

# To Enhance Performance Management, Make It Continuous

5 ways to give employees the feedback they crave all year long



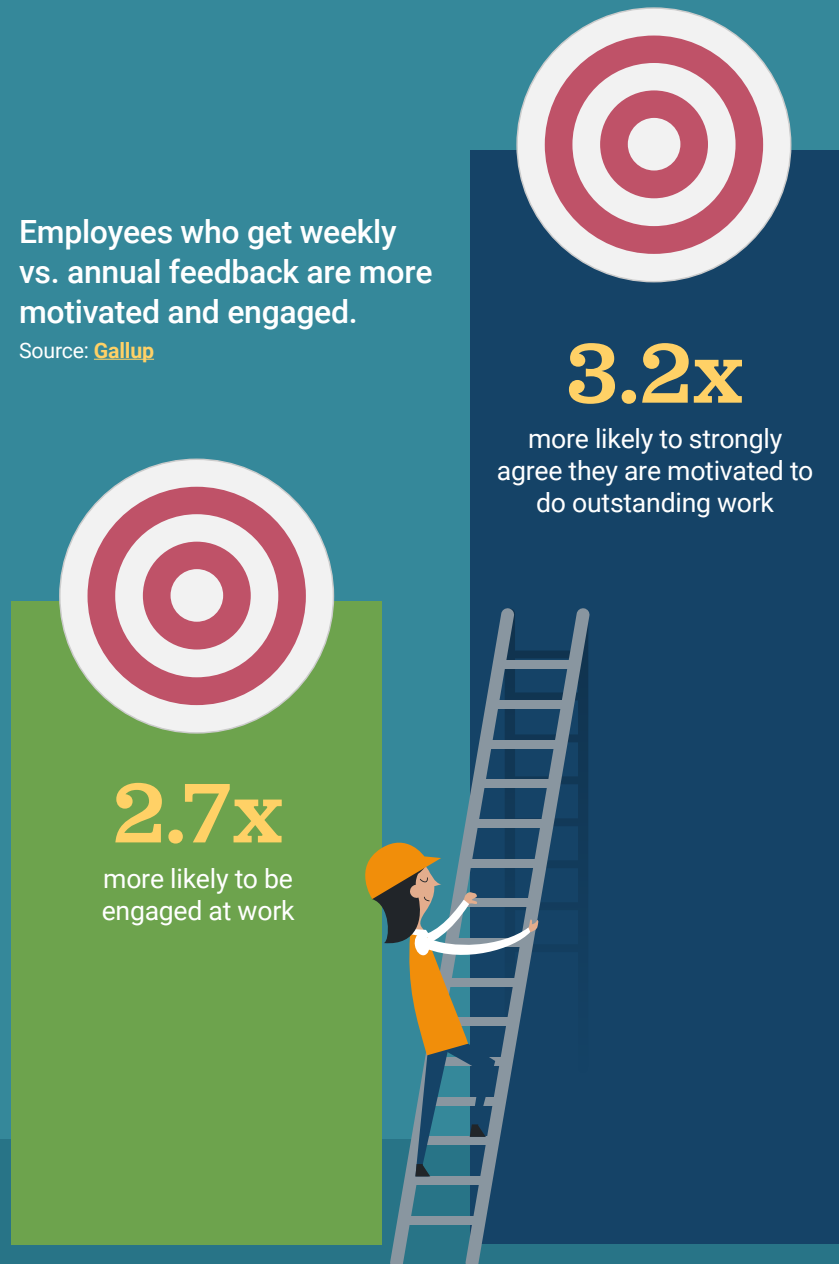
# The annual review is no longer the only game in town.

Today, fewer companies are relying **solely** on giving performance feedback to employees once a year.

Instead, they are using techniques to engage in an ongoing, open conversation with employees to coach, recognize and engage their workforce.

*Gone are the days when performance management meant using a somewhat static annual process, focusing solely on supervisor-subordinate pairs with little input from others, and relying on complex and likely invalid rating processes in an often feedback-poor environment.*

– **SHRM**, Performance Management that Makes a Difference: An Evidence-Based Approach



# Employees are hungry for more feedback.

People want to be recognized for good work and coached on how to improve. This can't be done effectively if it's accomplished just once a year.



**23% of employees** aren't satisfied by how frequently they get feedback from their direct manager.

Source: [Officevibe](#)



**28% of employees** report that feedback they receive isn't frequent enough to help them understand how to improve.

Source: [Officevibe](#)



**47% of employees** receive feedback just once or a few times a year.

Source: [Gallup](#)



# More frequent feedback works.



**85% of employees** who have weekly check-ins with their manager report high levels of engagement.

Source: [Gallup](#)

# Companies are transforming performance management.

Some companies have ditched annual reviews entirely. That might work for some organizations, but annual reviews can be an important component of continuous performance management.

Here are five ways organizations are giving more feedback and coaching to employees.

1. **Just-in-time feedback**
2. **Regular check-ins**
3. **Project reviews or debriefs**
4. **360 degree feedback**
5. **Annual reviews**

Let's take a closer look at each of these techniques.



# 1. Just-in-time feedback.

Instead of saving input for the next review or check-in, managers offer almost immediate recognition or coaching.

Here's an example of effective, timely feedback to an employee who got some unexpected blowback from a customer.

1. "Congratulations. You really handled those negative comments from the customer in today's meeting in a professional way. I appreciated how you listened and offered suggestions for improvement. That was a perfect way to defuse the situation and move us forward."
2. "In today's meeting, the customer offered some negative comments that we weren't expecting. I wanted to share a few tips for how to address situations like this so you can be prepared if this happens again."

We haven't included the tips here, but it's important to note that when offering constructive feedback you need to give actionable steps so the employee can use the feedback to improve.



## 2. Regular check-ins.

In many companies, a weekly check-in or 1:1 is standard. It's an opportunity for managers and employees to discuss how things are going, surface any challenges or concerns and develop a positive, **trusting** relationship.

But, weekly isn't the golden rule. In some industries it's not feasible for managers to meet with every direct report each and every week.

Check-ins can be monthly or even quarterly, especially if you're already offering some just-in-time feedback in between formal conversations.



### 3. Project reviews or debriefs.

In some industries—like construction—work is generally performed as projects, which gives the opportunity to debrief with employees when the project, or a project milestone, is complete.

Project reviews can act as a stepping stone to learning and development.

Looking at their performance on a project enables you to see how employees are doing in specific areas. Some employees may have gained significant proficiency and are ready for the next career step. Others may need some additional support or training in certain skills.

Project reviews lend themselves to longitudinal insights. If you look at an employee's performance over several projects you can gain a deeper perspective into how they are growing over time.



## 4. 360-degree feedback.

**360-degree feedback leverages feedback from people who work with an employee.**

Managers, co-workers, direct reports, customers, CEOs or anyone who is in the employee's circle can offer input. This provides managers and employees an idea of how their performance is viewed by others.

360-degree feedback works very well with project reviews because projects are always team-based. Using the construction example again, you can ask for input from crew supervisors, co-workers in the same trade and even colleagues in allied trades. This can give you real insights into how well an employee communicates with and supports others, something that's vital on a construction work site.

Another potential advantage to this type of feedback is that it can mitigate bias or the impact of poor relationships by getting multiple data points from other people.





## 5. Annual review.

When feedback is continuous, the annual review is a culmination of many conversations had throughout the year. As a result, there should be no surprises and that should make the process less worrisome or tense for both the employee and the manager.

If an employee had annual goals, this is the opportunity to explore those. It's also the time to recap, level-set and discuss plans and goals for the upcoming year.

Many companies couple the annual review with pay discussions. However, if performance and pay aren't truly related, that discussion around money may detract from having a real dialog around development and career paths. In many cases, it can make sense to hold those conversations separately.

And, while annual reviews are formal, they don't have to be dreary. If you've got a great, productive and highly engaged employee take the opportunity to thank and celebrate them. Employees really want to be **recognized** and appreciated and the formality of the annual review is a perfect avenue for that.



## Make a feedback loop.

You might have heard the adage that employees don't quit jobs they quit managers. Since managers are the ones most responsible for providing feedback, failing to offer timely, relevant and actionable feedback may contribute to people looking for their next job.

One remedy is to offer feedback more frequently. Holding back positive and negative input for an annual review is a recipe for disengaged employees. Workers may not only be scratching their heads wondering how they're doing and what their career path is, they may be looking for a new opportunity that offers more input and recognition.

With a tight labor market, you can't afford to lose people over a lack of feedback. No matter how busy you are, consider how much busier you and your team will be when that star employee resigns.



# Simplify continuous performance conversations.

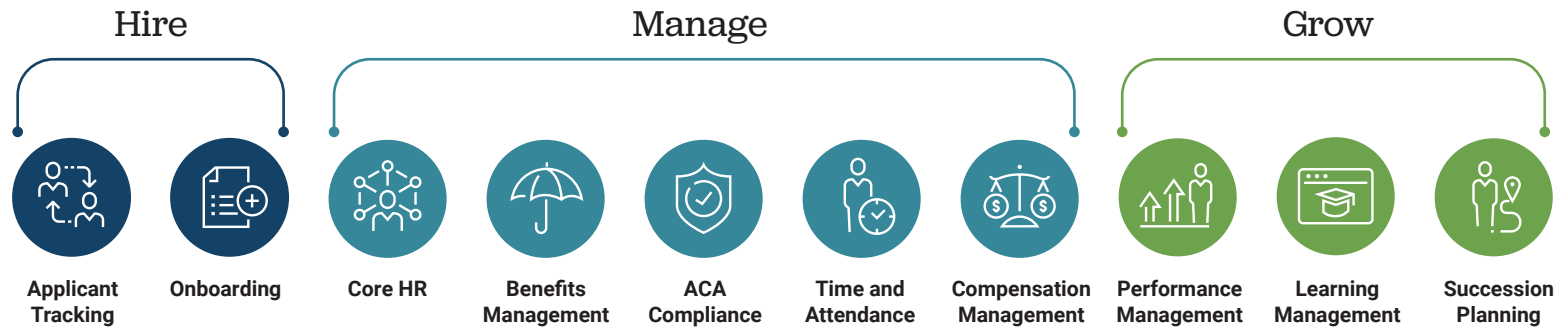
Use the tips in this guide to help create a continuous performance conversation with employees. Remember:

- **The easiest way to ramp up feedback is simply to say thank you.** That takes almost no time and very little effort. When employees do great work, let them know. Celebrate accomplishments unabashedly.
- **Schedule regular feedback sessions.** They don't have to be long—10 minutes a week or every other week can go a long way for employees looking for input.
- **Don't rely only on the annual review.** By the time the end of the year or the employee's anniversary rolls around, your feedback may be stale and meaningless. Use the annual review as a recap.

The right technology can make continuous performance easier for you and your employees. Arcoro's [performance management solution](#) offers a cloud-based system that can enable you to deliver the type and frequency of feedback employees need to be engaged and productive.



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