



5 Ways to Put Learning at the Center of Performance Reviews

A guide to transform managers into learning champions and develop high-performing teams

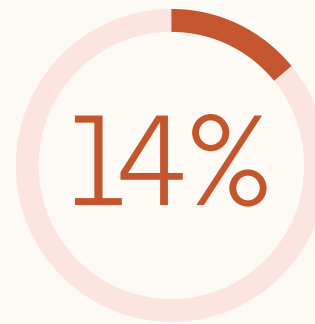
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Let's talk about Performance Reviews

Performance reviews are a hot topic amongst managers, employees, and executives alike this time of year—and it's up to Learning & Development (L&D) and HR professionals to empower managers to make them successful. Unfortunately, performance reviews today are widely unpopular.



According to Gallup, only 14% of employees strongly agree their performance reviews inspire them to improve.

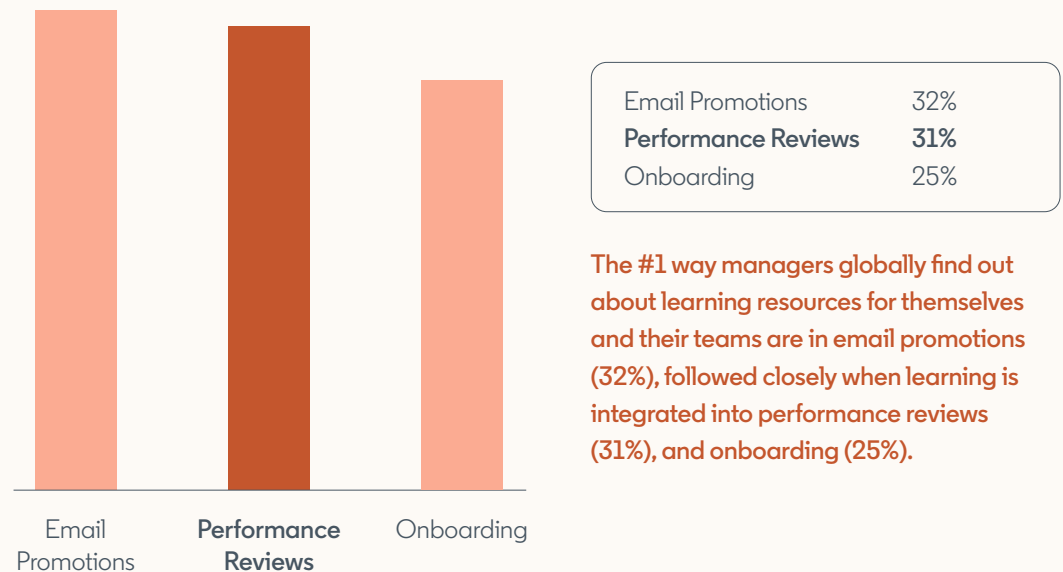
But performance reviews are important. When done well, they go beyond a standard performance appraisal of strengths and areas of development. They can offer an opportunity to strengthen manager and employee relationships, enhance performance, and provide employees a path to learn and grow. Even more importantly, it's an opportunity to engage managers in learning content—something that is consistently rated a top challenge among talent developers.

Are performance reviews the key to unlocking manager engagement?

We think so.

New 2019 LinkedIn Learning data, gathered from over 1,500 managers globally, may surprise you. When it comes to making managers aware of learning, email and performance reviews are equally important.

Top 3 ways managers find about learning resources globally



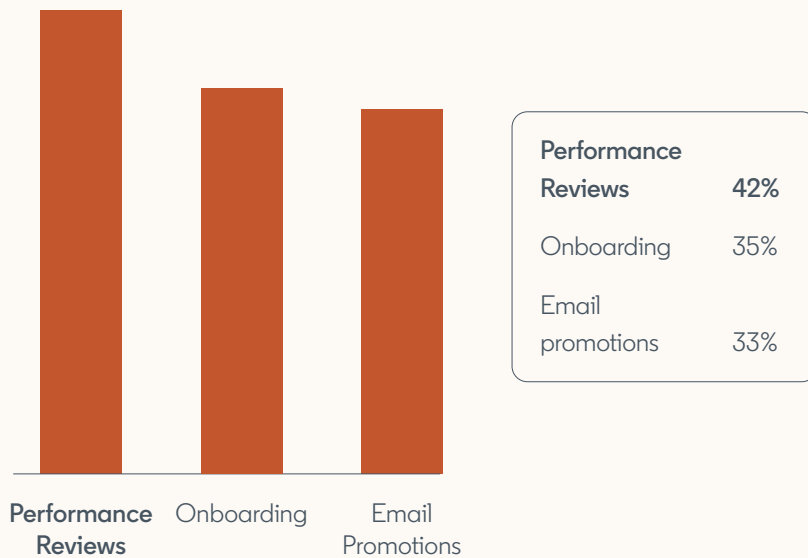
The #1 way managers globally find out about learning resources for themselves and their teams are in email promotions (32%), followed closely when learning is integrated into performance reviews (31%), and onboarding (25%).



This is even more true in enterprise companies. Performance reviews are far and away the #1 way that managers find out about learning resources. Surprisingly, they are even more effective than promotional emails or when learning is integrated into the onboarding process.

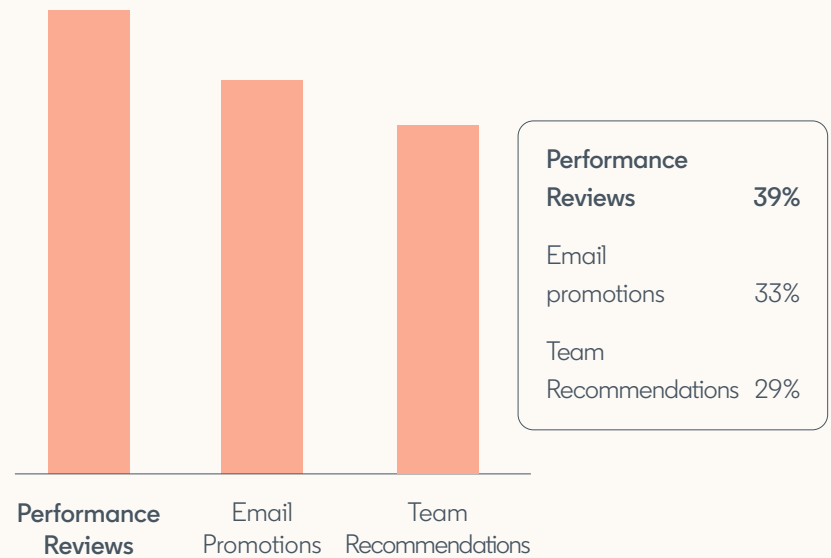
Top Ways Managers Find Out About Learning Resources

Enterprise Companies (5,000+ employees)

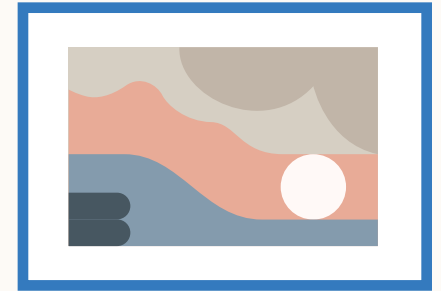
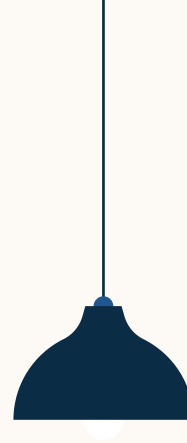


The #1 way managers at large enterprises globally find out about learning resources available to them and their teams is when they are integrated into performance reviews (42%), more than during onboarding (35%), or email promotions (33%).

Mid-Market Companies (1,000-4,999 employees)



The same is true for mid-market companies at 39%, with email trailing at 33%, and team recommendations at 29%.



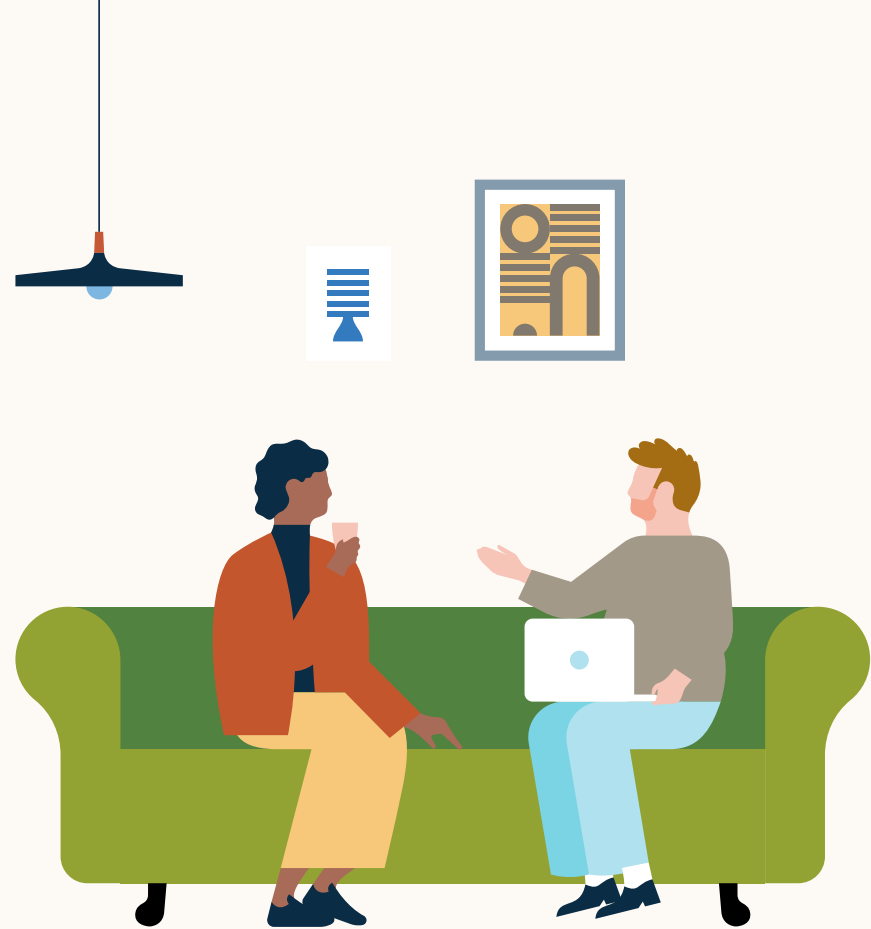
So, grab a coffee and discover how you, as a learning leader, can help managers put learning at the center of performance reviews to drive higher employee performance while transforming them into learning champions. The practical tips and courses in this guide will help you get there. That's a win-win in our book.



1. Delivery

Performance reviews are more about the 'how' than the 'what.'

Give managers the information that they need to make performance reviews an opportunity to strengthen their management skills and facilitate a valuable experience for team members.



By integrating learning into performance reviews, employees have an actionable roadmap to help them build the skills they need to succeed in their current role and take their career to the next level.

Top Tips



Take Your Time

Often, managers are evaluating a full year of performance, so it's worth encouraging them to put in at least 2 hours to gather 360-degree feedback and thoughtfully craft a review that is positive, unbiased, and helpful.



No One Likes Surprises

Giving employees a chance to review the feedback a few days ahead of a performance review meeting helps them prepare, too. Even better, having effective, frequent check-in conversations throughout the year can also help avoid surprises.



Be Prepared

Rescheduling performance reviews can send the wrong message. Managers should schedule the meeting a few weeks ahead, show up on time, and be ready for the conversation.



This Isn't a Negotiation

The focus of a review is an opportunity to review and discuss feedback rather than negotiating the review itself. If the discussion takes an unproductive turn, then managers should firmly pivot to the path forward.

1. Delivery

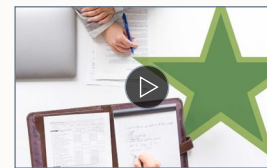
“Effectively giving and receiving feedback are two sides of the same coin. When you understand what it takes to receive feedback well, you’ll also master how to provide feedback effectively and vice versa.”



*Gemma Leigh Roberts, Director,
Resilience, Performance &
Wellbeing Consultant,
Kona Coaching
[Follow Gemma](#)*

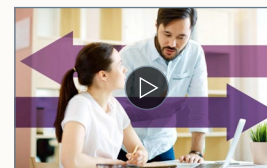


Learn More on LinkedIn Learning



The Manager's Role in Conducting Performance Reviews

Dr. Todd Dewett discusses how to create an impactful written and in-person performance review. [View course](#)



Giving and Receiving Feedback

Leigh Roberts shows how to give effective feedback and how to receive it with a growth mindset. [View course](#)

2. Coaching

Every great player needs a coach, especially during pivotal career moments.

At their best, performance reviews are not only an opportunity for managers to discuss performance, but they are also coaching opportunities to help their direct reports grow and develop.



Top Tips



Ask Powerful Questions

Open-ended probing questions invite people to find clarity, new perspectives, and can trigger employees to generate new ideas and solutions.



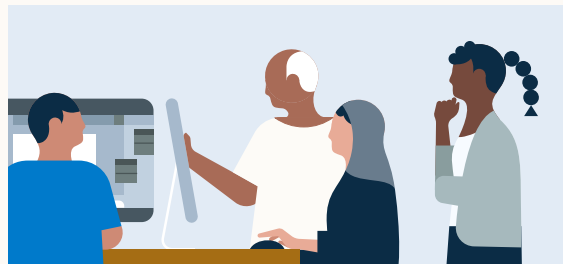
Listen Actively

When coaching an employee, managers should give them their full attention. By putting their phone on silent and closing their laptops, they are signaling that they are solely focused on their employees' success.



Give Specific Feedback

Providing feedback in generalities can lead to misunderstandings. Managers should be specific and focus on observable actions and facts so that everyone is on the same page.



Coach Compassionately

When in coaching mode, managers should choose their words wisely and deliver them tactfully to ensure that the conversation stays positive, constructive, and growth-oriented.

2. Coaching

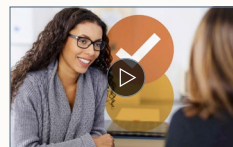


“What’s in it for those being coached? The obvious answer is the growth in their skills, but it’s so much more than that. When employees are coached, they feel like their talent is being recognized and their potential is being respected. It’s a huge motivator.”



Sara Canaday, Keynote Speaker, Consultant, and Author, Sara Canaday & Associates
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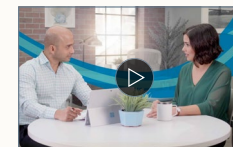
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Coaching Skills for Leaders and Managers

(Unlocked through 12/31/19) Leadership expert Sara Canaday gives you coaching models and skills to support employee development.

[View course](#)



Cornerstones of Coaching

Leadership coach Lisa Gates explains how managers can establish a coaching relationship with their direct reports.

[View course](#)

3. Goals

Setting the right goals leads to employee and company success.

Help your managers set performance goals that drive the right behavior, helps prioritize work that moves the business, and guides high-quality decision-making.



Top Tips



Create SMART Goals

When managers set goals with employees, make sure that they are SMART. It's an acronym for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.



Link Goals to Strategies

Managers should work with their teams to ensure that their goals and priorities ladder up to larger strategic initiatives or your company's mission and vision.



Everyone Loves Stretch Goals

Stretch goals push team members to achieve more, reach higher, and build new skills. If they are intelligent risks, then make sure that the potential payoff is exponential.



Hold Team Accountable

When evaluating performance, did employees achieve their goals? Whether they knocked them out of the park or fell short, a performance review is a great time to discuss future goals.

3. Goals

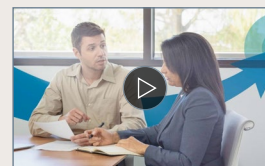
“For maximum success, everyone needs at least one BHAG—a big hairy audacious goal. The idea is simple. If your goals aren’t sometimes audacious, then your performance won’t be either.”



*Dr. Todd Dewett,
Best-Selling Author at LinkedIn
Learning, Inspirational Speaker,
Leadership and Authenticity Guru*
[Follow Todd](#)



Learn More on LinkedIn Learning



Setting Goals and Managing Performance

Dr. Todd Dewett will help you set you create smart goals for your employees that align with your business strategy and their skills. [View course](#)



Setting Team and Employee Goals

Mike Figliuolo walks you through different types of goals including bottom-up, zero-based, commit, and stretch goals. [View course](#)



4. Teams

High performing teams amplify positive outcomes.

Performance reviews are an opportunity for managers to not only evaluate individual performance, but also promote key cultural expectations to create high-performing teams.



Define High Performance

Whether you factor in hard business metrics, such as revenue, or qualitative metrics like employee engagement, define and measure what high-performance means in your organization.



Recognize Positive Behavior

Rewards reinforce behaviors that are consistent with the culture you're trying to build and performance you're trying to drive—individually and collectively.



Be a Storyteller

Stories help build a high-performing culture because they are memorable, engaging, and can demonstrate the culture a manager is trying to create.



Promote Inclusivity and Belonging

Diverse teams that celebrate differences and accept them, are well-known to collaborate more effectively and achieve more together.

4. Teams



“Your mission is your purpose. It explains why the organization exists and how it contributes to the world. The culture you build is an enabler of accomplishing your mission. High performance cultures stand for something, the vision and mission represent an ideal or a goal that people can get behind.”



Mike Figliuolo, Managing Director,
thoughtLEADERS

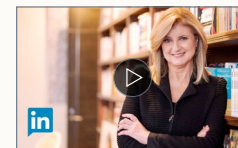
[Follow Mike](#)

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Creating a High Performance Culture

(Unlocked through 12/31/19) Mike Figliuolo reveals how to define your organization’s culture, set direction, manage performance, and foster a culture of learning. [View course](#)



Creating the Conditions for Others to Thrive

(Unlocked through 12/31/19) Arianna Huffington and others discuss practical changes to reduce stress and focus your energy on your team. [View course](#)

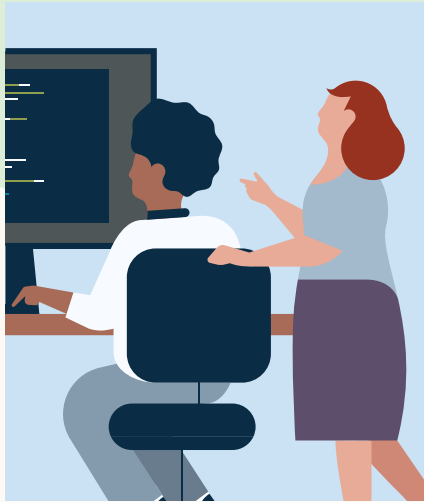
5. Growth

Help managers grow the careers of everyone on their team.

Within a team, performance typically falls along a bell curve—some exceeding expectations, a few struggling, and most in the middle—and each requires a different approach during a performance review.



Top Tips



Stretch High-Potentials

Most high-performers thrive when their skills are stretched and their job scope increases. Give them new challenges while providing the right level of support and independence.



Coach High-Performers to Learn

When new challenges are given, high-potentials are terrified of failure. Help them build new skills by integrating learning into their individual performance plan to help them feel more confident and succeed.



Talk About Poor Performance

Tough performance evaluations can sometimes hinder performance. Instead, managers should have a conversation about it, listen to the context an employee gives, and then work together on a plan to move forward.



Set Clear Expectations

Make sure that an employee who is struggling understands what managers expect of them moving forward and the gap between current performance and what is acceptable.

5. Growth

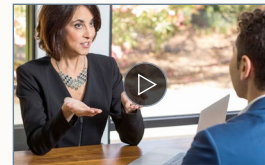
“High-performers are best rewarded with growth opportunities. Whether it’s a promotion or assignment to a new project. This type of recognition results in a clear win-win for you and the employee.”



Don Phin, Keynote Speaker and Emotional Intelligence Trainer
[Follow Don](#)



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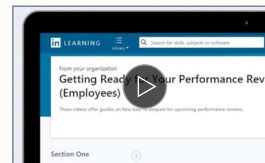
Managing High Potentials

Sara Canaday helps you understand the mindset and motivations of high potentials so you can meet their help them grow and develop. [View course](#)



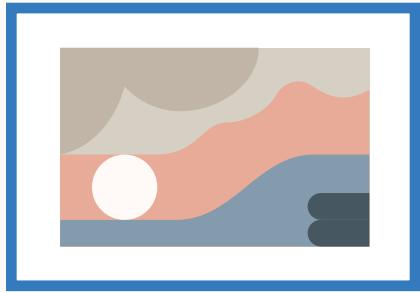
Improving Employee Performance

(Unlocked through 12/31/19) Don Phin explains how to get to the root of poor employee performance and coach low-performing employees. [View course](#)



Bonus: Individual Performance Plan

This template that managers and employees can work on together, can help them document learning goals and then the recommended courses to build their skills. [View course](#)



Putting it All Together

We hope that this guide has helped you empower your managers to deliver performance reviews that not only a look at past performance, but also create a path for employees to develop new skills and grow their careers. And, because performance reviews are the most effective way for managers to discover learning resources, they are a great opportunity to activate managers and foster a culture of learning.

Top 20 Tips to Put Learning at the Center of Performance Reviews

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2 No One Likes Surprises

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