

COACHING GUIDELINES

CORRECTIVE ACTION PROCESS

Policy Overview

Word of Life Church intends to give employees a generous opportunity to improve their performance whenever productivity, quality, efficiency, or behavior is below an acceptable level. When performance falls below an acceptable level, corrective action may be imposed, including: verbal warning; written warnings; suspension, or termination. (As noted in the Disciplinary Process section in the Word of Life Church Employee manual).

Since corrective action is intended to be action oriented, the written corrective documentation will usually include scheduled follow up meetings with the employee to monitor and establish progress toward acceptable performance.

The progressive process does not prevent Word of Life Church from terminating an employee at any time, without any previous corrective action, if circumstances warrant. The decision to use or not to use any of the corrective actions is solely within the discretion of Word of Life Church. Nothing in this process is intended to modify the at-will nature of employment which means that Word of Life Church may terminate the employment relationship at any time.

Corrective Action Options Include But Are Not Limited To

Verbal Warning: the purpose for this option is to clarify expectations of acceptable performance, development of an action plan for improvement, and advising of consequences if the performance is not corrected.

Written Warnings: These warnings state that performance or conduct is unacceptable and require development of an action plan for improvement. This option may also be initiated when a Verbal Warning was given and the employee's performance did not improve. The employee is also advised that continuation of any unacceptable performance for the same or different reason may result in further disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. The written warning option may also include a Written Final Warning. A Final Warning may be given in situations involving serious policy violations or as the final phase of the progressive corrective action process. The employee, at this stage, is advised that failure to improve performance or continued unacceptable behavior may result in termination of employment.

Suspension: Time off without pay for situations requiring Word of Life Church time to conduct an investigation into a severe policy violation and/or performance problem.

Termination: To end employment with or without notice.

Note: *Verbal and Written Warnings are effective during a rolling 12-month period. The employee could escalate to the next level of the corrective process if unacceptable performance re-occurs within 12 months of the date noted on the verbal or written warning.*

Verbal Warning is the most direct and appropriate course of action for dealing with minor (although unsatisfactory) performance/conduct problems. It can also be used as a tool when addressing performance issues at the beginning to avoid escalation.

When should the formal corrective process be initiated?

- When there is a serious violation of policy
- Repeated minor violation of policy where the employee was warned in previous conversations (behavior indicating a disregard for policy)
- When coaching an employee on their job performance has not produced improved performance.

A Performance Improvement Plan may be appropriate when:

- Performance problem continues after a verbal warning has been conducted with the employee. The performance issue at this point has escalated to Written Warning(s) in the process.
- The performance issue is characterized as serious (but not so serious as to result in immediate termination of employment).

The Best Method of Correction

The preferred method of establishing and maintaining good performance is regular and ongoing feedback between the employee and their manager or supervisor. As a standard practice, management should set aside time regularly to communicate their department's overall current goals, performance, and the employee's contribution to the results.

During these candid touch base meetings, the manager would be able to recognize:

- Employee development opportunities (to include advancement potential for good performers)
- Identify training needs of his/her employee
- Areas of weak performance to quickly address

Regular feedback of this nature gives employees an ongoing clear understanding of what is expected of them and how they are performing. This will limit the need for the supervisor and employee to be in a position where formal corrective action and/or a performance improvement plan is the course of action to achieve the basic goal of any job...good performance.

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE CORRECTIVE ACTION

Corrective Action is Needed When:

- Areas of unsatisfactory performance are identified
- When there is a violation of Word of Life Church policies and/or practices
- Any unacceptable behavior or personal conduct has occurred as noted on pages 25-29 in the Word of Life Employee Manual

Note: Disciplinary action is initiated in accordance with principles of progressive discipline.

Preparing for the Meeting

Scheduling

Please note that this is a formal meeting involving serious, candid discussion about an employee's performance. Schedule the meeting during a time in both of your schedules that allows for enough time. Plan for no less than 1 hour. After lunch is suggested.

Have Supportive Documentation and Facts Available

- Employee handbook (flag policies in the handbook that supports your discussion)
- Employee Job description (be familiar with the terminology used in this document)
- Reports and/or metrics that support the performance being discussed.
- Information from notes or statements of previous conversations (i.e. dates and highlights of discussion) if needed
- Copy of previous warnings

Know What You are Going to Say

Ensure your opening statement sets the tone for the purpose of the meeting. Clearly state the purpose of the meeting at the beginning. Although small talk can be a good way to break the ice, ensure that it is very brief. Note that these types of conversations are best when the discussion is limited to the purpose of the meeting.

Corrective Action Steps

All corrective action documents must be approved by the Executive Pastor and/or Human Resource Director prior to the meeting.

Verbal Warning

1. Prepare the verbal warning discussion. Discussion may vary based on the progression of the corrective process.
2. Meet with the employee.
 - State the problem specifically and clearly
 - Give the employee the opportunity to state his/her side of the situation.
 - Indicate to the employee the impact of the problem on Word of Life Church and the level of expected performance the employee must meet in the future.

There are two sides to every story. Be sure to listen. During the discussion:

- Clarify the problem and reach an agreement that a problem exists (if not done so prior to the meeting)
 - Make sure the employee understands the problem.
 - Mutually discuss alternative solutions and mutually agree on action to be taken.
 - Agree on the action the employee will take and your role in that action plan.
 - Conclude the meeting by communicating your belief in the employee's ability to make the needed changes.
3. Sign the document and schedule a follow-up meeting
 4. Document and date the substance of the verbal corrective discussion(s) and file

If the performance improves satisfactorily, meet with the employee to inform him/her and document it on the verbal warning. Advise the employee that the corrective action could escalate to the next level of the corrective process if unacceptable performance re-occurs

within 12 months of the date noted on the verbal warning. Please note to celebrate the employee's improved performance.

If the performance does not improve within the next 30 days, the employee progresses to written warnings. This may include a formal Performance Improvement Plan.

Written and Final Warnings

1. Prepare a written warning and/or performance improvement plan document. The completed document will be placed in the employee's file. Copies are retained by Word of Life Church and the employee (if signed by the employee).

The document should include the following elements

- A summary of prior discussions related to the performance problem (if available)
- A description of the problem, including the severity and impact on WOLC
- Any specific actions to be taken to correct the problem
- Future consequences that will be initiated if the problem continues
- Time frame of the warning, including follow-up dates

2. Review for completeness and accuracy

3. Meet with the employee to present the written warning and/or performance improvement plan.

- State the problem specifically and clearly
- Ensure the employee understands the problem, and the impact on WOLC, and explain why the performance issue has escalated to the next level of the corrective action process
- Advise the employee of the consequences should the performance not improve
- Have the employee sign and date the document (this acknowledges the receipt of the warning and awareness of the consequences that will occur if the performance does not improve)

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Preparing to Discuss the Issue with the Employee

If an employee is underperforming, it is pretty clear that management will need to meet with the employee to:

- Understand the cause of the performance issue
- Determine if the employee has the capacity and drive to overcome the issue
- Establish a plan for resolving the issue

Note: the manager should not hurry into this meeting because preparation on the manager's part can make the difference between achieving the goal of the meeting or having the meeting head in an unproductive direction.

The key goal of the meeting with the employee is to confirm that the problem is an ability (not motivation or drive, direction, or other factors that are causing the performance issue). There are number of indicators that a manager can look for to determine if a performance issue is due to insufficient skills or knowledge. They can include:

- Questions the employees asks the manager or peers to complete normal tasks
- The types of mistakes and quality problems that are noted when performing normal tasks

Considerations When Preparing for the Meeting

The manager should enter the meeting with a clear understanding of what is expected of the employee and which expectations are not being met. It is key for the manager to accurately define the standard to which the employee is expected to perform. The standard should be:

- Based on the job, not the employee
- Achievable, specific, measurable, and with established timelines
- Written to ensure the plan is clearly communicated and can serve as an ongoing reminder to the employee and the manager

Conducting the Meeting with the Employee

The meeting needs to be conducted in an environment where it is safe for the employee to speak openly. Much of building the environment involves the manager's approach to the meeting. It is imperative to you demonstrate that you:

- Respect the employee
- Value the employee and what he/she is contributing to the team
- Share a mutual purpose - that you both want him/her to succeed

The Meeting

- At the beginning, you should share your concerns and the purpose of the meeting. (if you begin the meeting with small talk, ensure it is very brief). Go into the meeting recognizing that it is likely the employee's interpretation of the situation may be different from yours, and he/she may shut down or get defensive. Have a game plan for both scenarios and others you may foresee.
- When identifying the issue, use facts and specifics about what occurred.
 - Note: facts are the basic events that occurred and should not be controversial or carry emotional interpretation.
 - From the facts, share your interpretation. Ex. "Seeing the process completed incorrectly leads me to think you don't know how to perform the correct process."
- When sharing this information, talk tentatively but confidently.
 - Talking tentatively means that when you are sharing your interpretation, you *label it as such rather than trying to communicate it as fact. Note: Tentatively does not mean that the information is weak, it is simply your take on it as the individual's manager.*
 - Take action in a positive, sincere, and confident manner that maintains the employee's dignity and respect.
- After you've shared your facts and interpretation, be prepared to listen to understand the employee's interpretation.
 - As you and the employee come to an agreement on the performance issue, ensure that conclusions aren't drawn from an emotional interpretation.
 - If, during the discussion, you find that the employee's interpretation is correct, be prepared to change the plan to reflect it.

- Once the manager and employee establish that the issue is that the employee doesn't have the knowledge to perform the task, the discussion should focus on if the individual has the skills, talent, and drive to learn. Candid 2-way communication is key here.

Developing a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

The Performance Improvement Plan is a written document that helps ensure agreement and understanding for what's expected of the employee and the consequences if expectations are not met. The manager will likely conduct this process with authorization from the Campus Pastor and Human Resources.

The Campus Pastor or designate should try to involve the employee in the development of the Performance Improvement Plan. This helps to get buy-in and makes the employee take accountability for their own development and performance. Make sure the PIP is conducted from a place of respect and care for the employee.

Key Components to include on the Performance Improvement Plan include:

- The written standard to which the employee is to complete the task or responsibility
- Specific examples where expectations were not met
- A time period within which the employee is expected to improve (usually 30, 60, or 90 days)
- Scheduled follow-up meetings where progress will be measured and discussed
- The indicators that will be looked at to measure if progress is being made
- The support that will be provided to the employee to help in learning the task or skill
- Consequences if improvement goals are not met (Corrective Action Process)
- Additional sources of information as needed for training and development
- Signatures of both the employee and manager signifying understanding and agreement of the plan

Coaching An Employee When Performance is in Question

At this point, the employee understands the need to learn the skill and has the drive to do so. Below are things that can be done to set up an employee to succeed:

- Provide training opportunities in different formats. Different people learn differently, try to find a learning format that works for the employee.
- Provide other resources the employee can learn from (i.e. other churches, in-house mentors, etc.)
- Give the employee the opportunity to put the learned skills to use right away
- Allow the employee to put additional focus on this task (if possible, by re-prioritizing or temporarily re-assigning other responsibilities). If temporary reassignment of responsibilities is decided, ensure that the employee understands this is temporary and that he/she will be expected to return to and perform their full duties in the agreed-upon timeframe
- Give frequent assessments of progress and feedback
- Continue to make the employee accountable for their performance by reinforcing the need for them to produce results with high standards

What if it's not going to work?

The manager may observe and decide during the process that the employee

- Will not be able to learn the new skill to fulfill their responsibility
- Does not have the knowledge or talent necessary for the job
- Does not have the drive to learn, or the manager may see that there are other factors outside that prevent the associate from learning the job

At this point, the manager may decide how critical the task (or job) is to the employee's role. Often employees struggle with tasks outside the scope of their ability.

- Note that not everyone is good at everything.
- If a particular goal that's not being achieved is not part of the employee's core job, consideration can be made in shifting the responsibility within the team.
- This can allow the employee to perform the responsibilities they succeed at.
- If this approach is chosen, it is important for the manager to share the reasons for the decision with the employee and how the decision could impact the employee's development path.

Note: If the missed goal is part of the employee's core job, the only alternatives may be reassignment, demotion, or termination. The employee in the wrong position can prevent growth for him/herself and for the organization.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

Employee's Name	Date
Supervisor's Name	Is any additional documentation attached?

Type of Action <i>(circle one)</i>
Verbal Warning Written Warning Final Warning Suspension Termination
Description of Issue <i>(circle one)</i>
Conduct Policy/Procedure Violation Unsatisfactory Job Performance Other
Explanation of Violation <i>(include dates)</i> . Please provide policy/procedure if relevant.
History <i>(include the date and explanation of previous disciplines and relevant counseling)</i> .

Goals / Corrective Behavior *(include potential consequences if the behavior is not corrected).*

If you fail to follow and immediately adopt these corrective behaviors, there will be further disciplinary actions taken up to and including termination.

Acknowledgment

The above has been discussed with me by my supervisor. I understand the contents and acknowledge and understand the corrective action required. I understand that I am able to respond in writing to this action and must do so within 3 workdays. I also acknowledge and understand the potential consequences of noncompliance.

Employee Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Employee's Name	Date
Supervisor's Name	Is any additional documentation attached?

Type of Action <i>(circle one)</i>
30 Days 60 Days 90 Days Termination
This Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) aims to define serious areas of concern and gaps in your work performance, reiterate Word of Life Church (WOLC) expectations, and allow you the opportunity to demonstrate improvement and commitment.
Areas of Concern
Observations or Previous Discussions
Improvement Goals
Activity Goals <i>(how you will reach your goals)</i>

Resources Needed
Expectations <i>(results required to achieve goals)</i>
Follow Up Checkpoints <i>(dates)</i>
Results and Next Steps

Timeline for Improvement, Consequences and Expectations:

Effective immediately, you are placed on a [30, 60, or 90] -day PIP. You will be expected to make regular progress on the plan outlined above during this time. Failure to meet or exceed these expectations or any display of gross misconduct will result in further disciplinary action, including termination. In addition, if there is no significant improvement to indicate that the expectations and goals will be met within the timeline stated in this PIP, your employment may be terminated before [30, 60, or 90] days. Furthermore, failure to maintain performance expectations after completing the PIP may result in additional disciplinary action, including termination.

The PIP does not alter the employment-at-will relationship. Additionally, the contents of this PIP are to remain confidential. Should you have questions or concerns regarding the content, you will be expected to follow up directly with [Name, Title]. Meetings will continue as noted above to discuss your Performance Improvement Plan. Please schedule accordingly.

Employee Signature Date

Supervisor Signature Date

10 Things to Remember When Having Difficult Conversations with Employees

- 1. Conquer Your Fears:** No one likes conflicts. Managers are hesitant to engage in these conversations because they're unsure how to approach the employee. They fear the conversation won't go well and the employee will get upset.
- 2. Do Your Homework:** The more prepared you are, the better the meeting will go. You don't want to address an employee based solely on your observations. You need proof. Facts to back you up.
- 3. Be Positive:** It's important to set a positive tone to the meeting. Don't go into it frustrated. It is very difficult to maintain control of the meeting when frustrated. Put yourself in their shoes. How would you like to be addressed in this same situation?
- 4. Leave Your Emotions at the Door:** These meetings should be facts based. Avoid saying, "I'm disappointed" or "I feel...". Doing so only adds biased emotional elements to the conversation.
- 5. Find the Right Setting:** This sets the tone for the meeting. Find a place that's private with less chance of distractions.
- 6. Can I Get a Witness?** Unless it's a quick chat, you should always find a witness to be present. Especially when addressing policy violations, behavioral issues or anything that is disciplinary in nature. The COO or designate should be your first consideration. You may also have another manager sit in. Partner with HR before and after the meeting.
- 7. Be Consistent:** hold all your employees accountable to the same performance expectations. Have the same dialogue with anyone who is slipping.
- 8. Keep it Confidential:** ny employee who isn't involved should not be aware of the situation. If employees come to you confidentially, make sure they understand that you cannot guarantee 100% confidentiality. Depending on what they disclose, you may have the responsibility to take action or partner with others.
- 9. When All Else Fails:** It's rare that conversations like these get out of hand. But if employees act rude, disrespectful, or display aggressive behavior, it's time to end the meeting. If the employee is disruptive, consider sending him/her home. This will allow everyone's emotions to settle down. Then regroup with a 3rd party witness and reflect on what happened in the meeting so that you can correct it in future interactions with the employee. Do conduct another meeting.
- 10. Document** what happened in the meeting.