

LEADERSHIP TOOLS
Skip Level Meetings
Overview & Sample Questions

Overview

Skip Level Meetings are periodic meetings with the groups of individuals who report to your direct reports, without your direct reports present. The general purpose of *Skip Level Meetings* is to give managers an opportunity to gather employees' thoughts about the organization and to learn of their satisfactions, dissatisfactions and recommendations for the future. These meetings can:

- Keep you in touch with what is going on in within your organization
- Solicit feedback on how your leadership is perceived
- Identify issues early in order to take corrective actions
- Can be a way for managers to inform employees about their goals, standards, the type of work culture they would like to establish, and
- To show that they care about the employees within the organization
- Gain feedback on your direct reports performance

Depending on the climate of the organization – *Skip Level Meetings* might occur quarterly, or just once or twice per year. Based on your goal(s), they may be held with just the reports to one of your direct reports, or with a mix of staff from your various direct reports. Employees may initially be a bit suspicious of these meetings and uncertain about how the information will be used. If you can ensure confidentiality, the trust level between you and the employees will be enhanced. In order to maintain trust with your own direct report, always remember to inform them that you will be conducting these meetings, with whom, when they will occur, and why you are conducting them. (Consider sharing the list of questions you plan to utilize.)

Sample Questions

Here are some sample questions to consider using in these meetings. (Encourage employees to share responses to these questions relative to: the College, their own Division or Department):

- What is going well?
- What needs improvement?
- Are you getting the information from your supervisor that you need in order to do your job effectively?
- Are you getting the equipment and resources from your supervisor that you need to do your job?
- Does your supervisor meet with you regularly? Are they available for you when you need them?
- How well do you understand what is expected of you?
- Do you feel comfortable asking your supervisor questions and discussing work-related concerns?
- Does your supervisor listen to your ideas and suggestions?
- Are you receiving training for the work you do?
- Do you feel recognized for the work you do?
- Are you receiving adequate information about the division? About the campus?
- Do you understand how your role fits into the department goals? The Strategic Plan?
- What could your supervisor do differently to be more effective?
- What do you wish your supervisor or I would do differently?
- Suppose your work unit had to stop doing some of the activities it now does. What could/should not be changed?
- Describe any tension or friction that exists between your department and other departments of the organization?
- How well does your supervisor and those above him/her understand the technical problems you face in doing your work?
- How does the planning, organizing and scheduling of the work in your department get accomplished?
- How free do you feel about talking over job problems with your supervisor?
- What are some of the helpful/unhelpful practices that go on in your work unit that you would like to share with me?
- What could I be doing differently to make your job easier?
- What should I know about – that I might not be aware of?
- What are the latest rumors?
- What else should I know about?
- I have asked you many questions. What questions do you have for me?