

Leadership skills: 5 essential questions to ask your staff today

Fierce Conversations, a business consulting company, recommends all leaders, at their earliest convenience, take the time to ask your employees five essential questions that get to the heart of their role within the company.

1. What difference do you want to make here? The act of asking it alone recognizes that a leader does in fact believe the employee can make a difference. It gives the employee the opportunity to think, perhaps for the first time, about the answer. This can help build a greater connection to their individual purpose and to the purpose of the organization, and ideally drive them toward greater success within their current role, and beyond.

2. How do you like to be recognized/rewarded? The truth is, sometimes individuals would rather a personal, in-person recognition vs. something more public. And while a bonus is always nice, perhaps some on your team would prefer a few extra days off instead. Understanding what motivates your employees on a personal level will ensure you can use these forms of reward to continue to get the results you want.

3. What is something that you feel is holding you back? This is a loaded question, but one that is worth asking. It quickly gets to the heart of any issues in a way that opens up the conversation to a number of possible barriers to success. Your job is to take these answers and try to smooth the way for that employee to be even more productive and self-aware. It is critical for you to be able to ask many probing questions, even focusing on "What else? What else? What else?"

4. What would you like to be doing two months from now? Two months isn't long, but it is enough time to set short-term, attainable goals. These answers can help focus an employee—whether it be greater work/life balance or finishing a project that's been on the back burner.

5. Do you feel you have successful work/life blending? Work/life blending is a bit different than work/life balance, and the subtle wording is key. Blending is a different way to look at it. The key here is to ensure that they feel supported in what they have created, or possibly, need to create.