

The Manager & Worker Script Cheat Sheet

EXECUTIVE TRACK

ANNOUNCING THE CHANGE

Opening the conversation

"I want to talk with you directly about something rather than have it reach you secondhand. We're introducing [tool or process] over the coming months. I don't have every detail worked out yet, and I'm not going to pretend I do. What I can tell you today is why we're doing this, what we already know, and how we'll keep you informed as the rest gets decided."

If asked, "Will this replace me?"

"I don't know exactly what your role looks like in eighteen months, and I won't pretend I do. Here's what I do know, and here's the process we're using to figure out the rest together."

THE QUIETLY DISENGAGING EMPLOYEE

Opening the conversation

"I've noticed you've seemed a bit more withdrawn in our last few meetings, and I wanted to check in directly rather than guess. Is there anything about the changes we've been rolling out that's sitting uneasily with you?"

If they say "I'm fine" but clearly aren't

"That's fair, and I don't want to push. I'll just say the door stays open, and if anything shifts for you, I'd rather hear it from you directly than find out later."

RETAINING A FLIGHT-RISK TOP PERFORMER

"I want to be direct with you. You're one of the people I'm most counting on to help this team come through this change well, and I know periods like this are exactly when strong people start looking elsewhere. I'd rather have that conversation with you now than lose you to a guess about what might happen."

WHEN A ROLE IS GENUINELY SHRINKING

"I want to talk with you about how your role is likely to change. Some of what you've been doing is going to be handled differently going forward, and I don't want to minimize what that means. What I can offer is time, a real process for figuring out what comes next for you, and my direct involvement in that process rather than leaving you to navigate it alone."

Full scenarios and context: Chapter 6, How to Upskill Quickly in 30 Days

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WORKER TRACK

MAKING IT VISIBLE BEYOND YOUR MANAGER

LinkedIn or internal update post

"Spent the past month building a working knowledge of [skill] and applying it to [specific project or task]. The biggest shift for me has been [one honest, specific insight]. Still early days, but a useful reminder that the most valuable upskilling often happens quietly, alongside the day job."

Email update to manager or skip-level

"Wanted to share a quick update. Over the past few weeks I've been working through [skill area] and used it directly on [task or deliverable]. Happy to walk through what I learned if it's useful for the wider team."

RAISING IT IN A PERFORMANCE REVIEW

"One thing I'd like to highlight from this period is the work I put into building [skill], which I applied on [specific examples already shared earlier]. Looking ahead, I'd like to talk about how that fits into where the team is headed, and where I might be able to take on more in that direction."

If the response is vague or noncommittal

"I hear that. Would it help if I put together a short, specific proposal for what taking on more in this area could look like, so it's easier to evaluate concretely?"

RESPONDING TO "YOU'RE JUST CHASING A TREND"

"Fair concern, and I get why it might look that way. For me it's less about chasing a trend and more about making sure the parts of my work I care most about staying sharp at are actually protected. Happy to share what I'm finding if it's useful."