



HOW TO HAVE A TRICKY CONVERSATION

If the thought of approaching your boss has you shaking in your shoes, we've got a few sneaky tips to get you feeling confident to deal with conversations that are out of your comfort zone. The first step to open the discussion is to be aware of how you're feeling as an employee. Then, you need to think about how you can reframe the conversation to be around learning and growing.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:



1. Plan a meeting

Keep things simple. Your supervisor will definitely be busy, so you might find it difficult to try and catch them at a good time. To avoid being knocked back, send an email, or if you see them in person, simply ask them. Try this: "Hi [NAME], could we please schedule some time to have a chat about my work challenges/ plans/ goals? When would be a good time for you?" Always be polite, and give them a rough outline of what you'd like to discuss.



2. Explain the situation and context

To do this properly, first determine exactly why you need this meeting: write down a few notes about what you want to talk about. Can you solve any of it by yourself? Do you need to do more research first? Decide what you'd like the outcome of the meeting to be, and prepare. Bring supporting documents if needed. Then, when you sit down with your supervisor, state your intention and what the situation is.

For example:

Hi [NAME], thank you for taking the time to speak to me. I would like to discuss some challenges I am having trouble managing myself/ my future career journey and plans. I have found things overwhelming and would like to clarify the process/ ask your thoughts on how to go about this.



3. Frame the conversation gracefully

Go into the discussion prepared: have a list of your concerns, BUT, also have a list of how you think some of your problems might be solved. Always be respectful, never demand, and try to frame the conversation as a way to improve yourself. Remember: you have a challenge that you want to address for the benefit of both yourself and your employer, but you don't want to jump in and complain about all the ways you think you've been wronged. If you've got a problem with your manager or a co-worker, there's a chance that you're at fault, so before you proceed to explain how you feel wronged, you should first admit your own shortcomings in the situation.



4. Ask for their perspective

Show your supervisor that you've thought about your challenges or plans, and that you'd appreciate their opinion. Here's where you can show that you've done your research but that you need some guidance.



5. Arrive at a mutual understanding and find a resolution

Listen closely to your supervisor's feedback and ask for clarification if you need it. A great way to solve your challenge is to pair your concerns with suggestions on how you'd go about solving them in a mutually beneficial way. Ask your boss if it would be possible to have a quick 15-minute catch-up meeting (if necessary) in a week's time, just to check that you're on track.

HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT TEAMMATES

Your colleagues all have their own opinions, habits and ways of doing things. At some point, you're probably going to butt heads with someone. How you deal with it can be key to your future workplace happiness.



Get to know your colleagues.

First impressions aren't always the best way to decide whether you're going to work well with someone or not.



Before losing your temper, take five deep breaths.

And then ask yourself: what could I do that might improve this situation? Because here's the thing: the only person you can control, is you.



Once you've thought about what you could bring to the conversation:

- Have a quiet chat with your colleague in a private space about ways in which you could work together better.
- Don't send an email to the entire office about your problems, or let off steam in the middle of the break room.
- If a one-on-one chat doesn't make things better, consider talking to your supervisor.



IMPORTANT:

If a colleague is:

- making you feel physically unsafe,
- bullying you,
- causing mental distress or
- harassing you in any way, sexually or otherwise, it's best to go straight to your supervisor, or a person that you trust.



Get in touch

Please call **1300 363 831** and ask to speak to one of our Apprentice Advisors or email us at intrainingsupport@businessaustralia.com