

There are many difficult conversations a manager will have, and one of those is the “performance management chat”

Whether you have a good or bad relationship with your team member, these conversations when you pick up on people’s poor performance can feel very awkward for both people involved.

When having this conversation with your team member, consider following the **SCOPE** model.

Let’s look at this a bit closer:

## **The S stands for Symptom**

This is where you show your team member evidence of their poor performance; this may be poor sales figures, work that is missing or projects that have not been completed.

It’s essential that the evidence is tangible and that the evidence is directly linked to the individual involved.

For example, the evidence you may provide is that the person in question’s sales figures are down and the cause may have been that they made twenty less cold calls than last month.

## **The C in the acronym is Cause.**

What is it that your team member thinks is causing their poor performance?

Avoid questions such as “Why are you performing badly this month?” By beginning the question with “why” this will imply you are pointing the finger of blame and will cause your team member to leap directly on the defensive.

Aim to ask more along the lines of “Are you aware of what might be causing these issues this month?”, to avoid blaming.

## **The O in SCOPE stands for Options.**

Once you have agreed on the fact that there is an issue with their performance, the next step is to generate options for improvement.

Brainstorm potential solutions with your team member, let them come up with the ideas for the problem; your job is to facilitate their idea generation.

Once you have come up with several solutions, discuss the merits of each one and from there choose the most appropriate option.

**This now brings us to the letter P, which stands for Preference.**

After you have discussed the pros and cons of each outcome, agree on the most preferential option that works best for both parties.

If you force your preferred outcome on the poor performer, the likelihood is they will do their best to ensure this option fails, so compromise on a solution that works for you both.

**And finally, the last letter in the acronym stands for 'Execute action'.**

It's all well and good compromising on an agreed outcome; however you must provide a path for the poor performer to achieve their desired outcome.

Come up with a step by step action plan to ensure that this poor performance is turned around. Have clear goals and objectives along the way that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.

Once you have an action plan in place, it is essential that there are also repercussions and punishments in place if these terms aren't met.

So when you next have to carry out the performance management chat, consider the SCOPE model:

The **S** stands for symptom, provide evidence and show how the poor performer is directly involved.

The **C** stands for cause, try and get the cause of this poor performance from the horses' mouth whilst avoiding finger pointing.

The **O** stands for options, generate options for improvement and discuss the merits of each one.

The **P** stands for preference, which is the preferred option and is most likely for the poor performer to succeed?

And the **E** stands for 'Execute action', create a clear action plan for your member of staff and also explain the consequences if these actions are not met.