



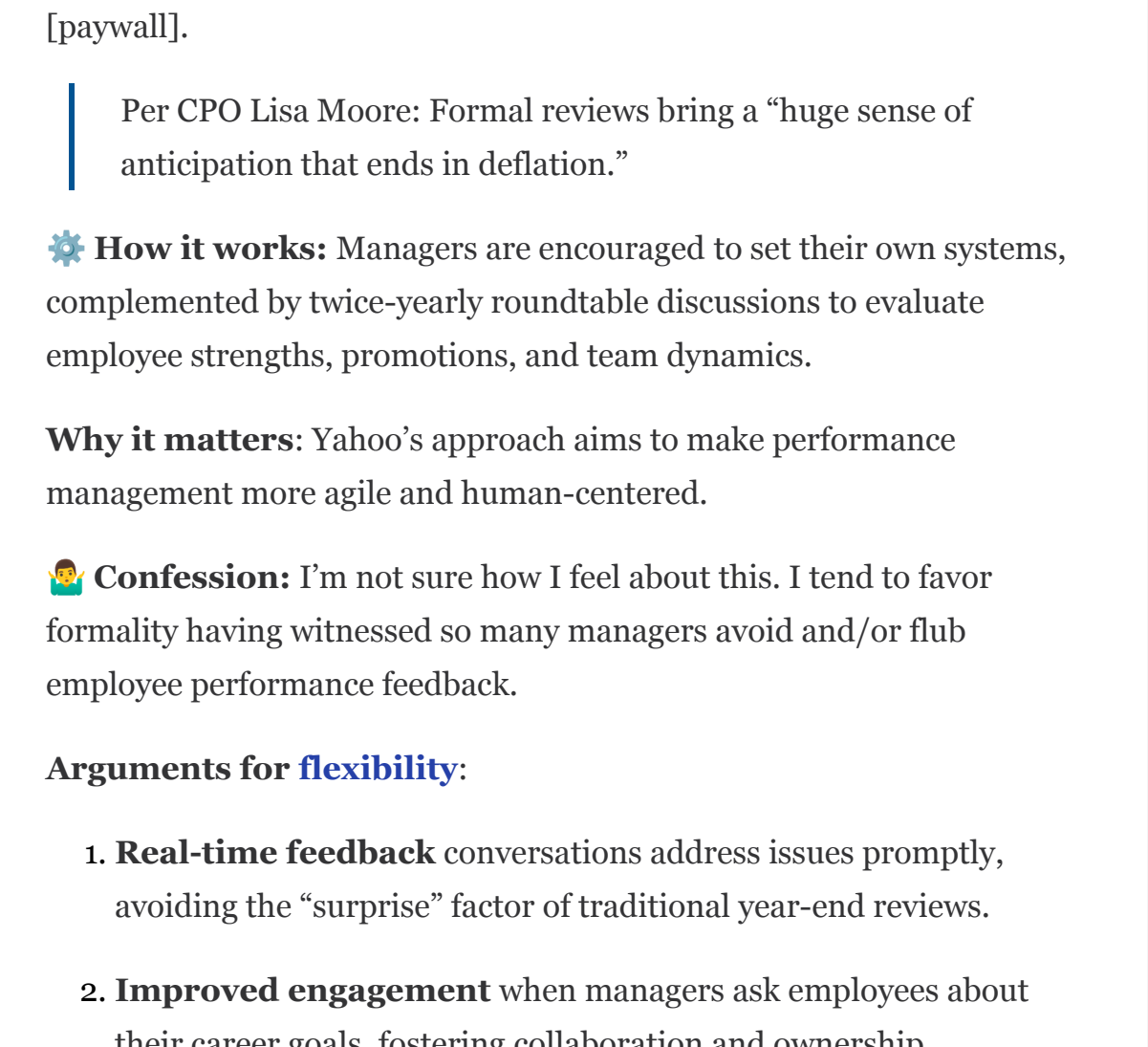
# Schachter Monthly

By Ephraim Schachter • Jan 07, 2025

Smart Brevity® count: 5 mins...1274 words

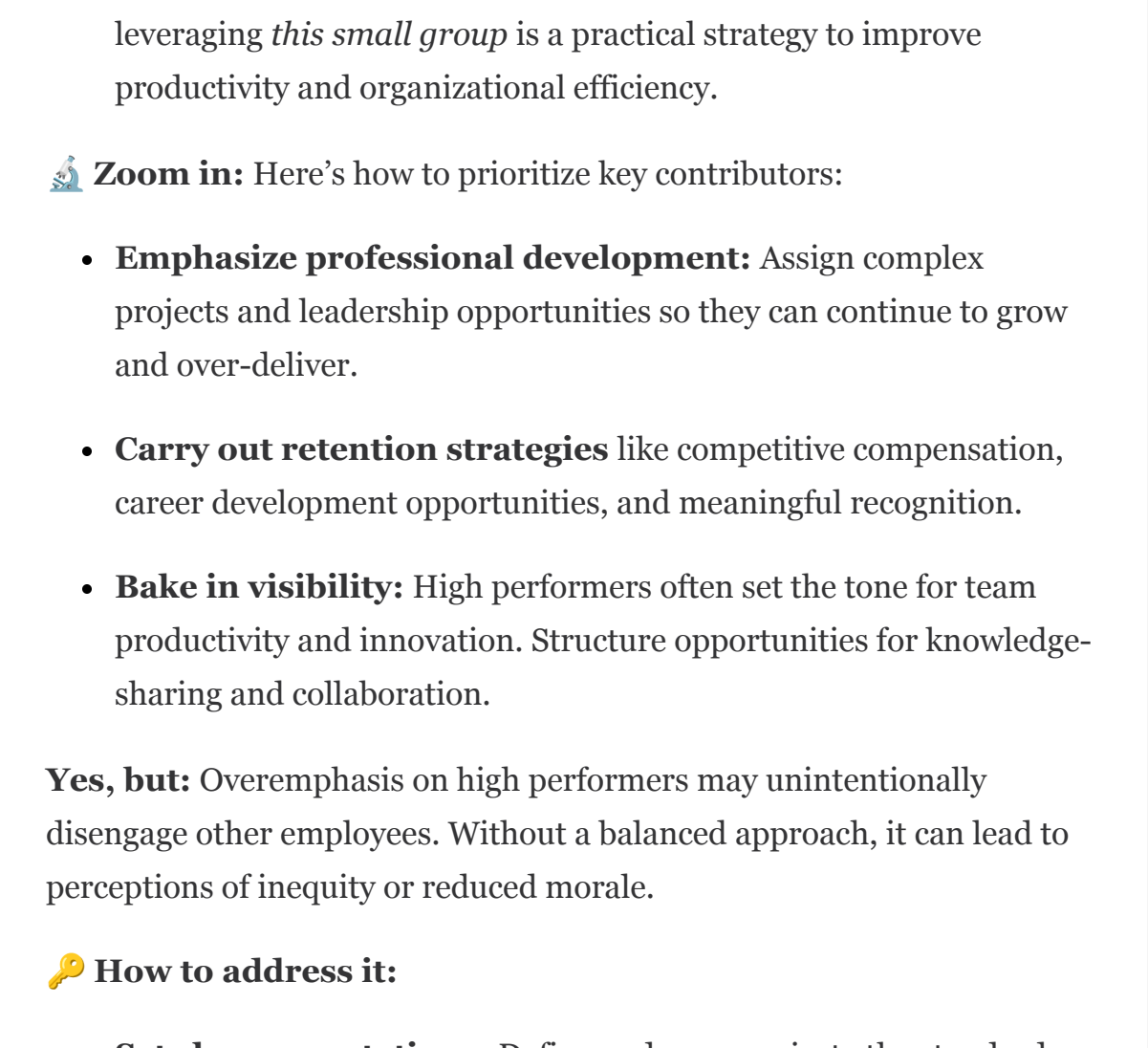
- 🌟 **It's 2025** and that means a new year rich in opportunities to add value!
- 🏆 **Let's be great leaders!** Here are some straightforward insights and actionable tools & tips.
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## 1 big thing: Yahoo nixes performance reviews



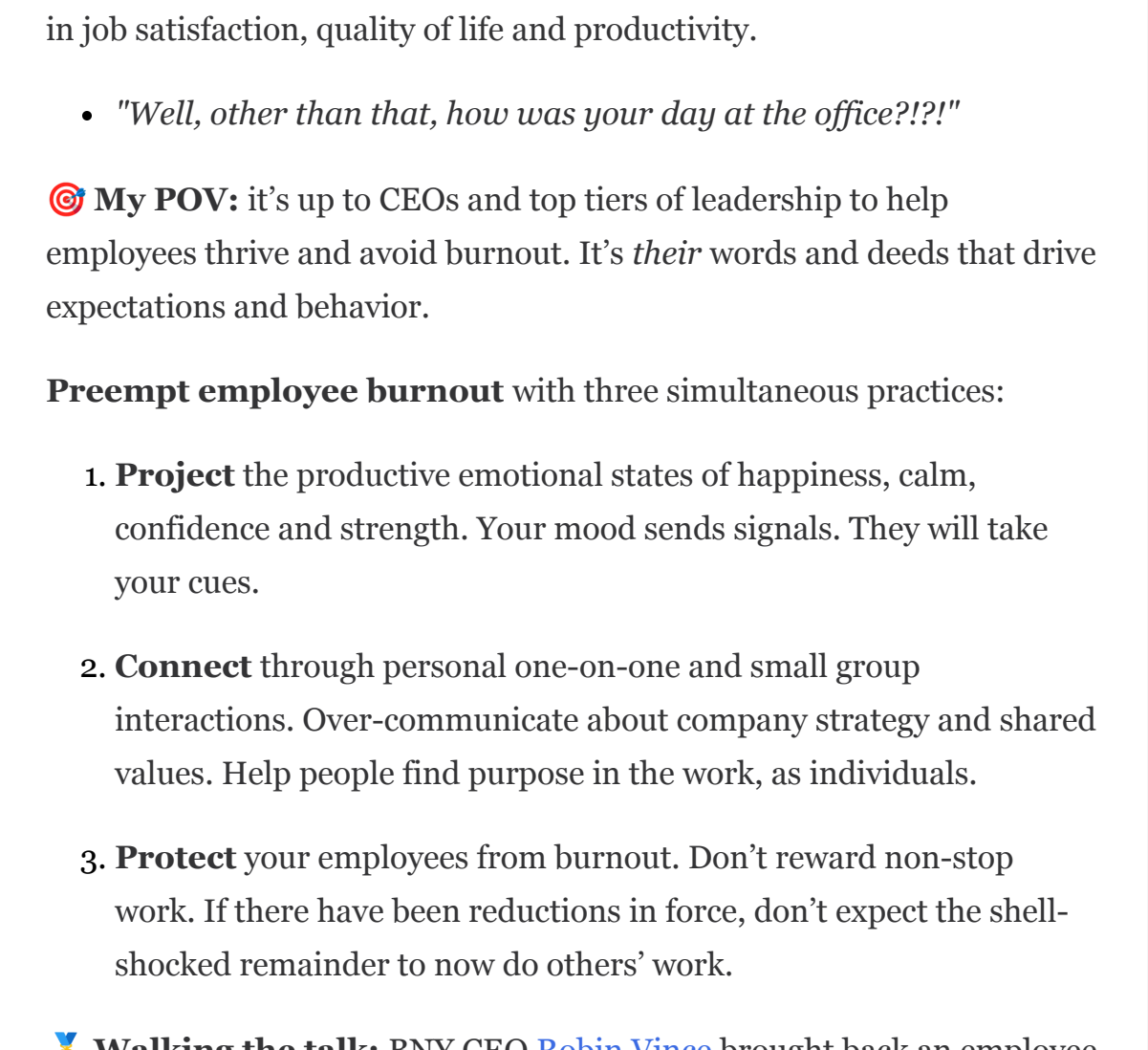
- What happened:** Yahoo [ditched](#) its twice-yearly performance reviews, replacing them with continuous feedback and informal check-ins [paywall].
- Per CPO Lisa Moore: Formal reviews bring a “huge sense of anticipation that ends in deflation.”
- ⚙️ **How it works:** Managers are encouraged to set their own systems, complemented by twice-yearly roundtable discussions to evaluate employee strengths, promotions, and team dynamics.
- Why it matters:** Yahoo's approach aims to make performance management more agile and human-centered.
- 🗨️ **Confession:** I'm not sure how I feel about this. I tend to favor formality having witnessed so many managers avoid and/or flub employee performance feedback.
- Arguments for flexibility:**
1. **Real-time feedback** conversations address issues promptly, avoiding the “surprise” factor of traditional year-end reviews.
  2. **Improved engagement** when managers ask employees about their career goals, fostering collaboration and ownership.
- Arguments for formality:**
1. **Consistency:** Without standardized processes, employees may experience inconsistent feedback and evaluation standards across teams.
  2. **Clarity and transparency:** Formal reviews provide clear milestones for performance discussions and compensation decisions, reducing ambiguity.
  3. **Documentation gaps:** Traditional reviews produce a paper trail that aids in promotions, dispute resolution, and legal issues.
- 🔥 **The bottom line:** Yahoo's shift reflects broader workplace trends prioritizing flexibility and real-time communication.
- Whether this model is scalable or effective in the long run depends on how well managers and employees embrace these new dynamics.
- 🔗 **Go deeper:** See below for how to give A+ feedback.

## 2. Leverage your top talent in 2025



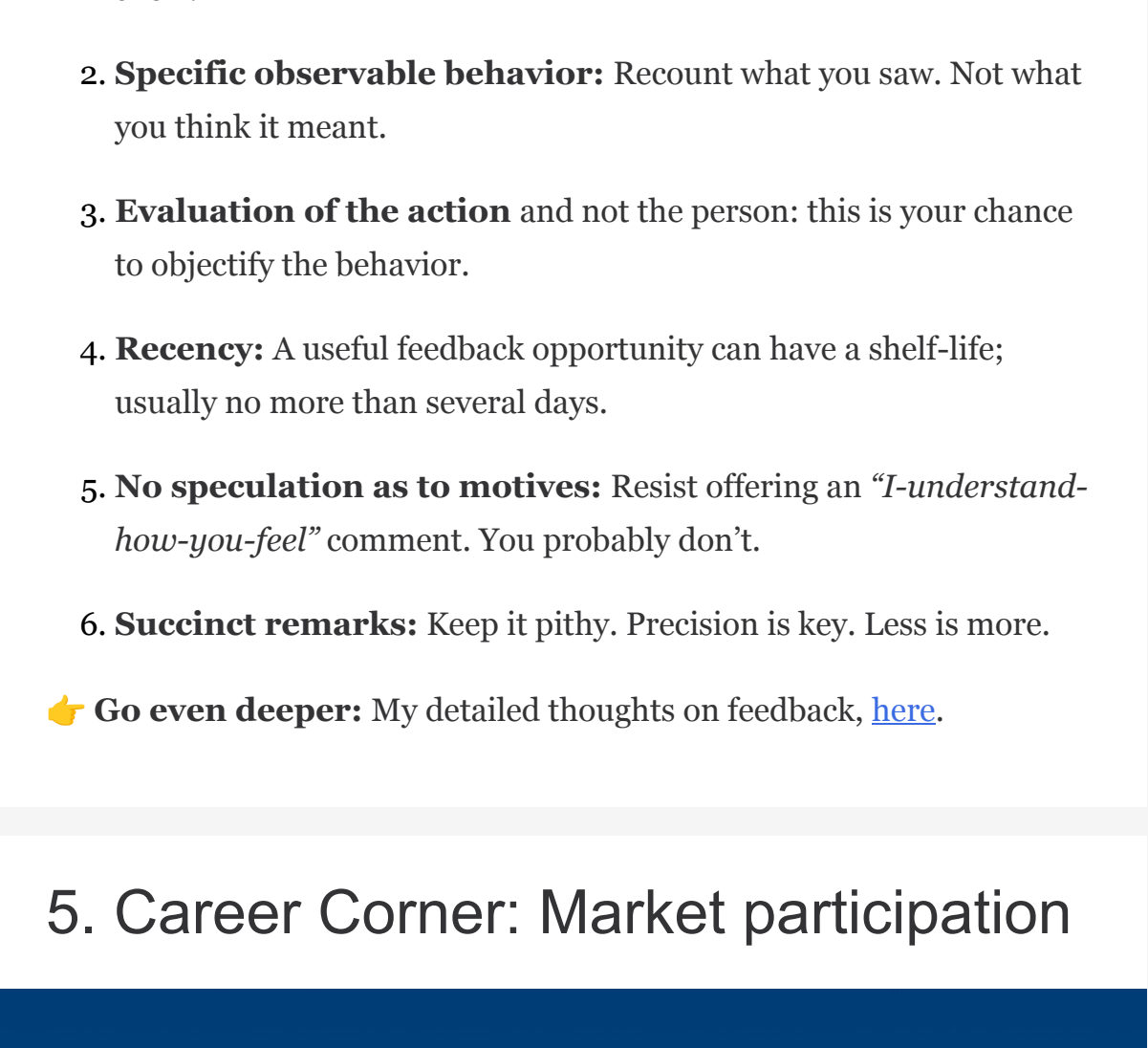
- 📊 **A persistent fact:** Individual performance within organizations often follows the Pareto principle: a small percentage of employees contribute a disproportionate share of value.
- **Why it matters:** [Research](#) confirms that for leaders, effectively leveraging *this small group* is a practical strategy to improve productivity and organizational efficiency.
- 🔍 **Zoom in:** Here's how to prioritize key contributors:
- **Emphasize professional development:** Assign complex projects and leadership opportunities so they can continue to grow and over-deliver.
  - **Carry out retention strategies** like competitive compensation, career development opportunities, and meaningful recognition.
  - **Bake in visibility:** High performers often set the tone for team productivity and innovation. Structure opportunities for knowledge-sharing and collaboration.
- Yes, but:** Overemphasis on high performers may unintentionally disengage other employees. Without a balanced approach, it can lead to perceptions of inequity or reduced morale.
- 🔑 **How to address it:**
1. **Set clear expectations:** Define and communicate the standards and metrics that differentiate high performance to ensure transparency.
  2. **Invest broadly:** While focusing on key contributors, maintain initiatives that support overall workforce development to encourage engagement and upward mobility.
  3. **Align incentives:** Structure rewards and recognition to encourage contributions across all levels while acknowledging top performers.
- The bottom line:** Always be fair, but also recognize that logic dictates that if the top 20% of your performers produce 80% of the positive outcomes, your talent strategy should reflect that.

## 3. How execs can preempt employee burnout



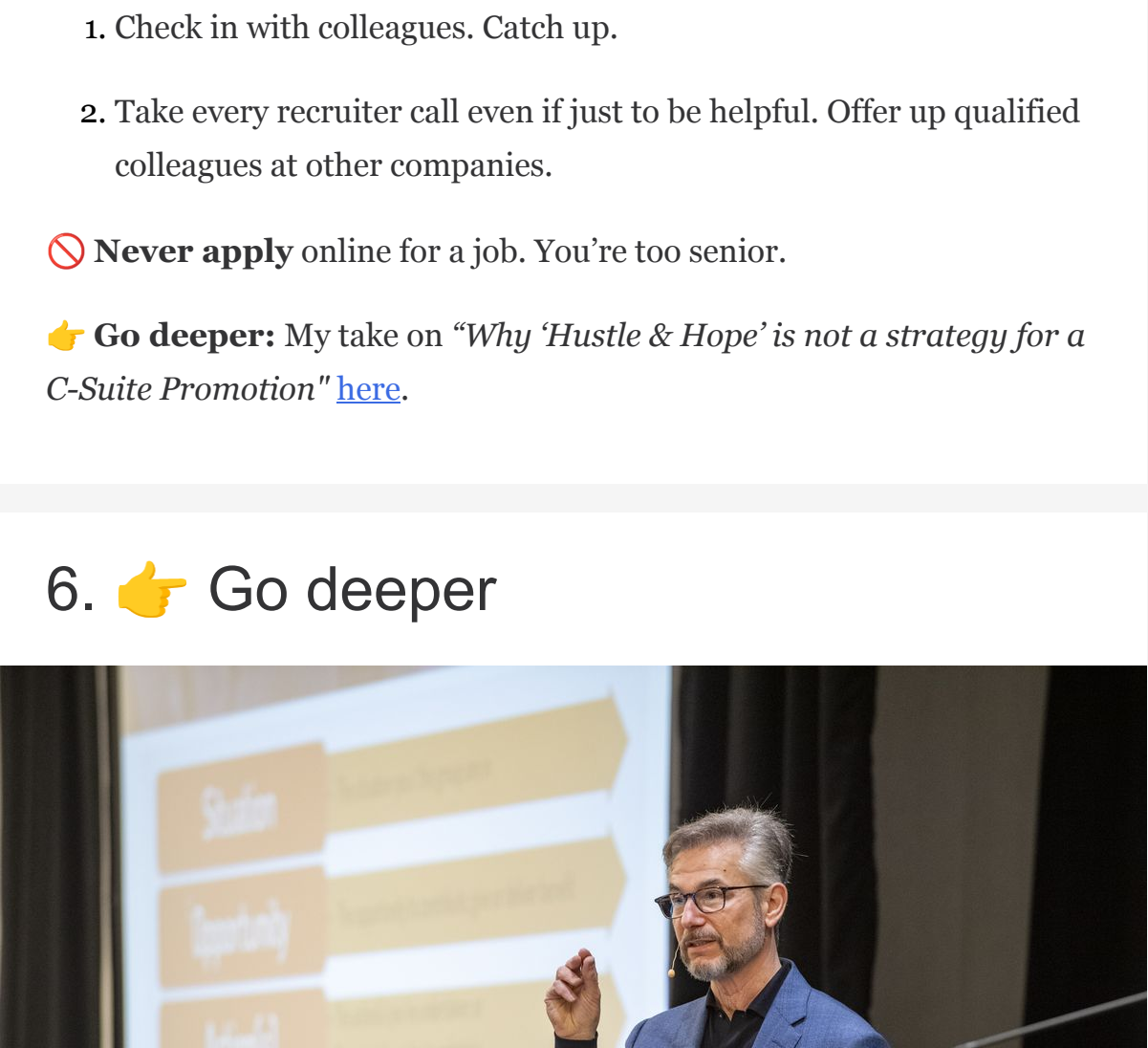
- What's new:** Burnout at work remains a threat in 2025.
- **By the numbers:** 51% of 1,500 respondents reported they have **suffered** burnout in the past year, a 15-point increase over those who reported burnout in 2023, per [research](#) from Grant Thornton.
- 🌟 **Why it matters:** Damage to mental and physical health, reduction in job satisfaction, quality of life and productivity.
- “Well, other than that, how was your day at the office?!?”
- 🎯 **My POV:** it's up to CEOs and top tiers of leadership to help employees thrive and avoid burnout. It's *their* words and deeds that drive expectations and behavior.
- Preempt employee burnout** with three simultaneous practices:
1. **Project** the productive emotional states of happiness, calm, confidence and strength. Your mood sends signals. They will take your cues.
  2. **Connect** through personal one-on-one and small group interactions. Over-communicate about company strategy and shared values. Help people find purpose in the work, as individuals.
  3. **Protect** your employees from burnout. Don't reward non-stop work. If there have been reductions in force, don't expect the shell-shocked remainder to now do others' work.
- 🗨️ **Walking the talk:** BNY CEO [Robin Vince](#) brought back an employee 2-week '[recharge period](#)' at the end of December, urging them to focus only on core business activities like client-related tasks and essential work [paywall].

## 4. January pro-tip: A+ feedback



- 🚫 **What they're saying:** my CHRO clients are telling me that widespread remote work, hybrid models, and evolving RTO strategies have led to a decline in managers' ability to effectively deliver performance feedback.
- 📄 **Why it matters:** When leaders aren't providing their direct reports with quality feedback there are two areas that suffer, organizational results and individual professional development.
- Reality check:** This is central to your job. Your aversion to conflict and good intentions don't excuse the opt-out.
- 💬 **My thought bubble:** This is a great opportunity for you to be purposeful, confident and aspirational. Here are six guidelines to help you steer the interaction safely:
1. **Positive intent:** If you are genuinely interested in helping, it will show.
  2. **Specific observable behavior:** Recount what you saw. Not what you think it meant.
  3. **Evaluation of the action** and not the person: this is your chance to objectify the behavior.
  4. **Recency:** A useful feedback opportunity can have a shelf-life; usually no more than several days.
  5. **No speculation as to motives:** Resist offering an “*I-understand-how-you-feel*” comment. You probably don't.
  6. **Succinct remarks:** Keep it pithy. Precision is key. Less is more.
- 🔗 **Go even deeper:** My detailed thoughts on feedback, [here](#).

## 5. Career Corner: Market participation



- ⚡ **Most senior leaders** I come across don't actively navigate their own career.
- Instead, they invest blind faith that their contributions are noticed and they will be rewarded with bigger or better roles — inside or outside their organization — for as long as they keep showing up.
- ⚠️ **Why it matters:** They don't get considered for bigger & better roles.
- **They're too far downstream.** They don't know when excellent opportunities open up.
  - **Worse, they lack** the relationship capital to act on opportunities that do arise.
- 🎯 **My POV:** Forget fairness. Think, *Market Participation*. Your bundle of skills, competencies and experience comprise an asset that is valued and traded.
- 📊 **Follow the market(s)** for *your* asset:
1. Read relevant trade pubs for recent hires, e.g., [Business Insurance](#).
  2. Search the hiring co's press release to see what they valued in the candidate they just hired.
  3. Connect on LinkedIn to monitor job movement.
- 💖 **Build relationship capital** to act on arising opportunities:
1. Check in with colleagues. Catch up.
  2. Take every recruiter call even if just to be helpful. Offer up qualified colleagues at other companies.
- 🚫 **Never apply** online for a job. You're too senior.
- 🔗 **Go deeper:** My take on “*Why 'Hustle & Hope' is not a strategy for a C-Suite Promotion*” [here](#).

## 6. 👉 Go deeper

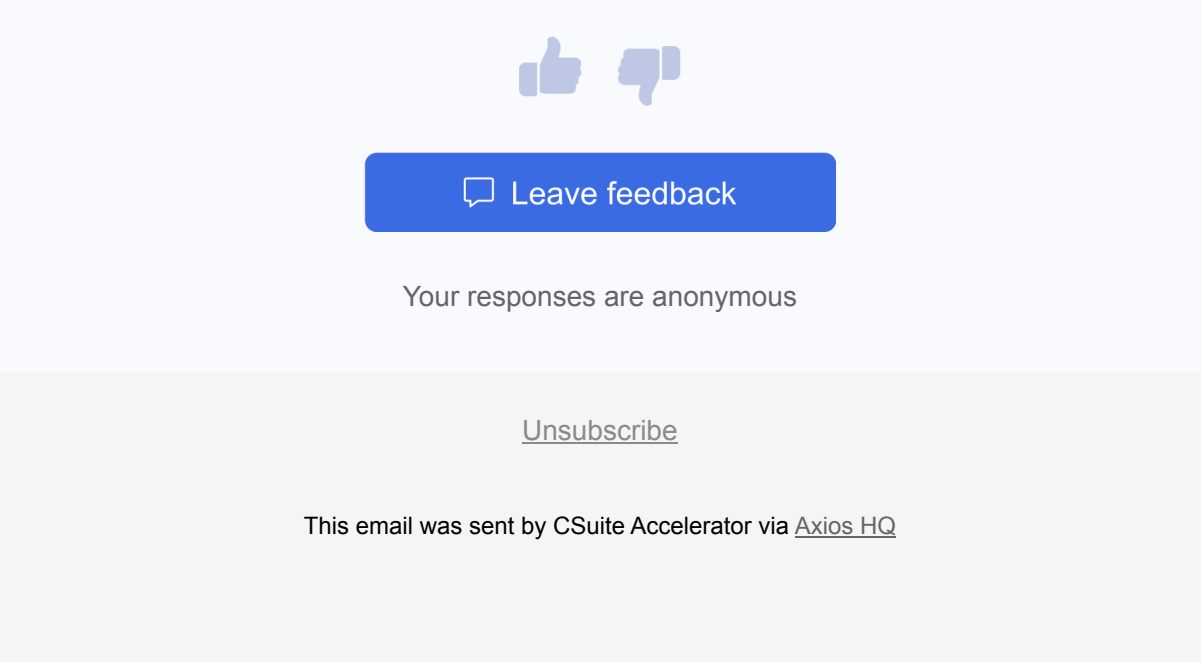


Photo by: Randy Belice

**Ephraim Schachter** is an award-winning C-Suite Coach and Leadership Strategist. He helps organizations thrive through disruption by developing their leaders' capabilities to accelerate trust, navigate obstacles and communicate influentially. These skills have never been more in demand than in the evolving workplace with its growing disaffection with traditional management practices. Ephraim is a trusted expert and thought partner known for strategic, insightful and practical problem-solving.

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💡 **Parting wisdom:** “*What really makes your business is your workers—their commitment, their knowledge, how you train them, how you treat them.*” Lidia Bastianich

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