

A FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR RESOURCE

Approachable Supervisor Conversation Guide

Word-for-word scripts for the conversations your supervisors
will face in the weeks after winning a union election.

"Do you have what you need?" • "What would make work better?" • "What's next?"

Three Questions That Change Everything

Approachability is the single behavior that most predicts discretionary effort and job performance. These three questions are the simplest, most powerful tool your supervisors have. Ask them daily.

1

"Do you have what you need?"

THE ASSUMPTION: *Nobody wakes up hoping to do bad work.*

WHY IT WORKS

If employees had all necessary resources, they'd perform great work. This question removes blame, focuses on possibilities, and turns every conversation into problem-solving. It signals that you're here to help, not to catch mistakes.

Ask at the start of shifts, during walk-throughs, in one-on-ones. Make it habitual.

2

"What would make work better?"

THE ASSUMPTION: *A leader's role is to reduce friction.*

WHY IT WORKS

This surfaces the daily annoyances that drain energy — broken equipment, confusing processes, scheduling headaches. Fixing even small irritants builds massive credibility. Employees see their input leading to real change.

Follow up on answers. The worst thing you can do is ask and then ignore what you hear.

3

"What's next?"

THE ASSUMPTION: *People want to make progress.*

WHY IT WORKS

This opens conversations about goals, growth, and aspirations — whether career advancement, skill development, or personal milestones. Supporting an employee's progress is the single most motivating thing a leader can do.

Even employees who seem disengaged have something they're working toward. Find it.

THE PLAYBOOK 8 Post-Election Conversations (Scenarios 1–4)

1

UNION SUPPORTER THINKS YOU MIGHT HOLD A GRUDGE

Employee is distant, avoids eye contact, stops asking questions. They supported the union and assume you're angry.

WHAT TO SAY

"I want you to know something — the election is over, and I'm not keeping score. You had every right to feel the way you did. My job hasn't changed: I'm here to make sure you have what you need to do great work. If something's bothering you, I'd rather hear it from you than guess. Can we start there?"

2

"SO WHAT'S GOING TO CHANGE NOW?"

Employee is testing whether the company's promises during the campaign were real or just talk.

WHAT TO SAY

"That's a fair question, and I'm glad you're asking. We're putting together a plan right now to address the issues that came up. I don't have all the answers yet, but I can tell you we're starting with [specific quick win]. I'll keep you posted as things move forward. What's the one thing you'd most want to see change?"

3

EMPLOYEE BRINGS UP A CAMPAIGN PROMISE

"Management said they'd fix the scheduling. It's been three weeks and nothing's different."

WHAT TO SAY

"You're right to hold us to that. I know scheduling was a big issue, and it's on our list. Here's where we are: [specific update or honest timeline]. If I don't have an answer, I'll find out and get back to you by [specific day]. I'd rather be straight with you than make another promise I can't keep yet."

4

RUMOR ABOUT RETALIATION OR LAYOFFS

"I heard they're going to start firing people who signed cards."

WHAT TO SAY

"Let me be direct — that is not happening. Retaliating against anyone for how they felt about the union would be wrong and illegal. Nobody is losing their job because of the election. If you hear something like that again, please come to me so I can address it. Rumors like that hurt everyone."

THE PLAYBOOK 8 Post-Election Conversations (Scenarios 5–8)

5

SUPERVISOR DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO ACT NORMAL

You know this employee was openly pro-union. Now every interaction feels awkward. You're walking on eggshells.

WHAT TO SAY

"I'll be honest — I know things have been a little different between us since the election, and I don't want that. We don't have to agree on everything to work well together. I respect you, and that hasn't changed. So let's get back to normal. What do you need from me today?"

6

"WHY SHOULD I TRUST MANAGEMENT NOW?"

Employee is skeptical. They've been through broken promises before and aren't buying the post-election optimism.

WHAT TO SAY

"I'm not going to ask you to trust me based on words. You're right to be skeptical — trust gets built by what we do, not what we say. So here's what I can offer: watch what happens over the next few weeks. If you see us doing what we said we'd do, maybe that starts to earn it back. And if you don't, I want to hear about it."

7

SKEPTIC: "MANAGEMENT ISN'T REALLY COMMITTED"

"This is just a show. Give it six months and everything goes back to the way it was."

WHAT TO SAY

"I hear you, and honestly, I understand why you'd say that. The only way I can prove you wrong is over time. But I'll tell you what I'm committed to right now: asking you what's working and what's not, and actually doing something about it. If I stop doing that, call me on it. Deal?"

8

POSITIVE: "HOW CAN I HELP MAKE THINGS BETTER?"

Employee genuinely wants to contribute. This is the conversation you want to have more of.

WHAT TO SAY

"That means a lot, and I want to take you up on it. We're putting together a team to work on [specific initiative]. Your perspective would be valuable. In the meantime, the best thing you can do is keep talking to me — when something's working, tell me. When it's not, tell me that too. That's how we make this real."

These Are Generic Scripts.

Imagine Them Built for Your Workplace.

Your Post-Election Reality

We'll identify the specific conversations your supervisors are struggling with right now.

Custom Scripts & Scenarios

Tailored to your workforce, your culture, and the issues that surfaced during your campaign.

Supervisor Training

Active interval workshops that build the habits of approachable leadership — not one-day lectures.

Ongoing Coaching

Regular check-ins to make sure supervisors are applying skills and adapting to new challenges.

Let's Equip Your Supervisors

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