



It might still be tough out there but, fortunately for all of us, people are a lot like plants - resilient and able to survive in challenging environments. If you are a leader, you can do a lot to help those around you withstand the cold winds of shrinking budgets and increasing targets. The three key elements to guarantee healthy team and personal growth are:

## Space

Give people room to grow and take responsibility by delegating more. To **delegate** effectively you can delegate the task to one person AND the responsibility for tracking progress to someone else – this way you make sure the task is done, but you have given control of both action and oversight to others. And you have delegated twice! **Delegation requires trust**; without trust your people will not grow.

## Water

The nourishment your people need comes in the form of **constructive feedback**. This feedback should be clear, specific, supportive and single-message. Just as you need to regularly water a plant, you need to supply regular feedback – otherwise your people can feel starved of essential nutrients and will fail to thrive. It is important to remember that **feedback is not the same as praise**. Feedback should be a verbal comment on a specific action that you would like to see more (or less) of.

## Light & Warmth

You can give this important element to your team in many ways. This includes providing a **supportive environment where achievement is recognised**. Real recognition needs to be constantly available (as light is important to plants and people). This means that recognition goes well beyond the yearly appraisal, promotion and bonus rounds. Recognise achievement by matching the reward to the person – this could be praise in public, delegating a key task, sending an email to senior management or using that person as a coach or mentor.

**Don't ditch your one-to-ones!** Tempting as it might be when time is short, this is a vital chance for you and your direct reports to develop and grow. Make sure you spend at least a third of this time talking about the "people" element of the job and don't just focus on fire-fighting task-related issues. Discussing one "people" topic can help to prevent many future challenges and problems. [www.mackieconsulting.com](http://www.mackieconsulting.com)