

Making Touchpoints Work for You

A Guide for Employees



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How Touchpoints Make a Difference

Touchpoints are the **key to unlocking your full potential and boosting your performance at work**. They're not just another meeting on your schedule. Instead, they're unique moments for you to connect with your supervisor on a personal level. These sessions allow you to talk about your work journey, the obstacles you've encountered, and your professional aspirations. This is **your chance** to foster a relationship with your supervisor and craft a mutual vision of success.

During Touchpoints, **you have the opportunity to get feedback on your work**. It's a critical way for you to identify how you can do better and what you're already doing well. It's your chance to ask questions, seek clarity, gain a deeper understanding of your role in the organization, and advocate for yourself.

Touchpoints are also the **perfect time for you to establish your professional goals and objectives**. When you have these important conversations with your supervisor, you're making sure that your aspirations align with the organization's overall objectives. This alignment can give you a sense of purpose and motivation, which, in turn, can lead to better performance.

You can **discuss your career goals** in Touchpoint meetings. By sharing these aspirations with your supervisor, you can get guidance and support in achieving them. They can also open doors for professional development and upward mobility.

In addition to all this, Touchpoints offers you a **safe space to discuss concerns and challenges**. By addressing these issues directly, your supervisor can help you overcome obstacles and improve your performance.

Preparing for a Successful Touchpoint

When you're gearing up for a Touchpoint, it's all about setting goals and expectations. This involves knowing what you want to get out of the meeting and what you hope to see from your supervisor. This helps you stay on course and ensures that you can convey your needs and concerns effectively.

Think about setting your goals. Ahead of your meeting, carve out some time to think about your accomplishments and your path forward. This might involve short-term targets or maybe long-term ambitions. After you've pinpointed your goals, jot them down and bring your list to the meeting. This will keep you on task and make certain that you're advancing towards your desired outcomes.

Establishing expectations is also a must. You should consider what you hope to see from your supervisor, but don't forget to think about what they're likely expecting from you as well. Ironing out these expectations helps to sidestep any potential misunderstandings and ensures everyone is reading from the same script. You might want to talk about things like **your workload, any looming deadlines**, and the kind of **support or resources you need to hit your targets**.

But remember, it's critical to **keep your goals and expectations grounded in reality**. Your supervisor might have other priorities or limitations that you're not privy to. This means it's vital to have a frank and open discussion about what's doable and what might need some tweaking.

And, of course, don't forget to **circle back to your goals and expectations after the meeting**. This could mean setting up regular Touchpoints to track your progress, keeping your supervisor in the loop about any shifts or challenges, and fine-tuning your goals or expectations as needed.

Navigating Touchpoints

Touchpoints with your supervisor are a golden ticket for discussing your career trajectory, setting new objectives, and tackling any hurdles you're encountering in your current role. Figuring out what to chat about can sometimes be the tricky part, though.

Here are some handy tips on how to decide what topics should be on the table:

Start with your job description and performance objectives. Take a moment to reread your job outline and any performance targets you've been assigned. Spot any areas where you think you could use a little extra help or guidance? Maybe there are some performance indicators you're having trouble with. These issues make a perfect starting point for a fruitful conversation.

Take a trip down memory lane and **consider your recent successes and obstacles**. Reflect on your achievements over the past few months and the bumps you've hit along the way. What insights did these experiences give you? Is there a certain skill set you're eager to expand upon?

Contemplate your distant career aspirations. Have you thought about where you want to be in the next five to ten years? Is there a specific skill or experience you need to grasp to reach that destination? A chat about your long-term career dreams with your boss can help confirm you're headed in the right direction.

Don't shy away from asking for feedback. Your supervisor can offer you priceless insight into your performance and pinpoint areas where you have room to grow. Request explicit feedback about your strengths and weaknesses, and how you can

mature in your current role. **You'll be surprised at how much you can learn from these conversations!**

Getting Feedback

Unearthing the gold nuggets of feedback in your Touchpoints can truly transform your growth trajectory. It's like peeking into a mirror held by your supervisor that reveals your strengths and the zones you need to spruce up.

As you gear up to tap into this rich resource, remember to walk in with an **open heart and a mind eager to learn**. Consider this not as a critique session but an enlightening discussion that offers you valuable insights and paves the way for your development.

Here are a few handy tips to make the most of these sessions:

Pose pointed questions: Instead of fishing for general feedback, try to zero in on specifics. Ask questions that get to the heart of the matter, like, "*What's your take on how I steered that project?*" or "*Could I have approached that meeting differently?*"

Tune in closely: As your supervisor shares their feedback, make sure you're really hearing them out. Endeavor to understand where they're coming from. Don't hesitate to ask for more details if something is not clear.

Hold off on defensive reflexes: It's only human to bristle a bit at feedback that's not all sunshine and rainbows. However, going into defensive mode can derail the conversation and inhibit your learning and growth.

Jot it down: Scribbling down notes during your sessions can be incredibly helpful to retain the feedback shared. These notes can be a great reference point when you're setting targets or contemplating changes.

Giving Feedback

Touchpoints are a great opportunity to build a professional relationship with your supervisor and discuss any concerns, expectations, and feedback. However, providing feedback can be tricky, especially if it involves constructive criticism.

Here are some tips on how to provide feedback during Touchpoints:

Be clear and objective. When providing feedback, make sure to be clear and objective. Avoid using vague language or personal attacks. Instead, focus on specific actions or behaviors that you would like to address. For example, "*I noticed that during our meetings, I occasionally find it challenging to share my*

thoughts due to time constraints. Could we discuss possible ways to ensure everyone on the team has an opportunity to contribute?"

Be respectful. Remember to be respectful when providing feedback. You can be honest without being rude or aggressive. Use a tone that is professional and calm. If you are providing constructive feedback, make sure to focus on the behavior or action, not the person. Avoid using language that could be interpreted as harsh or belittling.

Be solution-oriented. When providing feedback, it is essential to be solution-oriented. Instead of just pointing out problems, suggest solutions that can help improve the situation. For example, *"I believe that the productivity of our meetings could be enhanced by creating a clear agenda beforehand. This way, we can stay focused and make the most out of our time together. How do you feel about this approach?"*

Listen and be open to feedback. Touchpoints are a two-way street, so be open to feedback from your supervisor as well. Listen to their perspective and take their feedback into consideration. If you disagree, respectfully share your point of view and try to find common ground.

Building Trust

Trust is the foundation of any healthy relationship, and that includes the relationship between you and your supervisor. **Trust allows for open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect.** Without trust, it's difficult to achieve anything meaningful in a one-on-one meeting.

Here are tips to build trust with your supervisor:

Be honest and transparent. One of the best ways to build trust is to be honest and transparent with your supervisor. This means admitting when you've made a mistake, being upfront about your strengths and weaknesses, and sharing your goals and concerns. When you're honest and transparent, your supervisor is more likely to trust you and be open with you in return.

Follow through on your commitments. If you promise to do something, make sure you follow through on it. This shows your supervisor that you're reliable and dependable. If you can't complete a task or meet a deadline, communicate that as soon as possible and work with your supervisor to come up with a solution.

Be respectful. Respect is essential for building trust. Treat your supervisor with respect, even if you disagree with them. Avoid interrupting or talking over them and be mindful of your tone and body language.

Be consistent. Consistency is key when it comes to building trust. Show up to meetings on time, meet deadlines, and communicate regularly. When you're consistent, your supervisor knows they can count on you.

Listen actively. Listening actively is an important part of building trust. When your supervisor is speaking, make sure you're fully present and engaged. Ask questions to clarify their points and show that you're interested in what they have to say. This helps build a sense of mutual respect and understanding.

Active Listening Techniques

Effective communication is a two-way street, and active listening is a crucial component to ensure that both parties understand each other. Active listening techniques are an essential tool for building trust, improving relationships, and increasing your engagement.

1. **Pay attention:** One of the most crucial aspects of active listening is giving your undivided attention to the speaker. Avoid distractions such as checking your phone or emails, or looking around the room while the other person is speaking. Show the speaker that you are interested in what they have to say by maintaining eye contact, nodding your head, and asking questions.
2. **Paraphrase:** Paraphrasing is repeating what the speaker said in your own words. This technique helps to ensure that you have understood the speaker's message correctly and that there is no miscommunication. It also shows the speaker that you value their words and are invested in the conversation.
3. **Clarify:** If you are unsure about something the speaker said, ask for clarification. Avoid making assumptions or jumping to conclusions. Instead, ask open-ended questions to gain a better understanding of the speaker's perspective.
4. **Reflect:** Reflecting involves summarizing the speaker's message and your understanding of it. This technique helps to confirm that you have comprehended the speaker's message accurately and that there is no miscommunication. Reflecting also shows the speaker that you are actively engaged in the conversation and value their words.
5. **Empathize:** Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It is an essential component of active listening as it helps to build trust and rapport. Show the speaker that you understand their perspective and are willing to work with them to find a solution.

Tracking Progress

Touchpoints with your supervisor are a great way to discuss your progress and set goals. You should track your progress between these meetings to ensure that you're improving and meeting your goals.

One way to track your progress is to **create a list of goals and objectives at the beginning of the year or semester**. These goals should be **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART)**. Then, at each meeting, check in with your supervisor to discuss your progress towards these goals.

PageUp performance management's online journal feature can also be used to keep track of progress. **Keep a record of your accomplishments, challenges, and areas for improvement**. In doing so, you will be able to reflect on your progress and identify any patterns or trends you may have noticed. This journal can also be used to set new goals and track your progress towards them.

Finally, **don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it**. Reach out to your supervisor, colleagues, or mentors for guidance and support. They may have valuable insights and resources that can help you achieve your goals.

Touchpoints in Practice

Real-Life Examples of Successful Touchpoints

Touchpoints are an essential part of building engagement between employees and their supervisors. It provides an opportunity for both parties to connect on a personal level and discuss any concerns, goals, or progress. When done correctly, **Touchpoints can lead to improved job satisfaction, increased productivity, and a better work environment**.

Here are some real-life examples of successful Touchpoints:

Example 1: Mike, an academic advisor, was feeling dissatisfied with his lack of professional growth. In a Touchpoint meeting with his supervisor, Lisa, Mike expressed his desire for new challenges and opportunities. Lisa offered Mike the chance to lead a new student engagement initiative, providing him with additional resources and mentorship. As a result, Mike felt reinvigorated in his role, appreciating the opportunity to learn and grow.

Example 2: Tina, a research assistant, was struggling with a particular research project. During a Touchpoint with her project supervisor, Dr. Kim, she expressed her difficulties. Dr. Kim took the time to discuss her challenges in depth and provided additional guidance. She also connected her with a senior researcher for further assistance. Feeling heard and supported, Tina was able to progress in her project and gained valuable knowledge and experience.

Example 3: David, an electronic resource specialist, was interested in integrating new technologies into the library system. In a Touchpoint with his supervisor, Emily, he discussed his ideas. Emily was supportive, providing David with resources and connections to technology experts in the university. Following the meeting, David felt valued and motivated, and his successful project implementation later improved library services significantly.

Example 4: Nelly, an IT specialist, was having trouble managing her workload. During a Touchpoint with her supervisor, Rodney, she shared her difficulties. Rodney worked with her to reassess and prioritize her tasks and delegate some work to her colleagues. As a result, Nelly felt less stressed and overwhelmed, leading to a better work-life balance and improved productivity.

Touchpoints – Unlock Your Potential

Your Touchpoints are an **invaluable resource for unlocking your potential**. They offer you a platform to **advocate for yourself, discuss your career aspirations, receive feedback on your performance, build a positive relationship with your supervisor, and cultivate an environment of open communication and collaboration**.

It's our hope that the strategies shared in this guide will help you maximize the benefits of your Touchpoint meetings, paving your way to career success.



The Employee Relations Team

North End Center, Suite 2300

300 Turner Street NW Blacksburg, VA 24061

hr.vt.edu/employee-relations.html