

# How To Ask For Change In Employees Who Don't Listen

## Examples Included:

- Using Summaries and Questions
- Using Decisions
- Following up on email
- Creating consequences



# Asking For Summaries

After exchanging pleasantries:

- Manager** We spoke earlier about responding to Julia's request for an analysis of ABC customer. Would you give me a quick summary of what I asked for?
- Greg** eeerr... I am really sorry I have forgotten what you asked for.
- Manager** Have you forgotten or did you not really take in our discussion and my request of you?
- Greg** I was listening ... I just...eeerrr... I am sorry, I didn't really take what you asked for in.
- Manager** Do you understand the impact of not getting the analysis back to Julia on time?
- Greg** Not really. Can you tell me?
- Manager** Why don't you think about the situation and give me your best guess?  
[note the manager is avoiding doing the work for Greg]
- Greg** Well... urrrmmm... I guess that Julia will not be able to get back to the client by when she said would and they will not be that happy.
- Manager** Go on...
- Greg** ... I guess the client may go elsewhere or the relationship may be damaged, and Julia will have to work harder to mend any damage.



# Asking For Summaries

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Continued...

**Manager**

Given that the company could lose a customer and sales, can you understand why I am really disappointed that you didn't take in my request and as a result haven't done what I requested.

**Greg**

I'm sorry. I guess I wasn't sure what to do.

**Manager**

May I ask what stopped you coming and asking for help or more clarity on what was needed.

**Greg**

Nothing I guess

**Manager**

I need you to drop everything and work on this analysis until it is completed, and I have reviewed it. If you have any important and urgent tasks you are working on, can tell me now.

[Greg shakes his head]

So let's go through what is needed together. I am going to ask that you write down each of the points. Can you go get a pen and notebook.

**In this sort of conversation, it is important the manager keeps a calm and relaxed tone and pace of voice. Don't show annoyance or anger where possible.**



# Using Decisions

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Continued...

**Manager**

Jill, please listen carefully as I set out the situation. I want to hear your recommendation as to what decision you would make.

[Manager sets out situation and warns Jill of the requirement at the end i.e. you will need to listen]

**Jill**

Well I am not quite sure. I can see the situation from both sides. What do you think?

[note Jill is trying to get the manager to make the decision]

**Manager**

It might help if you take me through your thoughts for and against each option.

[Manager side stepping a decision and asking for a summary]

**Jill**

Okay. So ... [Jill provides summaries]

**Manager**

Did you find it useful to summarise both positions?

**Jill**

Yes definitely

**Manager**

So what decision would you recommend?

**Asking for a decision gets the other person thinking, which forces them to remember the information.**

**It is very important for the manager to avoid making the decision first. You are asking for a recommendation for a decision. You don't have to agree.**

**When you (the manager) have made a decision, take the other person through your thought process in arriving at your decision.**

# Email Follow Up Example

An example on an email sent from the manager to Bob after a meeting with him:

Hi Bob,

Thanks for your time just now. I appreciate you are busy with lots on. I need your help urgently to get back to customer ABC with a short piece of analysis.

Please can you provide to me by 3pm today:

- A list of the last 15 orders from ABC
- Break this down into three categories – margins <10%, margin between 11% and 26% and margin greater than 26%
- List out any returns or issues raised by ABC on any of the items purchased

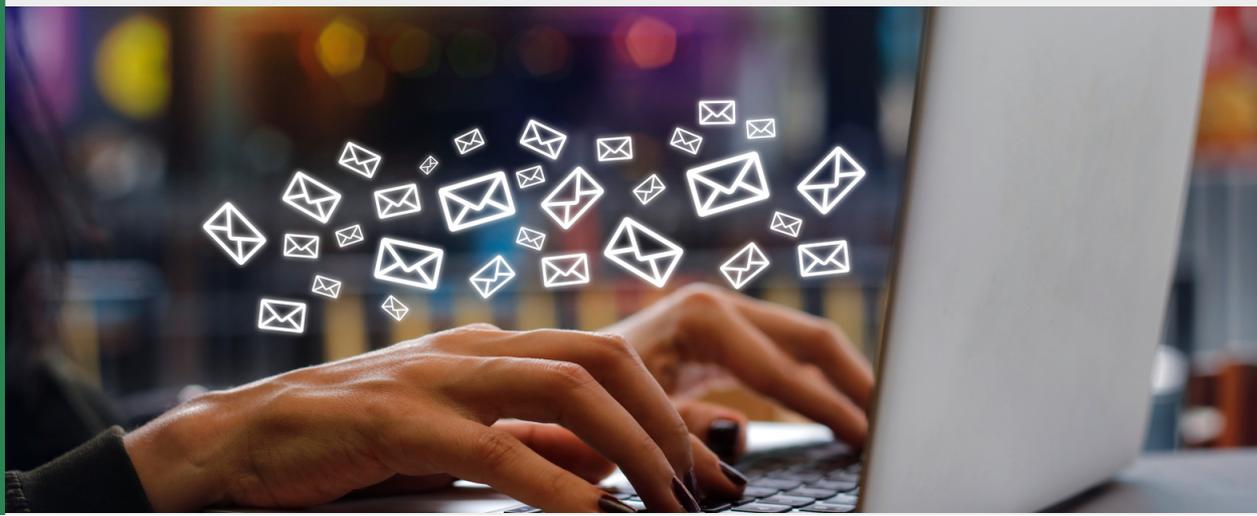
I have attached a simple excel file to help you with the format.

Any questions or issues, please find me ASAP.

Thanks  
Jess

**Keep your emails short, concise and to the point.**

**Include bullet points and spacing which makes your email easier to read quickly.**



# Creating Consequences

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**Manager**

Beth, this is the fourth time that I have asked you to undertake a small piece of work and to discover that you have not really taken in what I have asked nor taken any action to find out more or start the work.

The other three times were on Monday last week which we spoke about, then on Wednesday a similar thing happened, yesterday and again today.

Is there something that happening that I am not aware of? If you are under pressure or have problems, then I would like to be able to support you better.

**Beth**

I am very sorry. There is nothing I am worried about, nor do I have any problems or issues out of the ordinary. Thank you for asking – I appreciate it

**Manager**

Well I am pleased to hear that everything is okay. That is good news.

Based on the last two weeks, you do seem to be distracted and not really listening to me. Is that fair?

**Beth**

Yes, I suppose that is fair. I am sorry.



# Creating Consequences

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**Manager**

Okay. Thank you for apologising. I will assume that you not listening won't happen nearly as much going forward.

If the not listening continues, I may have to start a performance improvement process which is a more formal process setting out the issues, the impacts, and the steps you should take to improve. I would help support you through the process with more one-on-one meetings and similar.

I would prefer to keep this informal. What would you like?

**Beth**

I am sorry.

I will make sure I pay attention and will start writing the key points down straight away.

Sorry.

**Creating consequences is about getting the other person to focus and listen. It is not about making threats or venting your frustration and anger.**

**Keep your body language and tone of voice calm and neutral in this sort of conversation.**



# Options for a Next Step



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