

Facilitating a better future



**lma**  
LLOYD'S MARKET ASSOCIATION

# Leading Successful Performance Reviews

**“How to ensure fair and consistent reviews”**

# About this session

**Fairness and Consistency:** Ensure performance reviews are aligned across teams and reflect the clear, objective LMA standards.

**Driving Engagement:** Deliver constructive conversations that motivate and empower employees.

**Building Trust:** Use reviews to strengthen relationships and create a culture of transparency

***This session is a discussion — your insights, questions, and reflections are critical in learning from each other and applying these techniques successfully in your teams***

# Objectives this afternoon



**Develop Confidence:** Equip you with the skills and language to ensure fair and consistent performance reviews.



**Resolving Challenges:** Learning and reminders on practical techniques to handle challenging conversations, manage emotional reactions, and lead constructive outcomes.



**Focus on Growth:** Apply a structured tool (GROW) to set meaningful goals and objectives, align with organisational priorities, and support employee development and career growth.

# Objectives this afternoon

What would ensure today is valuable for you, what would you most like to get out of the discussion today?

# Agenda

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Identifying and resolving key challenges

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Ensuring employee-led discussions

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Reminders on eliminating bias

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Coaching for objectives, development and career growth

# Discussion: What Are Your Challenges?

- Recalibration?
- Managing emotional responses?
- Maintaining team motivation?
- Ensuring consistency?
- What else?

# Scenario 1: Rating Recalibration Challenge



Volunteer role play: How NOT to do it



Observations on what went wrong?



Volunteer role play: How to do it WELL



Group observation: Note verbal and non-verbal techniques



Debrief: Discuss what worked and what didn't

# Scenario 2: The Self-Rating Mismatch

## Discussion Points:

- How would you start the conversation to acknowledge the employee's perspective?
- What language can you use to explain the gap between self-assessment and the rating?
- How can you steer the conversation to focus on future development?

## Recommendations:

- Start with an acknowledgement of their perspective: 'I appreciate the detailed self-review you've prepared.'
- Bridge to feedback: 'Let me share my perspective on your performance against our criteria.'
- Define rating criteria clearly: 'A '3' reflects solid, consistent performance delivering objectives and meeting expectations.'



# Scenario 3: The 'How Do I Get to a 4?' Conversation

## Discussion Points:

- How can you acknowledge the employee's ambition without setting unrealistic expectations?
- What examples can you provide to illustrate 'Exceeds Expectations'?
- How can you collaboratively set goals to help the employee stretch their capabilities and achievement?

## Recommendations:

- Acknowledge ambition: 'I appreciate your drive for excellence and desire to grow.'
- Explore understanding: 'What do you think distinguishes a '4' from a '3'?'
- Collaborate on goals: 'Let's identify areas where you could expand your impact.'

## Scenario 4: The Emotional Response

### Discussion Points:

- What steps can you take to acknowledge emotions without compromising objectivity?
- How can you validate efforts while focusing on outcomes?
- What strategies can you use to de-escalate tension and redirect towards constructive dialogue?

### Recommendations:

- Acknowledge emotions: 'I can see this feedback is difficult to hear. Let's take a moment.' (Remember RAWA)
- Balance validation and outcomes: 'Let's discuss how your extra efforts align with objectives.'
- Focus on priorities: 'How can I support you in focusing on impactful deliverables?'

# Scenario 5: The Comparison Challenge

## Discussion Points:

- How can you refocus the conversation on the employee's individual achievements?
- What language can you use to reinforce role-specific expectations?
- How can you help the employee understand expectations for success in their role?

## Recommendations:

- Refocus on individual performance: 'Let's focus on your specific achievements.'
- Reinforce expectations: 'Each role has unique expectations and contributions.'
- Clarify next steps: 'Let's clarify expectations for success and growth in your role.'

# Scenario 6: The Historical Performance Shift

## Discussion Points:

- How can you balance recognising past achievements with addressing recent challenges?
- What steps can you take to uncover the root causes of performance issues?
- How can you collaboratively create an action plan for improvement?

## Recommendations:

- Recognise past performance: 'You've demonstrated solid capabilities in the past.'
- Explore challenges: 'What challenges have impacted your recent performance?'
- Collaborate on action plan: 'What support would help you return to prior success levels?'

# What Works in Difficult Performance Conversations

Recognise

**Start with Recognition:** Acknowledge achievements to set a positive tone.

Explain

**Explain Ratings Clearly:** Use objective language and provide examples.

Empathy

**Empathy:** Show you understand and address feelings constructively.

Individual

**Focus on Individual Performance:** Reframe discussions to specific contributions.

Balance

**Balance Feedback with Development:** Highlight growth opportunities with GROW

Forward

**Be Forward-Looking:** Set actionable goals using SMART

Tailor

**Tailor Your Approach:** Adjust based on employee reactions and needs.

Objective

**Stay Objective:** Use a structured framework like COIN to maintain professionalism.

Actions

**Follow Through:** Summarise next steps and schedule follow-ups.

# Why Employee-Led Reviews?



Increased engagement and accountability



Richer conversations and insights



Better development plans

# Phases of the Discussion (RAFA)

1. **Reflections** – Opening with employee thoughts, observations and reflections
2. **Alignment** – Align on ratings with the framework
3. **Forward Looking** – Focus on development and areas for growth
4. **Actions** – Agree actions, objectives and next steps

# RAFA Template

R.A.F.A. Template
<b>Reflections</b>
<b>Understand the employee's perspective on their achievements and challenges.</b> "Let's start with your reflections on this year's performance."; "What achievements are you most proud of?"; "What challenges did you face, and how did you address them?"
<b>Alignment</b>
<b>Discuss and align on performance ratings using clear criteria.</b> "Let's review your objectives and align them with the rating framework."; "Here's how your contributions align with [specific rating level]."; "Does this rating make sense based on your achievements and feedback?"
<b>Forward Looking</b>
<b>Identify areas for growth and discuss development opportunities.</b> "Looking ahead, what skills or behaviours would you like to develop further?"; "How can we build on your strengths to help you grow?"; "What opportunities could help you achieve your goals?"
<b>Actions</b>
<b>Conclude with a focus on objectives and next steps.</b> "Based on our conversation, let's outline your key goals for next year."; "What support do you need to achieve these objectives?"; "Let's schedule our follow-up objective discussion [January 2025]."



# 1. Reflections

## Opening the discussion

- How to set the context?
- What to focus on?
- Key questions to ask?

### Top tips

- Allow silence - give employees time to think and reflect
- Use non-verbal encouragement (nodding, maintaining appropriate eye contact)
- Take brief notes while maintaining engagement
- Listen for themes to explore further in the discussion
- Watch for signs of discomfort or uncertainty that might need addressing

# 2. Alignment of Rating

## Reviewing performance

- What are you trying to understand and achieve?
- How do you encourage self-reflection?
- What will you focus on to explore challenges constructively?

### Top tips

- Use open-ended questions to prompt deeper insights
- Ask for specific examples when responses are too general
- Balance discussion of successes and challenges
- Keep focus on performance against objectives
- Guide conversation back if it goes off-track

# 3. Forward/ Future

## Development Areas for Growth

- How can you identify development needs?
- What makes development conversations successful?
- How can you link performance to development?

### Top tips

- Focus on future opportunities rather than past shortcomings
- Connect development to both personal and organisational goals
- Be realistic about what can be achieved
- Explore both technical and behavioural development
- Ask about desired support and resources

# 4. Actions

## Goal Setting

- How to transition to forward-looking discussion?
- What makes goals meaningful?
- How to ensure commitment?

### Top tips

- Use SMART framework to refine vague objectives
- Connect goals to broader team/organizational priorities
- Agree specific milestones and check-in points
- Clarify support and resources needed
- End with clear next steps and timeframes

# Recognising Bias

1. **Recency Bias:** Focusing too much on recent performance rather than the entire year. **Impact:** Overlooks earlier achievements or challenges.
2. **Halo/Horns Effect:** Letting one strong positive or negative trait or event dominate the overall assessment. **Impact:** Skewed judgement not reflective of overall performance.
3. **Similarity Bias:** Rating employees higher who share similar traits, values, or backgrounds with the reviewer. **Impact:** Creates inequity and misses diverse contributions.
4. **Leniency Bias:** Rating too generously to avoid difficult conversations or to maintain relationships. **Impact:** Inflates ratings and reduces credibility.
5. **Central Tendency Bias:** Avoiding extreme ratings and grouping most employees in the middle. **Impact:** Fails to recognise high performers

# Practical Tips for Mitigating Bias

- **Recency Bias:** Keep ongoing notes of feedback discussions and 1-1's throughout the year and review these – consider monthly or quarterly achievement summaries
- **Halo/Horns Effect:** Assess each objective and value independently, using specific 'what' and 'how' examples for each rating; Consider seeking feedback from multiple stakeholders
- **Similarity Bias:** Focus on objective performance criteria using rating definitions, challenge your own assumptions, ask 'would I give someone else the same rating?'
- **Leniency Bias:** Use the clear rating criteria and specific examples; prepare and practice for any difficult or more challenging discussions; focus on 'fair and consistent'.
- **Central Tendency Bias:** Use specific evidence and examples to explain ratings, ensure comparisons are against standards, not others, document the specific examples related to a higher or lower rating

**Remember: Regular self-reflection, documentation, a focus on the tools you have and seeking feedback on the team member can help identify and address any unconscious bias.**

# Coaching with GROW

Using the GROW model for coaching:

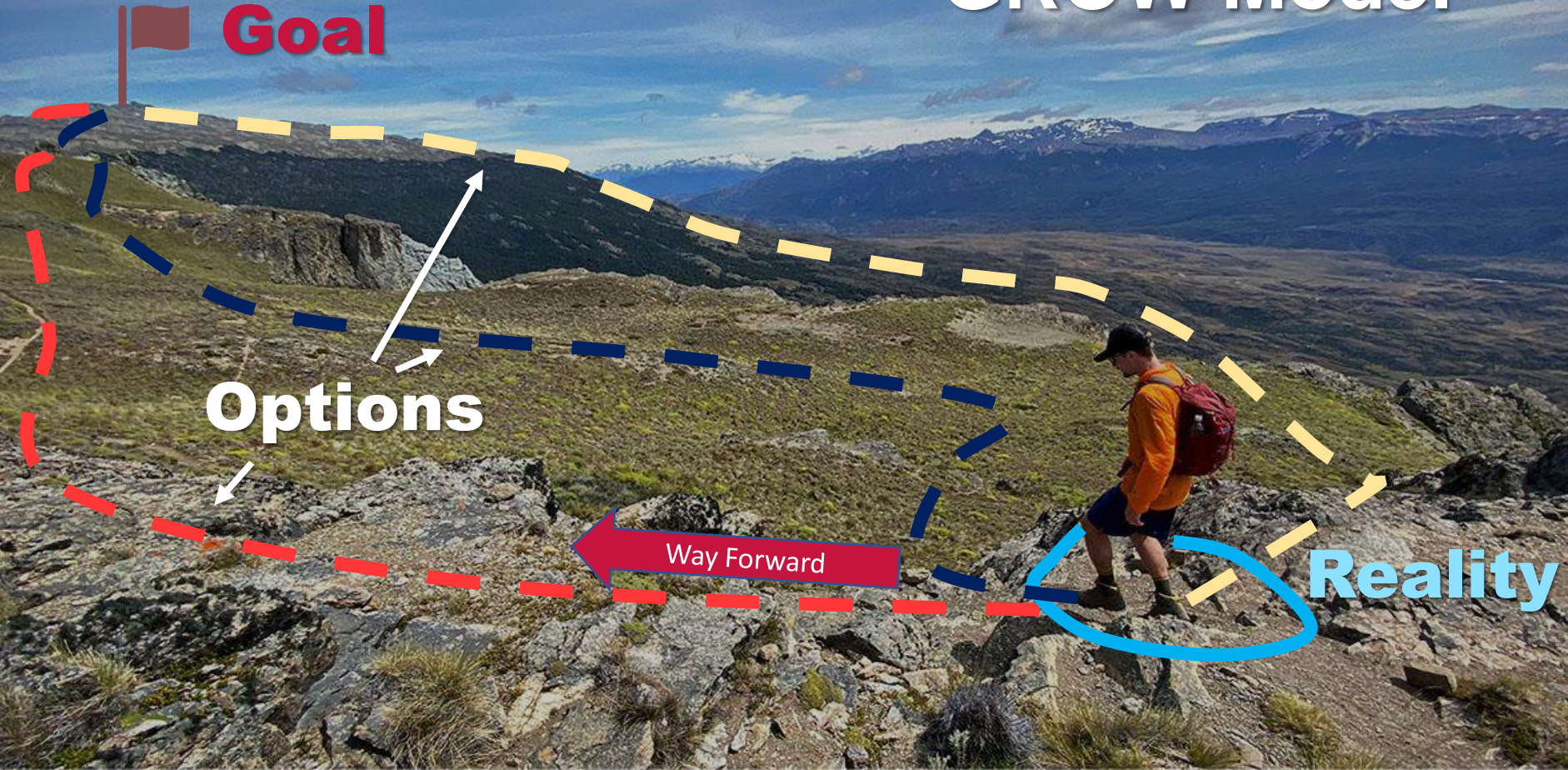
**Objective Setting**

**Personal Development**

**Career Development**



# GROW Model



**Goal**

**Options**

Way Forward

**Reality**



# Intent of the questions

## **GOAL:**

What do you want to achieve?

What is the best possible outcome?

What is the vision?

What does success look like?

## **REALITY:**

What is the current state?

What makes it difficult?

What is working/ not working?

What have you already tried?

## **OPTIONS:**

What are all the possible options?

How can you get there?

What else is possible?

What is within your control?

## **WAY FORWARD:**

What are the next steps?

Who or what can help?

What is the first step and when?

How will you keep going?

# Objectives Review



**Develop Confidence:** Equip you with the skills and language to ensure fair and consistent performance reviews.



**Resolving Challenges:** Learning and reminders on practical techniques to handle challenging conversations, manage emotional reactions, and lead constructive outcomes.



**Focus on Growth:** Apply structured tools to set meaningful goals and objectives, align with organisational priorities, and support employee development and career growth.

# Key Takeaways



Apply structured conversations



Be consistent and fair

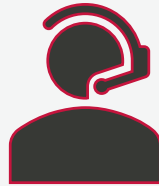


Use tools like RAFA, COIN, GROW and SMART

# Post-Workshop Support



Follow-up  
materials provided



HR support for  
complex cases



Facilitator  
availability

# Session feedback

