



## Using Your Brain On Employee Assessments

by [Steve Brown](#)

Did you hear about the "brain-eating amoeba"? This may sound like something out of a 1950's science fiction movie, but in fact, it has shown up in real life. An LA teenager was the latest case last year. Often found in southern states, the amoeba comes from warm, freshwater bodies of water. Once inhaled through the nose it is very difficult to detect. The good news is that only 40 cases have been reported in the last 10Ys.

Something that doesn't have to be as bad as the "brain-eating amoeba" relates to employee assessments. Although many people struggle to find the right way to give detailed and honest assessments, it is critical for employee development. By giving honest assessments about areas that they can grow, you do people a hard but valuable favor. We wanted to give you some insight today on the latest thinking of the best way to do this.

Honor employees' feedback preferences. Before they have a chance to do anything that might require critical feedback, ask your workers how they prefer to receive feedback. You can use email, telephone or sit down in person. If employees prefer talking in person, find out whether they want to do so in their office, your office, or some neutral workspace. Some may also want to hear feedback immediately when you see something you do or don't like, while others prefer more comprehensive observations over longer time periods.

No matter the approach, when you give difficult feedback, be specific. There's no need to bring up every single time your employee has done something wrong. Still, a general "you need to shape up" doesn't give the recipient the information they need to make a change. Make it detailed enough for the employee to clearly understand your concerns and set the stage for a solution.

Connect your criticism to your employee's values and goals. Perhaps the person you're reviewing cares about their colleagues' respect, but is often late to meetings. Instead of asking that person to set an alarm or politely ask that he make a greater effort to be on time, you may want to ask, "How do you think your chronic lateness affects how your colleagues think about you?" People are more receptive to suggested change when that change lets them align with something they care about.

Next, seek to maintain a neutral voice and body language. Yelling at your employees isn't acceptable, nor is threatening them with your body language or vocal tone. What's more, workplace criticism is more effective when you deliver it with neutral body language, an even tone of voice and a relaxed facial expression. Calm, unemotional delivery sends the message that critical feedback isn't something to get upset about. It's a normal part of the business world.

Be specific about the solution. When you offer general criticism, you make your audience guess what steps will fix the problem. Take the time to describe both the problem and the remedy you are thinking about in exact terms.

It can also be helpful to engage the employee in coming up with a solution. Instead of simply calling the worker on the carpet, explain the problem and ask how they might solve it.

In the case of the worker who was consistently late for meetings, for instance, maybe the solution is a calendar or phone alarm set for 10 minutes before the meeting begins. Either one of you can think up that plan but the employee is much more likely to actually set the alarm and respond if the idea comes from them.

Lastly, infuse any criticism with encouragement, praise and coaching, as employees take on new challenges. Respectful feedback builds trust, communicates respect, cultivates confidence and helps people get it right the next time - all without any brain damage of any sort.

## **BANK NEWS**

### **SBA Help**

Bankers should note that the SBA has authority to make disaster recovery loans to homeowners (up to \$200k for real estate), renters (up to \$40k for personal property), businesses (up to \$2mm for real estate, inventories, machinery, equipment and all other physical losses), and nonprofits.

### **Harvey Cos**

While the total cost of Hurricane Harvey is still unknown, AccuWeather is projecting the total will come in around \$190B vs. Hurricane Katrina at \$160B (in 2005).

### **Millennial Loans**

TransUnion reports Millennials are opening more auto and personal loans than Gen X did at their same age. Analysts speculate one reason could be broader availability due to more online lenders. Meanwhile, Millennials also carry 2 fewer bank cards than Gen X at the same age.

### **Small Biz**

FEMA research finds 40% of small businesses never reopen after a disaster because the cost of recovery is too high.

### **College Pressure**

Polls by Inside Higher Education and Gallup find the percentage of financial leaders at private, nonprofit colleges who agree or strongly agree that their college will be financially stable or sustainable over the next 5Ys has declined to 51% vs. 65% last year. As such, some are selling assets and seeking out merger partners.

### **Happy Workers**

The Wall Street Journal reports more than 50% of US workers say they are happy at work. This is the highest level in 12Ys.

### **Unemployment**

The latest jobs reading came in at 4.4%. Lest we all forget, this compares to a whopping 10.0% back in 2009.

### **Assets Held**

FDIC data finds that from Q2 2016 to Q2 2017 total assets held by financial institutions with assets <\$1B declined by 2% to about \$1.25T. However, when calculated based on the number of financial institutions, the average asset size for this group increased 4% to about \$248mm.

## **DEPOSIT OPPORTUNITIES**

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