Your Employees Still Need Mid-Year Reviews During COVID: Here's How to Make Them a Critical Part of Business Success

Most employees think of reviews as the sand in their bathing suit. Sure, it comes with a benefit (a day at the beach or, in this case, a great job) but it can be incredibly annoying. Add in a global pandemic and you may be thinking it's best to just skip them this year.

You couldn't be more wrong.

Skipping a mid-year review only adds to your employees' potential feeling of disconnection. Now, more than ever, you need to ensure your employees feel a strong allegiance to your company and are well-positioned for continued success. Mid-year reviews help you accomplish both of these things and more.

This Is a Different Kind of Review
Before you get ahead of yourself and start hammering on issues of non-performance, envision these reviews from a growth and loyalty perspective. Your employees have a lot of things they're balancing right now from kids at home to concerns over elderly parents to worries over race relations or personal safety.

Keeping this in mind, this review is not about pointing out how they're not as effective of an employee as they were pre-COVID. Assuming the employee was a high performer before the epidemic, think of this time as you would a professional athlete recovering after surgery. The first day back at physical therapy you wouldn't mention their lack of ability based on what they did prior to injury. You examine it as a growth opportunity and imagine how your support will help them get back to previous strength and potentially be better than before.

Yes, this review is different. It's about listening, guiding, connecting, and growing.

Questions, Not Forms
Instead of the typical employee review and completion of the goals sheet, look to create opportunities for discussion by asking questions. To be successful in the future you need to understand how your employees are faring during this time. It's an ideal opportunity for valuable exchange.

This review may closely resemble a personal, mini SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, threats) analysis and that's okay. Look to open up lines of communication through talking about:

- **The challenges they face(d).** What was the most challenging? In the past, we would be looking for "professional life" answers. But with COVID on our doorsteps, personal and professional lives have bled into each other. Encourage employees to share whatever challenges they've had to overcome.
- **Fears.** What are they most afraid of?

- **Triumphs.** What have they accomplished during this time that has made them feel good and capable? (Yes, making it through virtual school math with their child counts.)
- **What they need you to know.** Ask them if there's anything you should know about them or their lives. Sometimes employees want to share but opening up in a virtual meeting may be difficult. Give them an invitation to explain what they're going through. Offer support and help where you can. Share some of your own struggles.

You may be wondering about the business value behind this type of review. If all the things your employees talk about are personal, how can that help your business?

In the same way that posting pictures of your pet on social media gets some of your largest likes, shares, and comments.

The business is comprised of people. When you take the time to connect with them on a personal level and recognize what may be impeding their success or what is behind it, you'll both have a greater appreciation for the other.

This type of review helps build a company's culture and improve loyalty. Both very important factors in your business' future success.

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