

years and helping to write Illinois' five-year statewide mental health strategic plan.

Burgess left Alexian Brothers in January 2014 to take a job running the David Lawrence Center, a Naples nonprofit provider of mental health services and substance-

abuse therapy. The job is a dream come true. While a graduate student at Concordia University in Illinois, Burgess wrote a paper about what he considered to be an ideal situation for him down the road: running a mental health/substance-abuse organization that brings the best

evidence-based care to all people. "That's really what I'm doing now," he says.

Burgess says his career shows what can happen if you follow your passion. "If you go against those currents, I think it becomes much more challenging," he says.

MANAGEMENT

THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW REDO

Zach Katkin, president of Naples-based technology company Atilus, understands how millennials crave constant communication, collaboration and feedback. After all, at age 30, he's at the older end of the millennial generation. "I'm just as guilty about receiving criticism and praise a certain way," he says.

As companies bring on millennial workers—Census Bureau data shows that Southwest Florida has an estimated 60,000 workers between ages 16-34—some businesses are shifting their methods of giving feedback.

The often-dreaded annual performance reviews are being replaced by more frequent goal-setting sessions and informal discussions about workplace behavior, successes and challenges.

Southwest Florida executives and management experts shared suggestions for updating your company's review process.



TALK OFTEN

Increase the frequency of performance talks with employees for a greater impact. Nationally, companies that set performance goals quarterly generate 31 percent greater returns than those with annual reviews, according to Bersin by Deloitte, which conducts HR research. Ryan Carter, executive vice president for Fort Myers-based Scotlynn USA Division, a transportation and logistics company, challenges himself to hold a casual conversation with one employee each day. "Whether it's for 5 or 15 minutes, these transparent and candid conversations allow for feedback at any moment throughout the year," he says. Scotlynn also pairs

new employees with mentors for the first four to six months. Each month, both employees fill out a survey about the training process. "When we share the results with both employees, they feel comfortable and more open during training," Carter says.

MEET INFORMALLY

The term "performance review" creates images of stale, time-wasting meetings, says Stephen Bienko, franchise owner of College Hunks Hauling Junk in Fort Myers. In fact, almost everyone hates them, even employees who appreciate feedback, according to 2014 research by psychologists at Kansas State University, Texas A&M University

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MANAGEMENT, CONT.

and Eastern Kentucky University. Bienko talks to employees while in the car on the way to an assignment, in the office between assignments or during meal breaks. "When you have set times, everyone prepares instead of being reactive and transparent," he says. Bienko argues against the idea that millennials are spoiled and narcissistic for desiring constant feedback, instead crediting the generation for an age of openness.

LEARN MOTIVATION STYLES

The most successful feedback hinges on individual needs. About 30 percent of millennials say meaningful work is important versus only 12 percent of managers, according to research by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Executive Development program. In addition, about 74 percent like to collaborate in small groups, says a survey by workplace company IdeaPaint. At Atilus, Katkin and his team learned about each other's communication, organization and conflict resolution styles by using a survey that identifies and describes different work personalities. "Using a technical tool really made a difference," he says. "You understand more about yourself, and through the process, you get to know your team and adjust your style."

SET GOALS

Most outdated performance reviews focus on behavior and attributes, such as communication, teamwork, collaboration, creativity and attendance. Critics say they lack goal-oriented objectives that

specify what and how an employee contributes to the bigger picture. "This year's review shouldn't look like last year's review," says Joshua Sky of The Sky's the Limit Consulting in Estero. From 2005-2009, Sky helped the U.S. Department of Defense roll out a performance management program that teaches supervisors and staff how to draft performance objectives that focus on job tasks. He counsels small-business owners to do the same by tying each employee to a major organizational goal so they can take ownership. "Focus on a few major large bucket items," he says. "Everyone needs to know what the company's goals are and what they're doing to contribute."

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL
THINKING

During reviews, managers should ask open-ended questions to prompt discussions. At the Robert Half office in Naples, regional vice president Jamie Conley asks questions to reflect on progress and set goals for the future: What are your challenges? How would you overcome those? "Let them work through the solution," he says. At Scotlynn, Carter has learned that employees ask more questions than they did 10 years ago, so he thoroughly explains the "why" and "how" of new policies and processes. "In our culture, you're not looked down upon if you ask why things are they way they are," he says. "I've found people respond well and respect a rule more when they understand the reasoning behind it."

—Carolyn Crist