

## Workshop:

# Managing Down: Pro Tips for Critical Conversations to Balance Team Performance and Wellness

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**accenture**



# Let's get to know **YOU**

- ✓ Are you a **People Manager**?
- ✓ How long have you been managing **others**?
- ✓ How many people do you directly **manage**?
- ✓ How large is your **entire team** (reporting directly/indirectly to you)?





# Time for a **check-in**

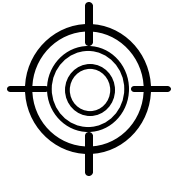
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- How often do you connect with your **direct reports**?
- What's your go-to approach to **motivate** and pull your team together?
- How do you approach sharing **developmental feedback** with a team member?
- How often do **you** ask team members (supervisor, peer or subordinate) for feedback?
- How do you **recognize or praise** the good work of your team members?
- At some point in the 6 months, have you spoken with each of your direct reports about their **aspirations** and **broader career development**?
- How would you manage **conflict** amongst your team?



# Types of conversations

1



## Goal & Expectation Setting

*Align on what success looks like*

5



## Wellbeing & Support

*Show care, build trust, and offer support*

2



## Developmental

*Support growth and career progression*

6



## Motivation & Engagement

*Tap into intrinsic motivators*

3



## Performance

*Give feedback, drive accountability, improve performance*

7



## Conflict or Tension

*Address issues before they escalate*

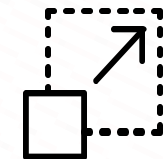
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## Alignment & Context

*Provide the “why” and maintain clarity*

8



## Career Transition

*Manage moments of change*





# What does this remind you of?



# 1. Goal & Expectation Setting

*Align on what success looks like*

## Topics:

- Setting objectives (OKRs, KPIs)
- Clarifying responsibilities or role expectations
- Defining timelines or deliverables

## What to Do:

- Use SMART goals
- Co-create goals with the team
- Explain the “why” behind the goals
- Schedule regular check-ins to track progress and course correct

## Common Pitfalls:

- Vague or overly broad goals
- One-way communication (top-down)
- Not aligning goals with individual motivation
- No follow-up after setting goals





## 2. Developmental



*Support growth and career progression*

### Topics:

- Career aspirations
- Skills and capability building
- Coaching and mentoring
- Development plans and stretch assignments

### Common Pitfalls:

- Focusing only on short-term training, not long-term growth
- Assuming everyone wants upward mobility
- Skipping the conversation entirely due to workload
- Giving generic advice

### What to Do:

- Ask about career aspirations, even if they're not crystal clear yet
- Explore lateral growth, new skills, or passion projects
- Provide actionable next steps and opportunities
- Follow up on progress—show you're invested



# 3. Performance



*Give feedback, drive accountability, improve performance*

## Topics:

- Regular performance check-ins
- Constructive feedback
- Addressing underperformance
- Celebrating wins and achievements

## Common Pitfalls:

- Saving feedback for formal reviews only
- Sugarcoating or being overly harsh
- Making it personal instead of behavioral
- Not tying feedback to impact or outcomes

## What to Do:

- Deliver feedback in real time or as close to the event as possible
- Use a feedback framework (e.g., SBI: Situation, Behavior, Impact or Well, Better Next)
- Keep a balance: reinforce strengths and address gaps
- Agree on improvement actions and support needed





## 4. Alignment & Context



*Provide the “why” and maintain clarity*

### Topics:

- Explaining changes (strategy, team structure, priorities)
- Sharing company direction or leadership decisions
- Clarifying the team’s role in the bigger picture

### Common Pitfalls:

- Sharing “what” without the “why”
- Communicating too late
- Being vague about implications for the team
- Assuming people already know

### What to Do:

- Break down complex changes in plain language
- Link strategy to the individual/team’s role
- Create space for questions or concerns
- Be transparent about what is known vs unknown



# 5. Wellbeing & Support



*Show care, build trust, and offer support*

## Topics:

- Checking in on personal wellbeing or burnout
- Discussing workload or stress levels
- Life events impacting work
- Psychological safety check-ins

## Common Pitfalls:

- Avoiding the topic altogether
- Making assumptions about someone's state
- Offering solutions instead of listening
- Not creating a safe space

## What to Do:

- Ask open, empathetic questions: "How are you really doing?"
- Normalize conversations about wellbeing
- Listen without judgment or rushing to solve
- Respect privacy and boundaries; follow up gently





# 6. Motivation & Engagement



*Tap into intrinsic motivators*

## Topics:

- What drives the team member?
- How can work be made more meaningful?
- Recognition and appreciation (non-monetary)
- Job satisfaction pulse checks

## What to Do:

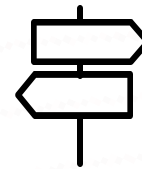
- Ask: “What makes work meaningful for you?”
- Tailor recognition (public/private, verbal/tangible)
- Notice and acknowledge effort, not just outcomes
- Regularly pulse-check engagement levels

## Common Pitfalls:

- Assuming money is the only motivator
- Ignoring intrinsic drivers (e.g., purpose, autonomy, challenge)
- Giving generic praise
- Not asking how people want to be recognized



# 7. Conflict or Tension



*Address issues before they escalate*

## Topics:

- Peer conflicts
- Miscommunications
- Team dynamic or behavior concerns

## Common Pitfalls:

- Avoiding the issue until it festers
- Taking sides or assigning blame too quickly
- Minimizing emotional impact
- Not setting boundaries for respectful dialogue

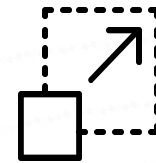
## What to Do:

- Address issues early with curiosity, not accusation
- Use neutral language and focus on shared outcomes
- Facilitate, don't dictate, resolution
- Support healthy team dynamics and rebuild trust





# 8. Career Transition



*Address issues before they escalate*

## Topics:

- Promotion readiness
- Internal transfers or new roles
- Exits and resignations (stay conversations, offboarding)

## Common Pitfalls:

- Treating it like a transaction, not a transition
- Failing to honor the person's contributions
- Not planning for knowledge transfer
- Avoiding stay conversations when early warning signs show

## What to Do:

- Celebrate milestones (promotion, role change, or exit)
- Have honest conversations about readiness or fit
- Offer support for the next step (internal or external)
- If someone is leaving, ask for feedback and part respectfully



# How some conversations might go...

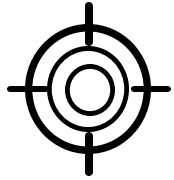
When people are curious  
about the reality of parenting





# Which is the most **difficult**?

1



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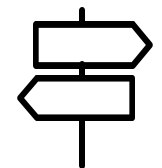
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## Motivation & Engagement

*Tap into intrinsic motivators*

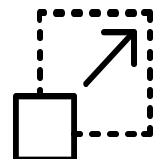
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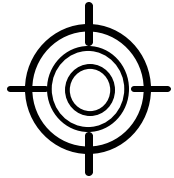
## Career Transition

*Manage moments of change*



# Which is the most **overlooked**?

1



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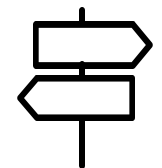
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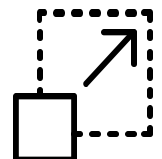
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# Unscheduled or Ad Hoc

Type	Where It Happens	What It's About	Tip for Managers
Quick Check-ins	Hallways, end of meetings, chat	Project updates, light support	Keep it short, genuine, and regular
Mood or Pulse Reads	Informal huddles, coffee runs	Emotional cues, team energy	Ask open questions, observe body language
Post-Meeting Side Chats	Walking out, quick calls	Clarification, emotional debrief	Be curious, not corrective
Real-time Feedback	Right after tasks, live work	Praise or improvements	Deliver close to the moment, balance tone
"In the Flow" Collabs	Work sessions, creative jams	Brainstorming, co-creating	Stay present, encourage experimentation
Micro Mentoring Moments	Lunch, casual convos, shared rides	Career, soft coaching	Share stories, listen more than advise
Safe Space Moments	Closed-door chats, "got a minute?"	Personal or emotional issues	Hold confidentiality, lead with empathy
Decision Nudges	Chat ping, during execution	Guidance on choices	Phrase as a question or offer, not command
Urgent/Crisis Moments	Immediate in-person or call	Escalations, personal issues	Stay calm, provide clarity and support
Spontaneous Recognition	Chat, Slack, in person	Celebrating effort or wins	Be specific, tie to impact



# Takeaway Tips

## Prepare

- Identify traits and personality
- Gather history & context
- Learn their aspirations
- Understand their challenges
- Role Playing helps

## Be Aware

- Treat others how you would like to be treated
- Empathy vs Sympathy
- It's ok to take a break and reschedule
- Conversations can be hard for both sides
- Mirroring is real

## Don't Assume

- Perception is not always Reality
- If you are not sure, ask!
- Don't coerce if sharing is difficult





# THANK YOU

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**“The greatest gap in life is the one between knowing and doing.”**

**– John Maxwell**