

The Brief - April 2023

Review Ready: Getting the Most Out of Your Performance Discussion

At this time of year, most organisations do some form of performance review. So how can you prepare and what can you expect?

We have led People & Culture teams for many years and discuss career histories, paths and ambitions with lawyers every day. We have spent hours coaching lawyers and managers on how to have great conversations that are positive, constructive, honest and career-enhancing.

So here are our tips for enhancing the performance review process and, ultimately, your career.

Not a once-a-year thing

Performance is not something that should just be measured once a year. Ideally, you're receiving and asking for regular feedback and what comes up in the review shouldn't be a surprise to either party. For those who manage people, make sure you give ongoing feedback. That 30-minute coffee every month is the perfect opportunity to give and, most importantly, ask for feedback.

A mutual exchange

Getting the most out of a performance review is a two-way street. If you take the time for the discussion and demonstrate interest, thought and effort, your manager will too (not always the case – but something to still pursue over your career). The important thing to remember is that you must drive the direction of your own career. Unless you are clear about your ambitions and aspirations, it's difficult to work with your manager and team to support your growth.

Top tips for preparing for the most effective performance review

- Set up a time for the meeting. You don't need to wait for an invitation.
- Before the meeting, send your thoughts and a snapshot of your performance. Think about:
 - The contributions you have made, including the matters you've worked on.
 - Your contribution to client relationships, people management and your broader contribution to the firm (ie involvement in committees/sectors/innovation and so on).
 - It's helpful to include what you've learnt and the new skills you've developed or refined.

- 'If you would value feedback from other people, especially other partners, make sure you are clear on this expectation.
- Now think about the future. Some questions to ask yourself:
 - Where do I want to be in 12 months' time?
 - What experiences do I need to achieve this?
 - What support do I need to achieve this?
 - What am I asking of my manager?
 - Be honest about where your learning gaps are and how you can get support to grow.

Setting **objectives** isn't something many of us find easy. This might be something you can collaborate and develop with your manager. They are useful to keep your career on track and there are lots of resources online about setting clear and meaningful objectives. It's a good idea to come to your meeting with draft ideas. Just remember to keep them achievable, aspirational and measurable – and ideally aligned to your organisation's goals.

It's so important to make sure you give yourself time to prepare for your performance review. Not only will this make it easier to recall your achievements and have some idea about what you want to discuss, you will also get the most out of the time with your manager. It's a time to demonstrate that you take your career seriously and value the input of your manager. It's also a great chance to carve out some time for reflection and planning – something that can be difficult to prioritise when you work in a busy and demanding profession.

Subscribe [**here**](#) to receive our newsletters. We regularly publish the latest industry insights and trends – including our Salary Pulse Check – and share the newest roles on the market.

If you'd like to have a preparation discussion or need any assistance to get the most out of this conversation, don't hesitate to contact us.

We love nothing more than talking about our candidates and clients. But recently, we've had people ask us to share more about who we are. And because we have had a whole bunch of new people recently join our network, we thought it was a good time to (re)introduce ourselves:

About Us

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