

# Painless

## Performance Conversations

A Practical Approach to Critical  
Day-to-Day Workplace Discussions

Facilitator Guide



Management **Education**  
Group, Inc.



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## Before We Begin

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For additional information about the facilitator guide, the accompanying training materials, and the *Painless Performance Conversations* book, contact the Management Education Group, Inc. at 480-705-9394. Additional information can also be found online at **[www.ManagementEducationGroup.com](http://www.ManagementEducationGroup.com)**.



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# A Message from the Author

Dear Facilitator,

You hold in your hands tools that can transform your organization. When performance expectations are clearly defined and when leaders have the skills to productively address performance that doesn't meet expectations, the entire organization benefits. Increased employee engagement, higher levels of productivity, and enhanced customer satisfaction are the results of leaders having frequent performance conversations.


It's likely that your organization has promoted technical specialists (engineers, analysts, experts) who can solve the most difficult technical issues. Yet, these competent, high achieving professionals are paralyzed when they face a conversation with an employee who is not performing up to par. And, if they don't avoid the conversation altogether, they do more harm than good when they initiate the performance discussion. Believing they know how to solve the problem, they proceed to tell, direct, and demand their employees behave differently. Of course, when employees don't comply, these competent technical experts get frustrated and disillusioned by the prospect of managing others.

As a facilitator of the Painless Performance Conversations workshop, you will master critical workplace discussion tools and model them for others in your organization. By leading this workshop, you will have the opportunity to influence the beliefs, perspectives, practices, and skills of your organization's managers. In doing so, you will be making a contribution toward building a performance-driven culture.

After presenting this workshop hundreds of times, I believe we've captured the most critical concepts and most impactful exercises for your use in this guide. You will likely have other creative methods and ideas for conveying the four mind-sets and the Painless Performance Conversations model. After you've played with this material a bit, please let me know about your experiences. You can always email me at [Mgreen@ManagementEducationGroup.com](mailto:Mgreen@ManagementEducationGroup.com).

I wish you the very best as you use these tools to build confidence and skill in your organization's leaders.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Marnie E. Green". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Marnie E. Green, CSP, IPMA-CP

Author, *Painless Performance Conversations: A Practical Approach to Critical Day-to-Day Workplace Discussions*

# Facilitator Preparation

Use the facilitator preparation section to review important steps and recommendations for effectively delivering the course.

## Course Overview and Learning Objectives

### Course Overview

Procrastination, fear, and competing priorities often get in the way of initiating conversations that inspire higher levels of performance. Delivering the uncomfortable news that an employee is not stacking up can be stressful, and managers often struggle to find the right words to get their message across.

*Painless Performance Conversations* presents practical communication and management strategies any manager can use to effectively influence employee performance. Through four critical mind-sets and a conversation model, this workshop offers tangible solutions for tackling critical workplace discussions with poise and professionalism. *Painless Performance Conversations: A Practical Approach to Critical Day-to-Day Workplace Discussions* will help you lead performance-related conversations with confidence and create a culture of workplace ownership.

### Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Identify the differences between a typical manager and a catalyst manager
- List the steps in the Performance Management Cycle
- Distinguish between pet peeves and performance issues
- Create a list of personal expectations for use within their team
- Use five steps for leading a conversation about performance expectations
- Identify the employee's behavior, avoiding attitudes and assumptions
- Recognize the difference between evidence and judgment and use evidence to identify performance gaps
- Formulate effective questions for use in performance conversations
- Shift the burden of problem solving from manager to employee by supporting a culture of ownership
- List the steps of the Painless Performance Conversations model
- Apply the key concepts of the Painless Performance Conversations model through case study examples

# Using the Facilitator Guide

## Delivery Options

The delivery recommendation for this course is an instructor-led training workshop conducted face to face with participants. The course materials are designed for three different delivery timeframes: full-day workshop, half-day workshop, and a two-hour workshop.

There are various factors to consider when choosing the workshop length that will work best for your audience:

- Participant experience level and tenure
- Facilitator experience level and tenure
- The needs of your organization
- The number of participants that will be attending

## Full-day Workshop Option

If you are choosing to use the full-day delivery option, you will cover all content found within each module and use all available PowerPoint slides. Total content time is approximately eight hours, allowing you to take breaks throughout the day as needed. If you include all of the optional activities in your delivery, you will have up to twelve hours of content delivery.

Using the full-day workshop instructions will allow participants to gain the most practice with the key concepts found within *Painless Performance Conversations: A Practical Approach to Critical Day-to-Day Workplace Discussions*.

Please note, participants completing the full-day workshop option must receive a copy of the Participant Workbook and a copy of *Painless Performance Conversations: A Practical Approach to Critical Day-to-Day Workplace Discussions* for use during the course. An optional Application & Reflection Guide is also available for distribution. The use of this document is referenced during each module review and participant completion is recommended.

## Half-day Workshop Option

The half-day option includes approximately four hours of content. When facilitating, you will go through all eight modules paying close attention to any notes designated as ■ **Half Day**. These notes will provide you additional information or directions to help you stay within the four-hour delivery timeframe. Review the PowerPoint deck and hide individual slides that will not be applicable to the half-day workshop option.

Please note, participants completing the half-day workshop option must receive a copy of the Participant Workbook and a copy of *Painless Performance Conversations: A Practical Approach to Critical Day-to-Day Workplace Discussions* for use during the course. An optional Application & Reflection Guide is also available for distribution. The use of this document is referenced during each module review and participant completion is recommended.

### **Two-hour Workshop Option**

The two-hour option includes content from all eight modules with special notes designated as ■ 2-Hour. These notes will provide you additional information or directions to help you stay within the two-hour delivery timeframe. Review the PowerPoint deck and hide individual slides that will not be applicable to the two-hour workshop option.

Please note, participants completing the two-hour workshop option will **not** receive a Participant Workbook, but will require a copy of *Painless Performance Conversations: A Practical Approach to Critical Day-to-Day Workplace Discussions* for use during the course. An optional Application & Reflection Guide is also available for distribution. The use of this document is referenced during each module review and participant completion is recommended.

**\*If you do not see a special note within a given section, facilitate the section as directed.**

## Notes

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## Delivery Options Agenda

The table below provides an overview of the sections included in each workshop option. Some sections that are included for the half-day and two-hour workshop options may include additional modification notes within the actual section content such as reduced discussion or activity time. In addition, optional activities are included throughout the Facilitator's Guide. It is important to review all section content when preparing to facilitate the workshop to determine the content that is right for your group.

Module/Section	Full-day Workshop	Half-day Workshop	Two-hour Workshop
<b>Module 1: Be a Catalyst</b>			
Course Introduction and Welcome	X	X	X
The Catalyst Manager	X	X	
Painless Performance Conversations Defined	X	X	
Recognizing Your Own Avoidance Behaviors	X		
The Performance Management Cycle	X	X	X
The Performance Conversation Journey	X		
Four Critical Mind-sets	X		
Module Review & Wrap-up	X	X	
<b>Module 2: Set Clear Expectations</b>			
The Pet Peeve Formula	X	X	
Imagine a Chair	X	X	X
Organizational & Personal Expectations Defined	X	X	X
Leading a Conversation About Performance Expectations	X	X	
Module Review & Wrap-up	X	X	
<b>Module 3: Lead with Behavior</b>			
Behavior <i>versus</i> Attitude	X	X	X
What You Observe <i>versus</i> What You Assume	X	X	X
Using Facts in Your Performance Conversations	X		
Module Review & Wrap-up	X	X	
<b>Module 4: Eliminate Judgment</b>			
What Do You Observe?	X	X	X
Judgment <i>versus</i> Evidence	X	X	
Performance Gap Model	X	X	X
Addressing Performance Gaps	X		
Module Review & Wrap-up	X	X	
<b>Module 5: Inquire with Purpose</b>			
Making Space in the Conversation	X	X	X

Module/Section	Full-day Workshop	Half-day Workshop	Two-hour Workshop
The Power of Questions	X		
Additional Questioning Techniques	X		
The Guidelines for Powerful Questions	X	X	X
Putting It All Together	X	X	
Module Review & Wrap-up	X	X	
<b>Module 6: Create a Culture of Ownership</b>			
The Difference between Accountability and Ownership	X	X	X
Creating a Culture of Ownership	X	X	X
The Conversation Hook	X	X	X
Avoiding Reverse Delegation	X		
Module Review & Wrap-up	X	X	
<b>Module 7: Conduct the Conversation</b>			
Three Essential Elements	X		
The Painless Performance Conversations Model	X	X	X
Case Study Skill Practice	X	X	X
Module Review & Wrap-up	X	X	
<b>Module 8: Course Wrap-up</b>			
Available Tips and Resources	X	X	X
My One Thing	X	X	X

## Trainer Suggestions

### Beginner Trainers and Facilitators

As much as possible, we have described and scripted the content for you, meaning that you have the exact words to say during the workshop. If you wish, you can present the scripted segments word for word. You can also change the scripted segments to your own words once you are comfortable with the content and the language of the program. Keep in mind there is more material in the Facilitator's Guide than you are likely to use. In your preparations, determine which of the optional exercises will work best for your group.

### Experienced Trainers and Facilitators

Use this guide as a suggested workshop plan. Replace the scripted segments with your own words, stories, and illustrations. Please make sure you are covering the important concepts. Once you are familiar with the material, modify it as you see fit.

### Virtual Trainers and Facilitators

Most of the activities in this guide are adaptable to any distance learning training program. With minor modifications, the activities can fit most technical formats. For example, with web-based programs, participants can do activities via chat or break-out rooms, depending on platform capability.

### Course Timing

The time estimates are printed for each workshop step, activity, and segment. The time required to facilitate each segment varies with the group size and your experience. Be aware of the suggested timeline for each module and change it according to your assessment of your learner's needs. You may also wish to add in breaks to accommodate audience needs.

