



STARBUCK ACADEMY

Manager Skills

Manager Skills: Managing Performance

Practical tools for setting clear expectations, holding regular performance conversations and handling underperformance fairly

About 2.5 learning hours across five video lessons. Use each tool with a real person or situation in your team.

Name

Date

STARBUCK & ASSOCIATES

COACHING & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

How to use this workbook

This workbook goes with the five video lessons of Manager Skills: Managing Performance. Each lesson has two pages here: the key ideas with some questions to reflect on, and a practical tool you use in your workplace task that week.

Watch a lesson, read its pages, then use the tool with a real person or situation in your team. Allow about 2.5 learning hours in total, spread over a few weeks so you can try each tool properly.

By the end of the course you will be able to

- Set clear expectations: outcomes, standards and measures
- Run regular one-to-ones and give specific feedback
- Spot performance gaps early and understand their causes
- Agree a fair support plan with clear goals and review dates
- Recognise and stretch good performers, and know when to involve HR

Programme map

LESSON	TITLE	TOOL
1	It starts with clear expectations	The Expectations Agreement
2	Regular performance conversations	The One-to-One Planner
3	Spotting underperformance early	The Five Causes Check
4	Addressing underperformance fairly	The Performance Support Plan
5	Getting the best from good performers	The Stretch and Growth Plan

WORTH KNOWING

This course is general learning material, not legal or HR advice. Formal capability or disciplinary processes must follow your organisation's policies and involve HR.

LESSON 1

It starts with clear expectations

Good performance starts before any work is done. When people know the outcome, the standard and how progress will be judged, most of them will deliver, and you have a fair basis for any later conversation.

Key ideas

- Many performance gaps start with unclear expectations rather than poor effort or attitude.
- Describe the outcome the work is for, not only the task, so people can use their judgement.
- Set out the standard, ideally with an example of good work people can see.
- Agree a few measures that matter, so you share a view of progress without surveillance.
- Ask the person to play the expectation back, talk through obstacles and write it down.

EXAMPLE

Priya asks Tom to "sort out the supplier list". Two weeks later he has tidied the spreadsheet, but she needed the three most expensive contracts reviewed before renewal. Neither of them was at fault. The outcome was never said out loud.

Reflect

Where might someone in my team be unclear about what good looks like right now?

When did I last check that an expectation had landed, rather than assume it had?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Choose one person and one piece of work, and use the Expectations Agreement to agree the outcome, standard, measures and a review date together.

The Expectations Agreement

Element	Question to Answer Together	Example
Outcome	What is this work for, and who benefits?	Leaders have accurate monthly sales figures for their meeting.
Standard	What does good look like? Can we see an example?	Figures checked against the system, no known errors.
Measures	How will we both know it is going well?	Report shared by the 3rd working day, queries answered in a day.
Support	What might get in the way, and what help is needed?	Access to the sales system and a walk-through of last month's report.
Review	When will we look at it together?	Quick check at our next two one-to-ones.

Element	What we agreed
Outcome	
Standard	
Measures	
Support	
Review	

LESSON 2

Regular performance conversations

Performance is shaped week by week, not once a year. Short, regular conversations keep everyone's picture up to date and make honest feedback feel normal.

Key ideas

- Short, regular conversations mean nothing in a formal review comes as a surprise.
- A good one-to-one belongs mainly to the other person, and the time is protected.
- Asking people to assess their own progress first leads to more honest conversations.
- Specific feedback describes what you saw, when, and its impact, for praise as well as concerns.
- Short notes after each one-to-one help you remember progress fairly and spot patterns.

EXAMPLE

Sam used to move one-to-ones whenever things got busy. Now he keeps a fixed thirty minutes every fortnight, and starts by asking, "What is on your mind?" Problems now reach him weeks earlier.

Reflect

How often do my one-to-ones get moved, and what message does that send?

What specific praise could I give this week that I have not yet said?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the One-to-One Planner for at least two one-to-ones this week, letting the person lead and assess their own progress first.

TOOL 2

The One-to-One Planner

A simple shape for a thirty minute one-to-one. Adjust the timings, but keep the order: their agenda first, yours last.

SECTION	TIME	USEFUL QUESTIONS
Their agenda	10 min	What is on your mind? What would be most useful to talk about today?
Progress	10 min	How do you think it is going against what we agreed? What is harder than expected?
Feedback both ways	5 min	Here is something specific I noticed. What could I do differently to help?
Support and next steps	5 min	What do you need from me? What will we each do before we next meet?

Plan and record a one-to-one

SECTION	BEFORE: WHAT I WANT TO COVER	AFTER: WHAT WE AGREED
Their agenda		
Progress		
Feedback		
Next steps		

WORTH KNOWING

Keep notes factual and brief. Write them soon after the meeting and share them if that fits the way your team works.

Spotting underperformance early

The earlier you notice a gap, the easier it is to help. Understand the cause before you decide what to do, because the right response depends on it.

Key ideas

- Early signs are usually small changes from a person's usual level.
- Write down what you have seen, with dates, and keep it separate from the story you are telling yourself.
- Most gaps come from clarity, skill, will, circumstances or wellbeing, or a mix of them.
- Check the work itself, such as workload, tools and processes, before deciding the problem is the person.
- Where health or personal circumstances may be involved, listen with care and get advice on support and adjustments.

EXAMPLE

Lena notices that Chris, usually quick and accurate, has made errors on three invoices this month. Before deciding he is careless, she checks. A new finance system went live a month ago, and Chris missed the training.

Reflect

Is there a change in someone's usual performance that I have noticed but not yet explored?

Which of the five causes do I tend to jump to, and which do I overlook?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the Five Causes Check on one gap you have noticed, then have an open conversation to hear the person's view.

The Five Causes Check

Start with the facts, then consider each cause. Treat your answers as questions to explore with the person, not conclusions.

CAUSE	QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE	WHAT OFTEN HELPS
Clarity	Do they know what is expected, and what matters most?	Revisit the Expectations Agreement.
Skill	Do they have the knowledge, training and practice?	Training, coaching, time with a colleague.
Will	Do they see why it matters? Has something changed for them?	An honest conversation about motivation.
Circumstances	Has workload, tools, process or life outside work changed?	Change something around the person.
Wellbeing	Are they well enough to work at their usual level?	Listen, then seek advice from HR or occupational health.

The facts

What have I actually seen or heard, and when?

My early thoughts

POSSIBLE CAUSE	WHAT I WILL ASK TO CHECK IT

WORTH KNOWING

Do not diagnose. If health or personal circumstances may be involved, adjustments may be needed, so speak to HR or occupational health before deciding next steps.

Addressing underperformance fairly

Addressing a gap early, honestly and with real support is one of the fairest things a manager can do. Avoiding it rarely helps anyone.

Key ideas

- Raising a concern early and kindly is fairer than waiting and hoping it improves.
- Open with specific facts and why they matter, then ask for the person's view and listen.
- A support plan sets out two or three priorities, what good looks like and the support you will give.
- Regular review dates and short shared records make the process consistent and fair.
- If the plan is not working or the concern is serious, speak to HR, as formal processes must follow your organisation's policies.

EXAMPLE

Omar has spotted missed deadlines for two months. He finally opens with two examples and asks for Jess's view. She explains that she has been covering a colleague's work. Their plan starts with clearing that.

Reflect

Is there a concern I have been putting off raising, and what has waiting cost?

What support could I realistically offer that would make the biggest difference?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the Performance Support Plan to prepare for a current concern, or practise on a past one, and agree the first review date.

TOOL 4

The Performance Support Plan

An informal plan, agreed together, to help someone get back on track. Keep it to two or three areas and set the first review date before you finish.

AREA TO IMPROVE	WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	HOW WE WILL KNOW	SUPPORT I WILL GIVE

Review dates

DATE	PROGRESS WE SAW	WHAT WE AGREED NEXT

BEFORE ANY FORMAL STEP

If the plan is not working, or the concern is serious, speak to HR before doing anything else. Formal capability or disciplinary processes must follow your organisation's policies.

Involve HR early if health, disability or personal circumstances may be a factor. This tool is general guidance, not legal or HR advice.

Getting the best from good performers

Good performers need recognition, challenge and growth as much as anyone. Managing performance well means paying attention to the whole team, not only to problems.

Key ideas

- Good performers are easy to overlook, and need your time and attention too.
- Recognition works best when it is specific, sincere, timely and fits how the person likes to be thanked.
- Stretch grows skills or influence, and comes with something taken off the person's plate.
- An honest conversation about what someone wants next is itself a form of recognition.
- Managing performance is a rhythm of expectations, one-to-ones, early attention, fair support and recognition.

EXAMPLE

Ben is Asha's most reliable team member and rarely asks for anything. In a one-to-one Asha asks what would make the work more interesting. Ben mentions training new starters, so Asha lets him lead the next induction and moves a weekly report to someone else.

Reflect

Who in my team does great work that I may be taking for granted?

How balanced is my attention between people who are struggling and people who are thriving?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the Stretch and Growth Plan with one strong performer to agree recognition, one stretch opportunity and what you will take off their plate.

The Stretch and Growth Plan

Use this with someone who is doing well. Fill in the first two rows yourself, then talk the rest through with them.

NOTES	
What they do really well	
How they like to be recognised	
What they want next	
One stretch opportunity	
What I will take off their plate	

Stretch without overload

CHECK	YES OR NOT YET
It grows their skills or influence, not just their workload	
We have agreed what they will learn from it	
Something has come off their plate to make room	
We have a date to talk about how it is going	

What I am going to do

Two or three small changes that you actually make will do more than a long list you never start.

My three actions

WHAT I WILL DO	WHEN	WHO I WILL TELL

Coming back to this

Put a date in your diary about a month from now and answer these three questions.

What has changed since I did this workbook?

What did I not get to, and what got in the way?

What am I carrying forward?

KEEP GOING

Manager Skills: Managing Performance

Come back to the video lessons, tools and knowledge checks at any time during your 12 months' access, and complete the course to receive your certificate.

£49 per person, one-off, inc. VAT

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