



Managing Difficult Conversations

How to Prepare for a Difficult Conversation

- ✓ Decide on your desired outcome.
- ✓ As yourself, “Why do I need to have this conversation?” and “Is the outcome I’m looking for realistic?”
- ✓ Think about the other person’s point of view and perspective.
- ✓ Prepare what you are going to say. Write down the key points you need to cover so that you can keep the conversation on track and stay in control.
- ✓ Give the other person time to prepare for the conversation by providing them some context in advance.

Positive Conversations

- ✓ **Step 1:** State the problem. Explain your view of the issues and provide examples.
- ✓ **Step 2:** Listen and question. Let the other person explain their side.
- ✓ **Step 3:** Acknowledge. Confirm and clarify your understanding of what they have said.
- ✓ **Step 4:** Reassess your position. Clarify your position without minimizing theirs. Has your position changed based on the information they provided?
- ✓ **Step 5:** Look for solutions. Work with them to develop solutions and agree on a way forward.
- ✓ **Step 6:** Close the conversation: Clarify and document the agreed upon actions.



+1 (207) 373-9301
solutions@strategictalentmgmt.com
www.strategictalentmgmt.com

Deescalating a Not-So-Positive Conversation

- ✓ Watch for warning signs that the conversation is getting out of hand.
- ✓ Don't assume you know what's going on with the other person.
- ✓ Try to redirect the conversation into more positive territory.
- ✓ Listen, REALLY listen, to what the other person is saying.
- ✓ Remain calm, no matter what.
- ✓ Try to see the other person's point of view.
- ✓ Echo what you've heard.
- ✓ When you're wrong, admit it.
- ✓ Characterize your viewpoint without becoming emotional.
- ✓ Ask the other person's advice. For example, "What ideas do you have for resolving this issue?"
- ✓ Express your own ideas for resolving the problem.
- ✓ Come to an agreement on the next steps.

Disengaging Without Resolution

- ✓ Stay calm and do not let your emotions guide the conversation.
- ✓ Avoid becoming defensive.
- ✓ Concede that the conversation is not productive.
- ✓ Acknowledge why you are disengaging.
- ✓ Show your appreciation for the other person's time.
- ✓ Restate your commitment to finding a solution.
- ✓ Take a break and pause the conversation.
- ✓ Regroup and reevaluate the situation. Reschedule if possible.
- ✓ If the conversation becomes threatening, walk away.
- ✓ Stay safe.

Build a foundation with STM and discover how to improve your leadership skills through managing difficult conversations. [Contact us today!](#)



+1 (207) 373-9301
solutions@strategictalentmgmt.com
www.strategictalentmgmt.com