

Ten Important Leader Talks

April 13, 2022

By Peter Germann
Germann Consulting Group

It's important to continuously build your effectiveness as a leader. There are certain moments in a leader's interaction with people that are more important than others – and they're repeated frequently. Imagine if you could get really good at the 10 most important one-on-one conversations to have with your team members. As you develop the 10 Important Talks skills into regular habits, you will be more effective and efficient, have more confidence and less stress around these talks, and fewer miscommunications.



Here are the 10 most important conversations you have with your team:

1. **Set clear goals together:** Develop your skills of talking about, establishing and following up on clear goals.
2. **Feedback:** Get really good at providing meaningful and helpful feedback – both positive and negative – at different intervals: in the moment, in monthly 1:1 meetings and in front of the entire team.
3. **Performance Reviews:** Learn how to provide good performance appraisals. Consider why you may dread them or discount them and deal with those emotions. Be able to help people understand expectations and their level of their performance. Share aspirational ways you'd like to help them develop.
4. **Compensation Discussions:** The biggest opportunity I think managers miss is a conversation around a compensation increase. This is a time to talk about why their compensation is what it is and why they did or didn't get the increase that they received. It doesn't have to be a long conversation. If you do it really well, it can have a big impact. If you do it poorly, the compensation has no impact. – and research shows it can actually have a negative impact. Along with the compensation, you'll want to discuss their intrinsic motivators on the job such as their interests, skills and the tasks they've done well so the people feel recognized, rewarded and equally internally motivated to contribute.
5. **Five Years from Now:** Another conversation you should be really good at is around career aspirations. Build your skills to listen and understand what the person's aspirations are and hopefully be an advocate for making them happen.
6. **Coaching:** Continuously practice your coaching skills and discernment for the best type of coaching for the situation. When an employee comes to you with a problem that is over their head, it's helpful for you to be able to help them solve it with a guiding or inspiring coaching style rather than a directive or criticizing style.

7. **Overwhelmed and need Priorities:** Another conversation you should practice is when someone comes to you and they are overwhelmed and not really sure what to do. This really is a priority-setting conversation to help an individual go through their tasks and set priorities.
8. **Development:** Another conversation is a development planning conversation. You should be able to help people know what activities, courses, tasks, and experience might improve their effectiveness in their current role and roles they hope to move into someday.
9. **Project Management:** Almost everyone should know how to organize complex projects, though few people have been taught the skills. Come up with strategies that work for your team and coach them through how to collaborate effectively with multiple people with multiple interests.
10. **Handle the Tough Stuff:** If you can effectively have those nine conversations really well, your ability to lead people will be incredible. The tenth one, which I tend to emphasize, is important because if a manager doesn't meet expectations in this circumstance they lose the respect and motivation of their employee. Whenever a person is going through a personal, traumatic experience, a manager needs to know how to handle that.

Your employee may come and tell you that they are going through a divorce, their dog died, they just had a car accident ... how you respond in that moment is a leadership moment that gives you the opportunity to really establish that relationship.

Assess how you currently handle these 10 Important Leader talks and set some goals for how you could improve.

Ten Leadership Talks	What you do well now	How you could improve
Establishing Goals		
Feedback		
Appraisals		
Compensation		
Aspirations		
Coaching vs Directing		
Priority setting		
Development Planning		
Organizing a complex project		
Handling a personal issue		