

LEAD

☰ 🔍 👤 **5 Questions Truly Exceptional Bosses Ask Their Employees**

Why performance evaluations suck.

By **Tommy Mello** *Founder, A1 Garage Doors* [@realtommymello](#)



[Performance reviews](#) suck. Why?

r mirror. You won't get

spend the entire review
wonder that these sessions

Here's what you should do instead: Transform your performance reviews into personal development reviews.

This brilliant idea came from Keith Lee, who's not just an expert in building systems that employees love, but also an entrepreneur who's grown companies to nine figures in revenue. The systems Keith developed and implemented allowed his company, American Retail Supply, to grow its sales from \$300,000 to \$15 million per year, and earned them the recognition of being the "Best Small Business to Work For in Washington State" by Washington CEO Magazine.

According to Keith, the key to empowering your employees is to run personal development reviews, which are monthly one-on-one meetings where you ask your employees a series of questions to help them reflect on themselves.

These five questions (that he personally uses) will encourage your employees to focus on continuous improvement:

1. What went well since we last met?

Before you start the session, get your employees to share their wins with you. Did they close a huge sale recently? Did they finally wrap up a challenging project? Did a customer write in to compliment them?

After your employee shares their wins with you, be sure to recognize their achievements and efforts. This will energize them, and start the session on a good note.

Personal development reviews aside, you can also apply this trick to other work situations. For example, I always start off my Morning Mojo meetings by celebrating wins.

2. What went wrong and what did you learn from it?

With this one question, you're achieving two things. First, you're getting your employees to assess their mistakes, and learn from whatever they did wrong.

Second, you're turning a negative into a positive. Your employee might feel down from a recent setback, but re-framing the situation will boost their spirits, and give them the confidence to keep trying.

Now, it's easy to start lecturing your employee on what they did wrong, especially if they've made a costly mistake. But it's much more effective to simply lead with a question, and let them figure it out by themselves. Trust me on this one. Doing it like this will really make it stick.

3. What did you find that was broken or could be improved, and what did you do to fix or improve it?

This question is particularly important -- it helps you cultivate a culture of proactiveness in your company. By asking this question, you're encouraging your employees to constantly think of ways to optimize processes, workflows, and tasks.

At the end of the day, you don't just want your employees to be hard workers; you want them to be smart workers as well.

4. What did you do to help create a motivating environment? Who did you catch doing something right?

You also want to encourage your employees to be team players.

Don't let your personal development sessions escalate into a rant session, where your employees trash-talk their colleagues and blame all their problems on them. Instead, have them focus on the positive aspects of working in a team.

to creating great results.

can raise it up. Your employees
estions that they might have.

Yes, traditional performance reviews are ineffective in helping your employees grow, but here's the good news: it's easy to come up with your very own version that will get the job done. Remember Keith's simple but impactful personal development reviews, and think about how you can use these to motivate your team. Your employees are your greatest asset, so it's in your best interests to empower and support them!

PUBLISHED ON: APR 20, 2018

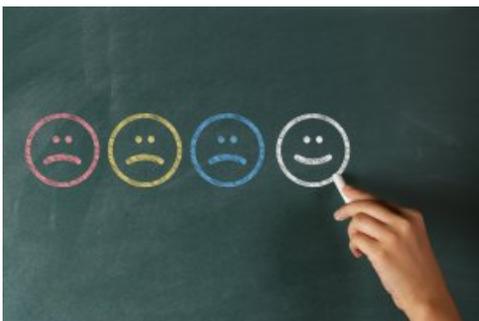
More from Inc.



Before You Hire Your Friends, Do These 3 Things



HRCIView
Fishing for Talent? Lure Them With the Perfect Job Posting



Forget the Year-End Performance Review: This Feedback Technique Is Far More Effective



Jeff Bezos's Secret to Being an Energetic and Happy Entrepreneur