

9. When Employees Bite Back

Common Employee Personas In Performance

JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE PARANOID DOESN'T MEAN THEY AREN'T OUT TO GET YOU.

-JOSEPH HELLER



It would be great if you could run everything we've shared with you in this module on performance management/reviews without interruption.

Which is code for the following—our plan for you would be foolproof **if it weren't for those pesky employees asking questions, throwing up objections and generally being disagreeable.**

And that's one of the biggest rubs in doing performance management/reviews, isn't it?

"This session is going to suck because they're going to _____ ."

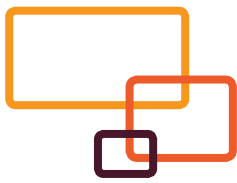
What do employees do during performance reviews? If they're quiet, the session is easy—if somewhat strange. If an employee is quiet, you probably haven't encouraged them to participate enough or be honest with you.

Once you've made them comfortable, they're going to tell you why they can't give more performance to you, and the reasons will be unique to their personality and performance profile.

But some of the objections can be trended, all the way to the point where we can create personas that you should expect to see during your session. Keep reading and we'll introduce you to the characters you're most likely to see on the other side of the table in your performance sessions.



A 1998 meta-analysis of social-dominance behaviors found that men interrupted women with the intent to take over the conversation more than the reverse.



The 5 Faces You'll See On the Other Side Of The Table During Performance Reviews

To get ready to deal with objections, it makes sense to identify the faces you're going to see on the other side of the table when coaching for increased performance. Once you know the most common personas employees regularly use when defending themselves from anyone asking for more performance, you're better equipped to fight through the objections and get to what's real.

Ready to hear the personas/masks team members regularly use to intimidate managers into not asking for more performance? Here are the five most common faces you'll see during any type of performance conversation:



1. **The Diva** – You've seen the Diva before—he's a legend in his own mind. The Diva thinks he's a world-class performer, and usually is a high performer in at least one area. The problem? He's got lots of development needs related to his other performance targets. The Diva probably had a hands-off manager before you, so he's shocked you would ask for more.



THIS JUST IN: He's not sure he has anything to learn from you as a manager, and as a result of his lack of self-awareness, he can be a disruptor on your team and a poor teammate. The good news for you: odds are some teammates hate to see him go unchecked, so they're rooting for you to bring him back to reality.

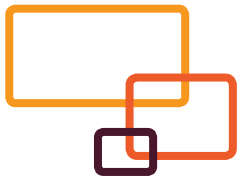
2. **The Deflector** – The Deflector could do more in her role on your team, but let's face it: she's been dealt a terrible hand at this jalopy you call a company. Just ask her. The Deflector is a gal who has an external locus of control in everything she experiences in your company. She'll tell you she doesn't see the point of trying harder, because too many things are in the way and out of her control. Poor, little Fluffy.

THIS JUST IN: It's not that she doesn't believe in you, she just thinks you're part of the overall situation. Make sure you aren't enabling this person with what we call the "manager pass-through." The external locus of control of the deflector means she's the most problematic profile to turnaround.

3. **The 9 to 5'er** – The 9 to 5'er is the classic profile—she's looking to work 40 hours, and she can become easily offended when you ask for more. The 9 to 5'er outlook can be voluntary (jaded, unwilling to allow perceived intrusions into her private life/time) or involuntary (as it often is with parents, etc.). The 9 to 5'er is generally looking to meet expectation/hit the target with the hours she has and has low interest in providing discretionary effort.

THIS JUST IN: If the 9 to 5'er outlook is involuntary, you can buy discretionary effort via flexibility. Finally, the 9 to 5'er is often seen as a steady performer by those around her.



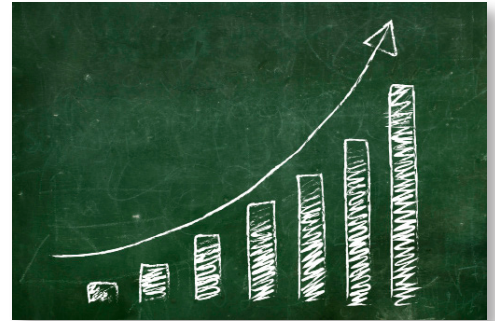


GOOD TO GREAT

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- 4. The Upwardly Mobile/Unsure** – The fun profile of the bunch, the Upwardly Mobile seeks to excel, but is unsure of what he wants in his career. He has no opinion on what the next step is for him, much less two steps down the road. A dream to have around, The Upwardly Mobile will provide discretionary effort, especially if recognition follows. He's looking for feedback on performance and linkage to how to progress in his career.

THIS JUST IN: If you don't take the time to be interested, The Upwardly Mobile profile can easily turn into a 9 to 5'er or a Deflector (it's a question of who is going to influence—you or the negative profiles around them on their team). Spend time with this profile to ensure he doesn't turn negative over time.

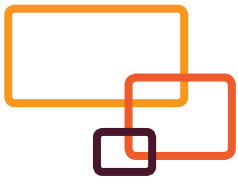


- 5. The Star** – One of the best in the company... and in your industry. She can choose to influence others or be an island depending on the role, and you'll live with it because she's that good. The Star is crushing most of the expectations you set regarding performance goals and routinely goes way beyond what's expected or called for.

THIS JUST IN: She's not sure she has anything to learn from you. Even if she can't, you have to try to engage by answering a tough question: How do you engage a star on performance?



Which face are you when you're on the receiving end of a performance review?
Does it change across the course of one's career?



Custom Strategies For Dealing With The 5 Faces During A Performance Review

Of course, simply knowing how to identify the 5 faces your managers will see during performance reviews and coaching conversations isn't enough. You need to know **WHAT TO DO AND SAY** once you've identified the face you're talking to.

Relax—we're here to help. Here are the best strategies to deal with the 5 faces we've outlined. For any of the faces, you should use one or more (usually a combo) of the strategies to survive and thrive:



1. **Focus on the definition of performance that is “meeting expectations” and “exceeding expectations.”**
2. **Push for more performance, specifically describing what you need and why it's good for the team member** (verbally and in writing).
3. **Focus on efficiency.** Talk about ways the team member can attack their performance goals to get more done during the day and potentially lift their performance.
4. **Focus the team member on what they can control.** Offer to knock down a barrier for them in exchange for more discretionary effort in a specific area.
5. **Link the development plan with the team member's performance.** Talk about areas they're interested in growing in. Find a link between those areas and the business/role and agree that's a focus for the next quarter.



**Pass The Mic
Beastie Boys**

Coaching is like theatre. As a manager, you have to perform on the fly. If you can't role play, there's no way they'll be able to handle the objections from the 5 (and other) faces on the fly. Good luck out there. The 5 Faces are waiting, and they're not going to take it easy on you.



The *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* cites research that says women are three times as likely to interrupt other women as they are other men.