

## 17 THINGS TO SAY DURING A PERFORMANCE REVIEW



**Summary:** Make sure you are covering all the bases by asking or saying these 17 things during performance reviews.

Performance reviews, whether quarterly or annually, are an important part of an employee's ability to grow. These reviews are supposed to inspire and motivate employees to improve their performance as well as let them know where they stand. Quite often, an employee may not realize they are struggling in a certain area or have a skill that you see as valuable. Having the opportunity to sit down and discuss these things gives them a chance to learn.

Performance reviews are also a chance for managers to learn how they can improve and make things better for their employees. Here are 17 things you should be asking or saying during the review to ensure you are addressing all the topics.

1. How are you feeling?

This is an obvious way to start out a performance review. Get them talking about how they are doing.

2. How do you think you did this past year?

Turn the conversation to their job and how they feel they have done.

3. How would you describe your on-the-job performance this year?

You want to get their feedback or thoughts on their performance. Listen to their words and phrases, taking note if necessary, so that you can repeat their own words during the review. Hearing what your employee has to say will help you learn their level of self-awareness and how to give feedback.

4. Good job achieving ..., that is excellent. How did you accomplish this?

Celebrate their accomplishments, reinforcing their strengths and what they are doing right. Add more positive comments from your perspectives. Be sure to use descriptive action verbs with specific facts that are quantifiable or measurable, if possible.

5. Is there anything you could have done better or differently this year to improve results?

This question lets you see where they think they fell short or could have been done differently.

6. Where do you see your greatest potential for growth and improvement?

Does their criticism align with yours? If they are on the same page as you, then corrective action will be easy. When the employee does not view their greatest strength as the same one you see, there may be a challenge to see eye-to-eye.

7. I think you did "x" very well this year, but "y" could be improved on more.

Now you have to turn to the harder part of the review where you give constructive criticism. Be honest in your feedback and specific. Just remember that being honest does not mean to be cruel. Coming down on them too hard may cause them to get discouraged and feel defeated.

8. You did "a" this year. That negatively impacted "b." Why did this happen?

Deliver the facts of what has happened over the past year and how their actions have affected things negatively. Discuss why their underperformance impacted others.

9. If you could do "z" all over again, what would you do differently?

Learn what they wish they had handled differently so you can see if they have learned better decision making skills as a result of their experiences.

10. What will you do to improve "x" in the coming year?

Here you should encourage the employee to develop their own plan for improvement instead of telling them what to do. Putting the power in their hands will empower them to take responsibility for the plan and be more motivated to change because it is their plan.

11. I recommend taking this class/reading this book/etc. to refresh your skill in this area.

Upon hearing their ideas for improvement, add your own ideas that they can add to their plan. These suggestions should help them take their career to the next level.

12. Moving forward, I expect "y."

Give a clear expectation of the improvement you want done and ask for a commitment from them. An example of this may be stating that you want reports submitted by the deadline from now on.

13. What can I be doing better?

Now give them a chance to explain what they would like to see you doing.

14. What do you need from me as a manager that I'm not currently doing or providing?

Ask for specific feedback on how you can improve as their manager. Is there something they need that they aren't getting from you such as a morning or weekly meeting to discuss the status of projects?

15. Thank you for all your hard work this past year.

Acknowledge the work they are putting in. Their contributions do impact and help the company.

16. Keep up the hard work, I believe in you.

Encourage them to keep working hard. You do the performance review because you believe the employee can improve and grow in their abilities. Make sure they understand this.

17. Remember that I am here to support you so please don't hesitate to ask me any questions that come up or share any concerns you have.

You want your employees to feel comfortable coming to you with good and bad things. Emphasize your open-door policy but that you will also handle their concerns with discretion. Many employees will be hesitant to call out co-workers or policies for the fear of retaliation.

Do you hold annual performance reviews or do you do them more often? Share your experiences with us in the comments below.

**To learn more about performance reviews, read these articles:**

- [How to Learn from a Performance Review](#)
- [34 Things Not to Say during a Performance Review](#)
- [How to Provide Employees with an Effective Performance Review](#)

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