

THREE-MONTH CHECK-IN

Since you have been providing regular and detailed feedback for the last three months, this conversation will be a recap, in addition to new discussions about overall goals.

It is time to conduct a face-to-face check-in with the new hire. It is a wise move for a supervisor to have a comprehensive and more formal check-in with the employee at this time. The first three months can be a stressful time for a new hire; it is important for them to know how they are doing and be given an opportunity to ask questions. Plus, your new hire will probably be expecting a status update.

Assess the employee's transition. You should clearly discuss whether the new hire is:

- Completing required and job-related training successfully
- Meeting performance (doing the work well) and behavioral (with an appropriate attitude) expectations
- Managing time appropriately for the workload
- Paying attention to details and meeting deadlines for quality deliverables
- Communicating effectively with colleagues, stakeholders, and leadership
- Developing positive engagement with the work and their colleagues

(Modify, as needed, to fit the new hire's role.)

Questions to ask the new hire after three months on the job:¹

1. What surprised you during the first few months on the job?
2. What has been your biggest challenge or adjustment?
3. Tell me about an experience in the last three months that made you feel successful.
4. Tell me about an experience in the last three months that left you feeling discouraged. Tell me why.
5. Have you developed partnerships or a feedback friend within the team?
6. What are some aspects about this role that you expected and some that you didn't expect?
7. If you could assess your learning curve at this point, what grade would you give yourself and why?
8. How can I help you succeed? What additional tools or training would be helpful?

Source:¹ [Seven Questions To Ask Your New Hire After Three Months, Forbes Communication Council \(Dec. 28, 2016\).](#)

This is a critical employment fork in the road. As the supervisor, you will need to decide if your new hire has the skills to be successful. Boiling it down to the basics, you really have only three possible answers.

YES



NO



MAYBE

Is the New Hire Meeting Performance Expectations?

YES!

- If you are happy with their performance, make sure that the new hire knows.
- ***They should not have to guess!***
- Even if you are satisfied, there is ***always*** room for improvement. Still provide the new hire with suggestions and constructive feedback.
- Ask them what they need to be successful and stay engaged and challenged in the job.

NO!

- If the employee is not meeting expectations regarding performance, conduct, or attendance, ***be sure they know.***
- You should already be providing contemporaneous feedback, but the three-month check-in is an ideal time to recap the performance expectations.
- Make it very clear that immediate changes need to be made, or the new hire will not continue to be employed.

MAYBE?

- Adjusting to a new job can be tough.
- You may have an employee who is doing great in some areas and is weak in others.
- Or, you may have an employee who is just “okay” all around. If you can’t tell what you have after three months, ***it’s time to be paying closer attention!***
- Take some time to identify and articulate where you have concerns and where you are satisfied.
- A “maybe” employee will need specific guidance to have a chance at moving into the “yes” bucket.

Is the Feedback Going to be Positive?

YES!

- Provide positive and detailed feedback on the great work the new hire is doing.
- Include suggestions for ways to improve or enhance their performance by taking the work to the next level.
- **Build on their successes!**

NO!

- Being honest and forthcoming is only fair to the new hire. These conversations aren’t fun, but they really need to happen.
- If the new hire’s performance, conduct, or attendance issues are serious, talk to your HR Representative.
- **Give them a path forward!**

MAYBE?

- Provide suggestions for improving or enhancing the work they are performing that you do think is satisfactory.
- Make sure you acknowledge this, so there is some weight given to the positives.
- **Build on their successes! Show them how to improve!**

YES



NO



MAYBE

Can the Supervisor Address the Deficits?

YES!

- Ask the new hire how they are adjusting, whether they have questions or need more training.
- Articulate areas that can be improved and discuss new areas for the new hire to dive into.
- If there are any specific expectations you need to reiterate, now is a good time to do so.

NO!

- If it is bad, there is no need to delay the inevitable. Contact your HR rep to end the new hire's employment.
- If you think the new hire can still turn it around, lay out specific expectations. Provide a general expectation and follow up with several specific actions or behaviors that you need to see.
- Be sure to follow up your face-to-face with a written plan by email that reiterates the general and specific expectations you have and summarizes your concerns.
- Do not wait another three months before talking to the employee again. Do another check-in a few weeks later. Has the employee made the necessary changes?
- If so, give some words of encouragement. If not, remind the employee that changes need to be made soon.
- Discuss your concerns with your HR representative

MAYBE?

- If the deficits are in performance, determine if training is needed to improve skills or knowledge.
- Consider that if the deficit is more of a competency and capability issue, this may be difficult to fix with training. Do you have the resources to support the new hire in this area?
- If deficits are in areas of conduct, attitude, or attendance, provide specific examples of what needs to stop or change. Provide suggestions on how to do that successfully.
- **Be clear and assertive**—there is no value in being vague or general here.

YES



NO



MAYBE

Is the New Hire Connecting Well with Their Position, Your Department, and SHERMAN COLLEGE?

YES!

- Find out what parts of the job the new hire enjoys and what they find challenging.
- Ask whether there is anything you can do to help them feel more settled and comfortable with the job and their co-workers.
- If they are new to Spartanburg, see if they need any tips or assistance for settling in.

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Does the New Hire Know Exactly Where They Stand?

YES, this person is a keeper!

- If you know you have a winner, they should not be sweating over their performance.
- ***Be sure to tell the new hire that you are excited to have them onboard!***

NO, this person is not a keeper!

- If you suspect the employee is not a keeper, they should know this and why.
- If there is a road to success, ***you will need to be active in getting them there.***
- If not, the sooner you confirm that, the better (for everyone).
- If you think releasing the employee from their employment is the right thing to do, talk to your HR representative.

MAYBE, I am not sure if this person is a keeper.

- If you cannot tell whether the new hire will successfully be able to continue their employment, ***tell them.***
- Then, provide the new hire with a clear roadmap to get there. Be specific—don't say, "do better" or "work harder." Provide a clear roadmap of what needs to change and improve ***and how. You will need to be actively involved in getting them there.***
- If you need assistance in describing the roadmap to success, talk to your HR rep.