

FIXING PERFORMANCE REVIEWS:

# 3 steps to more actionable feedback

Forget performance reviews. There's a better way to collect feedback.



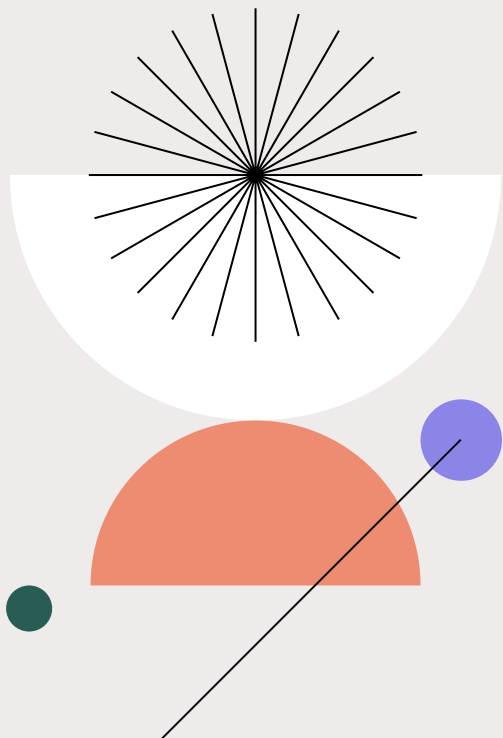
THE WORK INNOVATION LAB

BY  asana

# Performance reviews are broken. At The Work Innovation Lab, we developed a research-backed plan to fix them.

## The problem with performance reviews:

- They lack actionable feedback.
- Their negative effects disproportionately impact women.
- They can provoke anxiety for the employee in the review.
- They're time-consuming to complete, often without much value.



# The solution:

## The Feedback Switcheroo

We heard from employees at several organizations that performance reviews can be useful. However, they also noted that these reviews tend to lack real-time, actionable feedback on day-to-day work.

Rebecca Hinds, Head of The Work Innovation Lab by Asana, and Joshua Zerkel, co-founder of The Work Innovation Lab and Head of Global Community at Asana, designed a new, actionable, and research-backed way for leaders to gather feedback.

To replace outdated performance reviews, The Work Innovation Lab ran a study to see how they could be improved. Inspired by previous research on “perspective getting,” which involves collecting accurate and timely information directly from another person, we designed a new approach.

It’s called the Feedback Switcheroo. Here’s how it works so you can perform it in your own organization.

## 1. Ask each of your team members to submit one action for you to implement

A Switcheroo starts with everyone imagining that they are you—their team's leader. Encourage your team members to step into your shoes. Ask them to observe how you interact in meetings, your goals and priorities, and look at your calendar to get a full sense of your day-to-day work.

Why is this a critical first step? Research shows that team members and leaders often suffer from what's called "perceptual distance," meaning your team members probably have a different perception of your day-to-day work than what's happening in reality. For example, your team may not know where you spend most of your time or how you prioritize work.

The goal in bridging this perceptual distance is that team members will be able to deliver actionable feedback informed by your actual work—not false perceptions.

### **After their review is complete, instruct each team member to:**

- Independently, choose one action they would like you (their leader) to implement that would help them more effectively execute work. You can use a survey tool to collect each response.

## 2. Ask your team members to collectively vote on one action for you to implement

Once you've compiled all the submissions, ask your team members to vote on the top action that they want you to implement.

The vote itself is a form of structured brainstorming, which has shown to be more effective than common, loosely-structured brainstorming. By asking your team members to vote on all the submissions, you'll limit rigid thinking.

For example, during one company's Feedback Switcheroo, we found that many team members changed their selection during the vote for another idea that they liked better than their own.

## 3. Announce the vote's winner

Last, announce the winning action and commit to implementing it. By selecting only one winner, the goal is to limit information overload so that you'll be able to swiftly implement the one change that's going to have the biggest impact.

## 4. Share experiences, not advice

When we ran the Switcheroo, we found that team members wanted their leaders to share their experiences more broadly with them. Team members didn't want tips, strategies, and resources as much as they wanted to learn directly from their leaders' experiences.

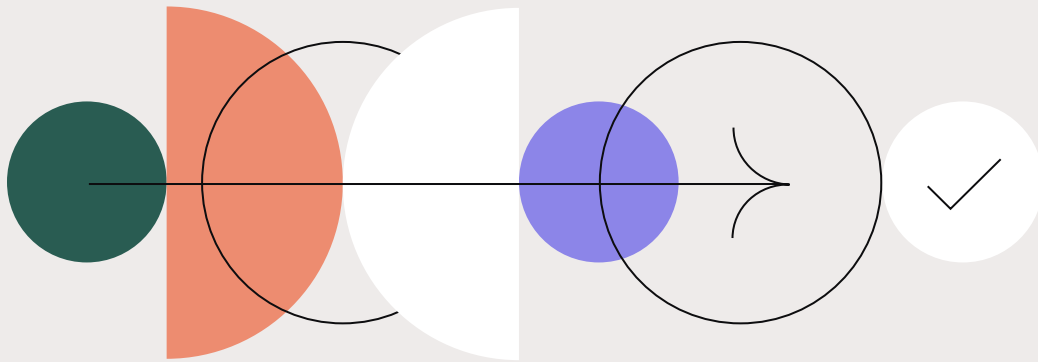
### **Their requests included:**

- Host monthly team workshops to learn more from our leader's experiences.
- Share career stories and turning points, and provide words of advice and wisdom.
- Organize a shadowing session to understand how our leader tackles strategic challenges.

Why is this experiential knowledge-sharing in high demand right now? When you share information or advice with your team, it can feel transactional—it doesn't often invite discussion, reflection, or engagement. In contrast, sharing your experiences can trigger highly immersive exchanges that foster greater connection and more humanity.

# Designing feedback for our next era of work

The way that we collect feedback needs to be updated for the future of work. The Feedback Switcheroo is designed to help you gather feedback in a way that sets your team up for collective success. As a leader, that's the single most impactful thing that you can do.



# Perform a Feedback Switcharoo

## THE WHAT

### Step 1:

Have each team member make one suggestion

### Step 2:

Ask team members to collectively vote for one suggestion

### Step 3:

Announce the winning suggestion

### Bonus tip:

Share experiences (not advice)

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## THE HOW

Ask the individuals on your team to:

- Observe how you interact, look at your calendar, and review your goals and priorities.
- Choose one suggestion they would like you (the team lead) to do.
- Propose this suggestion to you.

Once you've compiled the submissions, ask team members to vote on the top suggestion they want you to implement.

Announce the winning suggestion—what the majority of your team voted to have you do—and commit to completing it.

Team members want to learn directly from their leaders' experiences. Ideas to get you started:

- Host monthly team workshops.
- Share career stories, and provide words of wisdom.
- Organize a shadowing session to understand how leaders tackle strategic challenges.



The Work Innovation Lab is a think tank by Asana that develops human-centric, cutting-edge research to help businesses evolve today to meet the growing changes and challenges of the future of work.

Learn more at [workinnovationlab.com](https://workinnovationlab.com).

This sets out the research findings of the Work Innovation Lab and partners, and is not business advice from Asana.

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