

7 things you should tell your boss at review time

Do you consider a performance review a time simply for your manager to provide feedback? Well, you're half right. A performance review provides the perfect opportunity to have a healthy two-way conversation with your manager about how you're functioning in your role, what ambitions you have and other relevant issues.

Not all of us get formal reviews in the workplace, but it's important to have a conversation with your boss about performance and goals one way or another.

“Go into your review with the relevant skill in mind, and the rationale behind why you feel it will benefit your workplace, and you will demonstrate to your manager that you're committed to developing within your role.”

For the best way to navigate this, career coach Nicole Grainger-Marsh shares her advice on the seven things you should tell your boss at review time.

- 1. What you love about your job, and what you wish you could be doing more of.**

Start off by talking about what you love about your job, and you'll set a positive and productive context for your performance review, Grainger-Marsh says.

“When you talk about what you wish you did more of, you should make sure you keep it contextual – both to your own needs and wishes as well as the company's needs.”

For example, if you enjoy making promotional flyers for your workplace as part of your marketing job, you could say, “I enjoy helping out with promotions and would love to be of assistance in that department regularly, if there's an ongoing need.”

- 2. Other skills you have that you believe would benefit your workplace.**

“We all tend to think our manifest talents are clearly visible to everyone around us. However, there's a good chance your boss doesn't know every skill you have,” Grainger-Marsh says.

Before you bring them up, consider how utilising these skills could benefit your workplace. “Remember, this isn’t just about what you want to do, it’s also about what you can bring in addition to make this role easier, and the company’s performance better. It’s all about win-win. Start your comments with some variation of, ‘Another area that I can add further value is...’”

3. The achievements you’re most proud of, and why.

Don’t be a wallflower when it comes to talking about your accomplishments and what motivates you at work. “That side of you is what your manager needs to see and understand, so they have the best chance to provide you with the type of role and environment where you will thrive and add the most value,” says Grainger-Marsh.

It’s important to talk about your achievements in the context of work. “Consider how you have worked as part of the team to undertake them, and, if possible, make sure they enhanced your department’s position and prestige.” It could be as simple as streamlining a process, which increased efficiency.

4. What you need in order to do your best work.

“We are all affected both positively and negatively by external factors like environment or management,” says Grainger-Marsh. “However, before you raise any requests for change, make sure you’ve looked at both sides.” Think about the difference between ‘must-haves’ and ‘nice-to-haves’.

For example, requesting updated software will enable you to do your best work and is therefore likely a ‘must-have’, whereas asking to work from a yacht would probably fall in the ‘nice-to-have’ category. “Present any requests for change as something that’s good for you and the business, and you’ll have a much better chance of effecting the change you want.”

5. The skills you want to gain and why.

It’s important to continue upskilling, and raising your desire to gain new skills with your manager shows you care about your work. However, you need to make sure the skills you want to develop are related to your role, and that they will benefit your workplace. Learning macramé might sound appealing, but it’s probably unlikely to be relevant to your work if you’re a receptionist. But you might be able to find other creative tasks you could take on if you let your manager know about your creative streak.

Grainger-Marsh says, “Go into your review with the relevant skill in mind, and the rationale behind why you feel it will benefit your workplace, and you will demonstrate to your manager that you’re committed to developing within your role.”

6. Which processes you think could improve, and how.

Performance reviews are great opportunities to provide feedback on processes that you feel could be refined, and doing so will show your manager that you're proactive. Keep in mind, though, that not all things can be changed.

"Come armed with a suggestion or two on what could be changed, and make sure you tie it back to improvements," Grainger-Marsh recommends.

"Remember that to change the process, the chances are your manager will need to present a business case. The easier you make it for them, the more likely you are to get the change you want."

7. What you would like to achieve in the next 12 months.

As with the skills you want to gain, this is your chance to demonstrate your alignment to the business, says Grainger-Marsh. Try to find some common ground between what you want to do, and what the business is focusing on.

If you have a desire to move up in your role, make sure that the skills you want to gain and the processes you have talked about reflect this. "Don't go into the session with a feeling of entitlement or expectation of an immediate outcome. Create a win-win for you and your manager, and you will be better positioned to achieve what you want."