

Why Praise Can Backfire – And How to Do It Right

1. **According to the Quick Take, what's the main reason that a manager might overuse superficial praise?**

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- Laziness. They see it as a shortcut to employee engagement
- They don't understand the complexity of praise, and don't realize that if handled the wrong way, an expression of approval could actually de-motivate an employee.

2. **Tell us about an example where you got a compliment from a boss that really made you feel recognized and motivated. What was it about the compliment that made you feel that way?**

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- My boss was very specific about what he/she liked
- I felt that my boss really "got" what makes me so good and how I make a difference in our organization.

3. **In terms of retention, why is it so important that bosses recognize what makes high performers good?**

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- Because for any given employee the boss is THE most important person at the company. If the boss "gets" the employee, the person feels good about his or her future with the company
- Because what motivates top performers the most is using their talents in the pursuit of excellence. They want to make a difference. If their boss "gets" why they're contributing, and frequently communicates that, it means the world to them.

4. **Describe a situation where a boss praised you and you felt it wasn't sincere. How did that make you feel?**

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- It made me feel I was working for an empty suit. He lost all credibility with me
- I felt that my boss didn't care enough to take the time to evaluate my work properly. I felt unimportant
- I felt that if one day I did something really amazing, my boss wouldn't even notice.

5. **After watching this Quick Take, how will you use praise differently in the future?**

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- I'll be more aware of instances where I'm using praise for reasons other than to show approval
- I'll use praise less often, but when I give it, I'll really mean it
- Especially with high performers, I'll be very careful never to give disingenuous praise because it could erode my credibility
- I'll invest the time it takes to review people's work carefully, so I can give specifics about why it's good
- When I praise people, I'll go out of my way to show them that I "get" their talents and how they make a difference at our company