

Counseling Your Employees

The “2-Minute Challenge”

The “2-Minute Challenge” is a way to have a brief - maybe not two minutes, but certainly short and focused - and meaningful conversation that identifies a specific problem and redirects the employee. The “2-Minute Challenge” can improve communications and perhaps mitigate any further action, including formal disciplinary action. It consists of the following steps:

1. State what you have observed – “This is what I saw...”

Example: Brad, I could help but notice that you were late again with your monthly report.

2. Wait for response from employee

3. Remind employee of goal – “This is what I need to see...”

Example: We spoke before about the importance of getting those reports to me on time so I can include them in my department summary. I expect you to have it to me on time in the future.

4. Ask for a specific solution – “What can we do to make sure this happens?”

Example: What can you do to assure me that you will turn your report in on time?

5. Agree on solution – “So we agree that...”

Example: So, beginning today, I can expect to have your report prepared and delivered on time?

6. Follow up using positive reinforcement and pay attention for signs of relapse

Example: Thanks, Brad. I appreciate your help. Your contributions are important to our team.

During this conversation, don’t be side-tracked by items that are unrelated specifically to the issue you are addressing. Stay focused and direct.

Also, it’s important that the solution is specific and time bound, and that the employee takes ownership of the issue and thus is responsible for changing his behavior accordingly.