



WHITE PAPER

Teleflex: Building Relationships through Progress Conversations

TELEFLEX IS A LEADING MEDICAL DEVICE MANUFACTURING COMPANY WITH A GLOBAL REACH.

They have had a tremendous amount of success focusing on Principle #2: Care About People's Goals, Passions and Struggles from Ed Wallace's Book: The Relationship Engine. Its core values define for employees the culture they can expect working at the company as reflected by its motto: "People, at the center of all we do."

Shortly after Benson Smith became CEO of Teleflex, he held a global conference call with his new professional workforce. He introduced a process that had served him well as a medical device executive: the Work Planning and Review System (WPRS). At its base level, WPRS is a "progress conversation" that takes place on a regular basis between managers and employees.

WHAT IS WPRS?

WPRS is a simple concept, but one that has made a major impact. Employees document short-term objectives on a form and send it to their manager. Managers meet with employees to discuss priorities, and they review progress from the previous period. Benson Smith used WPRS with all of the top leaders in the company. From there, the practice cascaded throughout the professional workforce and eventually replaced annual performance reviews.

Frequent performance discussions were familiar to the sales force, but it was a new concept for other exempt professionals. Early on, some thought WPRS seemed excessive and micromanaging, and some complained about documentation. But using WPRS that first year demonstrated the value of regular progress conversations. And having a form that tracked progress supported more informed merit and bonus compensation decisions.

WPRS AT-A-GLANCE

The process exemplifies several leadership best practices:

- Managers can recognize great work closer to the time it occurred
- Opportunity to remove obstacles to quickly align on high-priority projects
- Tracks employee development goals & progress
- Ability to foster conversations about career aspirations
- Chance to use the conversations to show interest in employee's personal lives.



The WPRS process has been a powerful tool for us to build engagement across our organization. By ensuring that every manager has a regular, dedicated and focused one-on-one interaction with each of their direct reports, it has been a concrete way for us to entrench one of our core values: putting people at the center. It's one of those regular conversations that help to build understanding and clarity in the most important relationship that exists in the workplace; between an individual and their immediate manager.

-Cam Hicks

VP Global Human Resources & Employee Communications
Teleflex

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Studies indicate that achieving progress and recognition are among the most satisfying aspects of work. WPRS supports that recognition, but it also serves a much higher cause than a progress report. The conversations that take place over time are building trust that someone cares about you and your work and is there to support you and as a result managers are becoming stronger coaches and mentors.

Having a CEO that speaks about and practices these leadership concepts has helped make Teleflex a relationship-centric, performance-focused organization and a great place to work. From an engagement standpoint, one of the highest-rated responses to employee surveys at Teleflex is: "I know what is expected from me at work."



I really like sharing the Teleflex 'progress conversations' process with emerging relational leaders because after establishing an understanding of the foundational and unavoidable principle of Worthy Intent, the Teleflex process is an intentional, straightforward example of Principle N2: Care about people's goals, passions and struggles. By way of translation, people have business and personal goals which are passions and causes – things they care deeply about, and ultimately, struggles just like every human being experiences. -Cam Hicks, *Teleflex*



CONCLUSION

The WPRS approach creates intentional opportunities or conversations that lift up and allow for engagement around the Relational GPS (Goals, Passions, and Struggles) of fellow Teleflex employees. As simple as this sounds, I find the approach profound because with work so frantic today, we may tend to forget the key concept that I mentioned earlier: "Success comes through the experience we create for others!" That experience, aka engagement, begins with our ability to learn about and align with our colleagues' Relational GPS. Just like our car's GPS is the road map to our travel success, Relational GPS is the road map to unlocking the potential to create, advance, and sustain our business relationships.

