How to hold a successful salary dialogue

The salary dialogue can be implemented in various ways using different steps. If the dialogue is about evaluating results and performance, more time is required than a discussion on salary only.

# 1. Clarify the purpose

A good idea is to start by clarifying the purpose of the dialogue.

# 2. Listen to the employee’s picture

Let the employee give her/his picture of how she/he regards his/her work performance over the period in question.

Give employees the opportunity to describe the role their own efforts have played for the development of operations in their own words. What inputs is the employee most satisfied/dissatisfied with?

# 3. Give your picture

Give your opinion, based on your overall assessment, of the employee's work results and performance. Describe the basis of the salary level setting policy and how you assess his/her opportunities for continued salary development. The clearer you are when it comes to assessment, requirements and expectations, the easier it will be for the employee to accept the salary level offered. Express yourself clearly and in practical terms so that the employee understands what needs to be improved and what has been good. Give clearly-described examples.

Give feedback on aspects that the employee is able to influence. Let the employee have the opportunity to respond to your picture. Employees do not influence their salaries in the salary dialogue, this is achieved by performing well between the regular dialogues.

# 4. Be prepared for reactions

When you feel that the assessment of an employee's work results will cause an emotional response, make sure that you can stand for your assessment, even in the face of a strong reaction. Be prepared for it to be difficult to disappoint an employee. The employee may question you and your ability to assess her/his efforts. Sometimes the salary dialogue can be a difficult conversation. Prepare by thinking about how the employee may react. How could you react then? Try to keep calm and objective even if an employee reacts strongly. Listen and accept the other person's reaction. You do not have to agree on the issues, sometimes this is not possible.

# 5. Avoid talking about other individuals

The salary dialogue should deal with employee work results and your assessment of those work results and not with the work results or salaries of other employees.

# 6. Dissatisfied employees

If an employee is dissatisfied it is difficult to make them satisfied by talking to them. In certain cases it is better to conclude the salary dialogue and follow up any other issues for discussion at a separate meeting.

# 7. Document everything

It is a good idea to document the dialogue directly while it is fresh in both your minds. Documentation is essential for future follow-up.