

Checking-In Versus Checking-Up on your Employees

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According to a recent McKinsey & Company report titled, "[Women in the Workplace 2020: Corporate America is at a Critical Crossroads](#)" there is a significant difference between what many companies are asking their managers to do to support their staff during the COVID pandemic and what their employees say their managers are actually doing. According to the report companies are asking managers to check-in weekly to make sure that workloads are manageable and to confirm that employee mental health and well-being are not being overlooked. Companies are also asking that managers take steps to ensure parents' work/life needs are being met and that reductions are made in the scope of work to help support them. Helping managers understand the difference between checking-in and checking-up on their employees may be one way to help address these problems.

The Center for Creative Leadership suggests adopting a mindset of 'checking-in' with employees rather than "checking-up" on them. They assert that if managers are mostly asking employees if they completed specific tasks or are constantly monitoring how people achieve their goals, then they are checking-up on them. This is frequently felt as micromanagement by employees leading them to feel that their judgment, talents, and skills are not valued. Checking-up on employees can also lead to decreased motivation and creativity.

On the other hand, the Center encourage managers check-in with their employees to find out how their projects are coming along and if they need anything of their manager to help them complete their assignments, or if any deadline or scope changes may be needed. When managers focus on simply more than deadline completion, employees feel valued as if they are an important part of a more collaborative team. For years, research trends have shown that employees want more than equitable compensation today. They value jobs that they feel offer opportunity to succeed at meaningful work.

Another aspect of checking-in with employees, particularly during COVID, is making sure that they are respected as whole people, not just for their work contribution. Checking-in with staff includes exchanging conversation about things other than just work. By doing this, managers create connection with their team members and recognize that the things going on outside of work are relevant and may impact how things are going at work. Managers should share some about their own life and extend the olive branch to staff to share as well. Additionally, managers should ask their staff if there are things, they could do to help them be more successful at home, considering things such as flexible work hours or reminding them of benefits that may offer additional support.