

Performance Management and Evaluation: Pre-conference Session

By Carol Elder

In this BC Library Conference pre-conference session, Teresa Hartman and Chris Middlemass tackled a topic many of us love to hate, or at least approach with trepidation: employee performance management and evaluation.

Practical applications

The session started with some theory about the purpose of a performance management system, emphasizing the need to ensure that an annual review is just that – a review of what's been discussed all year with an employee.

We moved quickly onto practical applications, with exercises pinpointing steps in the process, especially when dealing with less than positive performance. This is where the expertise of the presenters really shone. Teresa and Chris were able to provide many valuable and specific examples, as well as respond to scenarios participants brought up, that managers face every day.

They demonstrated how a simple process can be applied to open a conversation and work through to

a solution: present the situation, ask open-ended questions, and problem solve.

Keeping to the facts

When presenting the situation we were reminded to keep to the facts, commenting on the behavior, not the person: "I noticed that ... ," "I saw this ... ," "the impact on the team is such" Then, start to ask questions, the kind we've all been trained to ask, that is: open-ended questions. For instance, "how come ... ?" "What's happening for you ... ?" We were advised to be sure to come from a place that's comfortable for us, ensuring everyone feels safe, and give the employee a chance to talk.

Teresa and Chris were able to provide many tips, comment on participant's concerns, and far too soon we were out of time, unable to cover some of the legal situations that can arise. Participants left with much food for thought and possible material for future sessions.

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