

Rounding

The purpose of rounding is for managers to hear firsthand what is going well and what issues need to be addressed with the employee or on behalf of the employee.

Rounding is a leadership practice where managers intentionally “makes the rounds” of all of his or her employees on a regular basis. Depending on the department, this occurs semi-annually, quarterly, or monthly. While rounding, a manager asks questions, talks with and listens to each employee. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways: during a “walking” meeting, in someone’s office, in a conference room, outside on a picnic table, etc. Rounding involves management intentionally taking time to touch base with their employees, make personal connections, find out what’s going well, and determine what resources are needed.

Rounding works well when managers see rounding as a meaningful way to connect with their employees. If it is perceived by employees as “just face-time,” or “checking a box,” rounding is ineffective. Rounding can provide opportunities to help employees perform even better.

Employees have the opportunity to bring forth questions, concerns, and ideas to improve the work culture, performance or organization. Rounding is a time to highlight your accomplishments and/or challenges.

Why do rounding? Employees want five critical things from their supervisors. These are listed below, along with explanations of how rounding helps you accomplish them:

1. Employees want a manager who cares about and values them. The number one reason people leave their jobs is because they feel they are not valued. What’s more, people don’t leave their “team”—they leave their direct supervisors. Taking the time every day to make a human connection with your employees—and to really listen and respond to their needs—counteracts that perception by providing feelings of value. Good rounding builds strong relationships with employees and is a natural opportunity for feedback.
2. Employees want systems that work and the tools and equipment to do the job. Obviously, a major part of job satisfaction centers on being able to actually do your job. For example, sometimes we experience equipment breakdowns or processes that frustrate employees. Rounding can help solve these problems and boost productivity. When you ask people, ‘Do you have the tools and equipment you need to do your job today?’ and they say “yes”, it’s a positive for everyone.” If they say no, perhaps you can fix the problem or discuss it with others to develop a plan of action.
3. Employees want opportunities for professional development. Rounding is a way to discover what skill sets need improvement and to discuss professional development opportunities. During rounding, it is easy to suggest training to someone who clearly needs it, or to ask one employee to mentor another.
4. Employees want to be recognized and rewarded for doing a good job. Rounding includes asking people who else is showing exceptional performance—and then passing the compliments on to that person.
5. Employees don’t want to work with low performers. Nothing makes employees as discouraged and resentful as having to co-exist with people who don’t pull their own weight. Rounding naturally provides opportunities for constructive feedback, and to catch problems early.

Why:

- Rounding provides opportunities for managers and employees to think about professional development.
- Rounding serves as an important signal of the manager's commitment to the employee, performance improvement and quality assurance.
- Rounding improves and strengthens manager-employee relationships.
- Rounding is proactive. Managers will hear about issues before they grow into major problems. This is a scheduled opportunity for an employee to discuss potential issues or concerns.
- Rounding gives regular opportunities for feedback.
- Rounding can increase employee engagement, making employees feel valued and more likely to perform better.

How:

- To assure that rounding is done on at least on a semi-annual basis and to assure that all employees have opportunities to talk with their manager, managers should schedule their rounding.
- Managers should let employees know in advance that they will be stopping by so that employees can think about or prepare any topics that they would like to bring up.
- The tone should be positive, conversational, and interested. The point is to find out how things are going from the employee's perspective. Rounding is not a performance appraisal or disciplinary meeting.
- The manager should write down action items/things they need to follow-up on.

Follow Up By Managers:

At or before the next rounding session, be sure to follow up on:

- Any questions asked by the employee that you could not answer immediately,
- Information you agreed to obtain and provide to the employee,
- Status of information that you agreed to take to the next management meeting for discussion, and
- Any good things that you hear about the employee from others, but didn't have a chance to tell them previously.