these changes include providing employees with flexibility to work from home more often, and leveraging technology like Skype for Business or Yammer to better communicate and share information among team members and even the entire organization.

One area experiencing a large transformation is performance reviews. For decades, the prevailing wisdom has been that a big annual review at the end of the year is enough to let employees know how they're doing. However, this is no longer true - employees are demanding more frequent and detailed feedback on their work, and managers are responding by making their review practices more flexible and engaging.

If your company hasn't updated its performance review practices, it runs the risk of losing top talent to companies that build feedback into their regular business functions from week to week. Also, you'll miss out on the valuable chance to identify and develop employees' professional skill sets.

According to [a recent survey](#) by the Institute for Corporate Productivity, 67 percent of the 244 companies surveyed said that they are rethinking their current performance management practices - and 59 percent of these companies are doing so because of employee feedback.

As you begin to focus on business planning and employee goals for the coming year, consider these four ways you can modernize reviews at your company:

1. Make performance an ongoing conversation

Instead of saving comments for the annual review, find ways to provide feedback and discuss priorities with employees on a regular basis. You could hold biweekly, one-on-one check-ins with employees, discuss goals or accomplishments at the beginning or end of each quarter or provide opportunities for group discussions at weekly team meetings. Regular check-ins help employees feel that their managers are committed to them being successful workers, which in turn helps them be more engaged and motivated to do their best work.



2. Embrace career pathing

Career pathing is a strategy that actively invests in and develops your employees to thrive in their current and future roles. It is an intentional approach as opposed to a reactive one - instead of managers passively learning of an employee's goals at the company, they take a participatory role in professionally developing the individual. Through career pathing, managers and employees sit down and learn of the employee's professional aspirations at the company and then set a tangible plan for helping the employee reach these goals.

3. Create an open culture of feedback

Reviews that benefit both employee and employer are based on honest, open communication, and this is only possible when there is a culture of workplace transparency. Employees should feel comfortable expressing their concerns, and criticism should be communicated in a way that is constructive. If employees feel that they are always one misstep away from being fired, or that their managers

are not honest with them, reviews are more likely to further cement negative feelings instead of paving the way for constructive team-building. Company leadership can do their part to create an open culture of feedback by keeping employees in the loop on workflow changes, encouraging employees to voice their concerns and recognizing workers who aren't afraid to ask for help.

4. Ensure reviews are fair

[Only 29 percent](#) of employees strongly agree that their performance reviews are fair, according to Gallup. The organization found that one main reason for this is reviews that are held just once a year fail to take into account all the changes that can occur in responsibilities, workflows and personal lives over the course of 12 months. Gallup also suggests that when conducting reviews, managers consider the expectations of the role compared to the time and resources employees actually have to fulfill these duties. The benchmarks employees are judged against should be realistic and fair.

Performance reviews are integral to employee success, but expectations have changed in the 21st century. Employees want reviews that are frequent, constructive, authentic and fair - and companies that update their review processes to match these needs are most likely to retain top talent.