

## 2 How To Have Awkward Conversations

Awkward conversations are a given in the business world. Who hasn't had to critique someone's performance — or been critiqued? Who hasn't said something in the workplace that they later regret? Who hasn't felt passed over for a promotion, or been in the position of denying someone else advancement? But, the goal is to reduce the awkwardness, not eliminate it. Here are some tips for reaching that goal:



### TOP TIPS

#### Be Present

Avoiding them never solves a problem. Being evasive merely postpones an awkward conversation. Be proactive and make yourself available. Listen to what the other person has to say. Don't be caught off guard — think through what you want to say in advance.

#### Be Honest

Your feedback must be truthful and direct. You wouldn't be having an awkward conversation if there wasn't a problem. Don't sugar coat problems. Be ready to talk specifics, rather than generalizing.

#### Be Kind

Being direct is not the same thing as being harsh. When possible, acknowledge positive and productive qualities of another person. Try not to let your own emotions enter into it — as a leader, your job is to remain calm.

#### Be Realistic

Know what you want to achieve. Go into an awkward conversation with a clear set of outcomes in mind: for yourself, for the other person, and for your business.