

Ruth Sanderson, Assistant Head - Participant of PTC Finance 2019



“Yes. When I started my role, uh, last year it was my first headship. Um, in my speech of the year, I shared a Mary Prada, which is what is the most important thing in the world? It is people. It is people, it is people. And it's really important to me that I put that into practice every day, in my job. And so an example of this is when I was sitting down with my leadership group and we were going through who we've aligned managing. I was given a particular person, I didn't choose it. It was all organized before I arrived. And when I looked through the list, I said, Oh, I've got this person, the looks from the leadership group across the table to me, raise the eyebrows, like, Oh dear, sort of pity, but I've got this person to manage.

And I said, well, what's the problem here? And they said, you know, she's really got communication issues, the way she emails people and the way she talks to people. Uh, and nobody can talk to her about it. So I thought, well, I really need to tackle this head on. And from a PCC on assessment, I don't know if anyone's done that one, but there's a section on feedback and feedback is where am I now? Where do I need to be and how do I close that gap in between? And so I use that approach. When I met with this lady for the first meeting, obviously it was a get to know me meeting, but then afterwards I started seeing as well, the communication in the emails to me, the list of things she was wanting me to do, telling me to do with them.

This isn't the way that we communicate with each other. So I spoke to her about it and she had the most enormous, I can only call it tantrum. And it was quite a shock, that in a professional meeting that she exploded in this way and it really made my heart race more than it's doing. Now, speaking to you. And I thought, gosh, this is why people haven't addressed this with her. Because if you try and address things with her, she blows up and it puts you off saying it. So anyway, I'm brave and I met with her again and she had another tantrum and this time she runs to HR to complain about me. I was on probation so I was even feeling more nervous. Like, Oh my gosh, you know, something's going to go horribly wrong here. But anyway, she came back from each I know, already prepped her and said, I was gonna talk to her about this issue, about how communication and HR said, no, Ruth is your line manager and Ruth does get to give you targets and things like that.



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So she came back crying, just said, if you think this is what I need to work on, Ruth, this is what I will work on. I just need you to tell me how to do it. It's like a huge transformation. And through the year, you know, I gave a consistent feedback both when she was doing things really well and also when she was slipping back to her old habits. And by the end of the year for her and for others in the organization, it was a transformational change. And she thanked me that, you know, she, somebody had told her the truth and all these problems are happening that people weren't addressing with her and of course that experience, that approach wouldn't work with everybody. But she had listened, she'd learned to trust. And now when I do give her feedback on things, she's completely different. She's completely open. I really want to sort of please me and things which is, which is really nice. I want her to do well for herself, of course. It reminded me having that experience that you need to have courage, doing these kinds of jobs. You also need to have hope that people will, be led. And I'd change it and do the best they can for themselves. And you also need to be determined and also reminded. I'm reminded that you're investing in people. Uh, is putting people first that they are the most important thing. People, people, people."