

Giving Constructive Feedback

Self-Paced eLearning | Portfolio PDF

About this artifact

This PDF provides a static view of a self-paced learning experience originally developed in Articulate Rise 360. Interactive elements and branching behaviors are represented as static pages in this portfolio version.

AUDIENCE

Newly Promoted Managers

DURATION

Approximately 9 minutes

ROLE

Instructional Designer & Developer

TOOL

Articulate Rise 360



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Giving Constructive Feedback

Learn how to give clear, constructive feedback, respond to an employee's perspective, and determine actionable next steps.



Giving Constructive Feedback

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Welcome

Giving corrective feedback isn't always easy. You may struggle to find the right words or worry about sounding too judgmental. And knowing how to respond to what an employee tells you can be just as challenging.

In this course, you'll learn how to communicate feedback clearly and professionally, listen to your employee's perspective, and use what you learn to determine actionable next steps.

How You Say It Matters

How you communicate feedback can be just as important as the feedback itself. If feedback feels personal or judgmental, an employee may become defensive and miss the message. But if the message is overly softened or vague, they may not understand what needs to change—or how important that change is.

Effective corrective feedback balances clarity and consideration. The employee should understand the concern, why it matters, and what needs to happen next.

Common Feedback Traps

Personal or Judgmental —

When feedback focuses on the person rather than the behavior, the employee may become defensive and the actual performance issue can get lost.

Vague —

When feedback lacks specific information, the employee may not understand exactly what the concern is or what needs to change.

Overly Softened —

When a manager minimizes or buries the concern to avoid sounding harsh, the employee may not understand how important the issue is or that a change is expected.

Being clear and being considerate aren't opposites.

Make Feedback Specific and Actionable

To make corrective feedback clear and actionable, focus on three questions.

Step 1

What happened?

Describe the observable behavior or performance issue rather than making a judgment about the person.

Step 2

Why does it matter?

Explain the impact of the behavior. Help the employee understand how the issue affects their work, the team, or the process.

Step 3

What needs to happen next?

Make the expectation clear so the employee understands what needs to change.

Keep the Focus on the Work

Together, these questions keep feedback focused on what the employee can understand and act on, rather than on judgments about the person.

Consider this Feedback

“You need to be more careful with your work.”

The manager has identified a concern, but the employee doesn't know specifically what went wrong, why it matters, or what they should do differently.

A More Effective Approach

Select each marker to see the framework in action.

You’ve submitted **several reports with errors** that another team member has had to correct, **pulling them away from their own work** and **slowing down** our process.

Before submitting a report, take a moment to review your work and make sure all required fields are complete.

A More Effective Approach

Select each marker to see the framework in action.

You've submitted **several reports with errors** that another team member has had to correct, **pulling them away from their own work** and **slowing down** our process.

Before submitting a report, take a moment to review your work and make sure all required fields are complete.

What happened?

The manager identifies the observable behavior: several reports contained errors. This keeps the feedback focused on the employee's work rather than making a judgment about the employee.

A More Effective Approach

Select each marker to see the framework in action.

You've submitted **several reports with errors** that another team member has had to correct, **pulling them away from their own work** and **slowing down** our process.



Before submitting a report, take a moment to review your work and make sure all required fields are complete.

Why does it matter?

The manager explains the impact: correcting the errors pulls another team member away from their work and slows down the process. This helps the employee understand why the issue matters.

A More Effective Approach

Select each marker to see the framework in action.

You've submitted **several reports with errors** that another team member has had to correct, **pulling them away from their own work** and **slowing down** our process.

Before submitting a report, take a moment to review your work and make sure all required fields are complete.



What needs to happen next?

The manager sets a clear expectation: review the report and make sure all required fields are complete before submitting it. The employee knows what to do differently going forward.

Put It Into Practice

Jordan has arrived more than 10 minutes late to three team meetings this month. When Jordan arrives after the meeting has started, the team has to repeat information, causing the meetings to run over.

You need to address the issue with Jordan.

Which approach would provide the most effective corrective feedback?

- ☐ Jordan, you're messing up our meetings. You need to get your act together.
- ☐ I know you have a lot going on, and you're doing a great job, but can you be a little more mindful of the meeting times?
- ☐ Jordan, you've arrived more than 10 minutes late to three team meetings this month. When you arrive after we've started, we have to stop and repeat information you've missed, which causes our meetings to run over. Going forward, I need you to be ready to join at the scheduled start time.

SUBMIT

Listen Before Deciding What Comes Next

Giving clear feedback is only part of the conversation. Once you've shared the concern, the employee may provide information you didn't have before.

Listening to their perspective doesn't mean ignoring the performance issue or changing your expectations. It gives you information to consider before deciding what should happen next.

Let's return to Jordan.

After you address the repeated lateness, Jordan responds:

“I've been late because my client call right before this meeting has been running over.”

Think Through Jordan's Response

Jordan has given you new information about why he's been arriving late. Before deciding how to respond, let's work through what that information changes.

Step 1

Listen

What is the employee telling you? Focus on understanding their perspective before deciding how to respond.

In this situation: Jordan is telling you that the client call before the meeting has been running over, affecting his ability to arrive on time.

Step 2

Evaluate

Consider what this information changes about your understanding of the situation. What was within the employee's control? What wasn't?

In this situation: You now know his lateness is connected to another work responsibility. Jordan may not always be able to control when a client call ends.

Step 3

Determine

Based on what you've learned and the needs of the business, determine the appropriate next step.

In this situation: His late arrivals are still affecting the team, but you don't yet know the best solution. Consider what could address the conflict between his client call and the team meeting.

Step 4

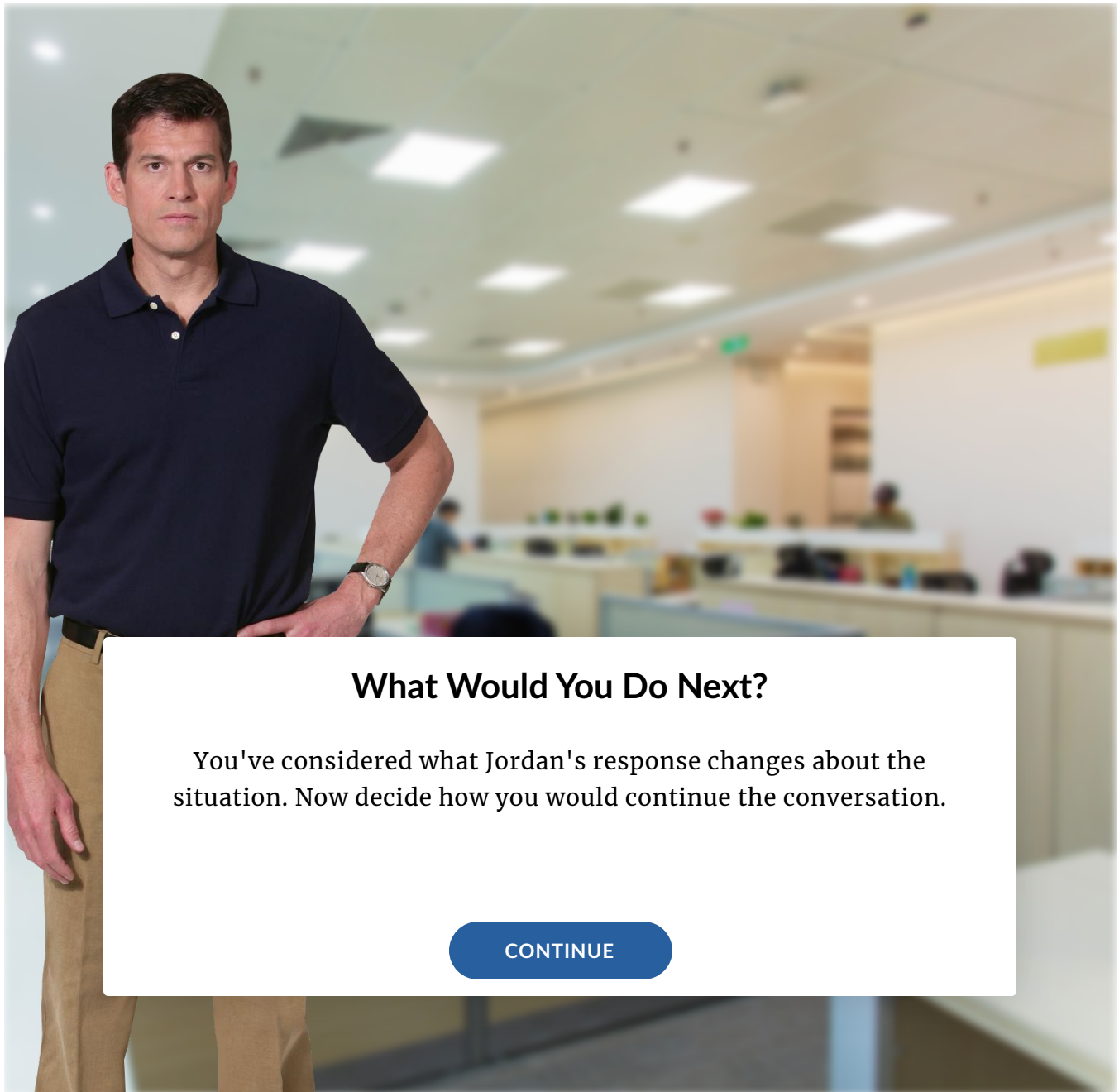
Communicate

Clearly explain your decision and any expectations going forward.

In this situation: Your response should acknowledge what you've learned while still addressing the impact of his late arrivals and working toward a clear next step.

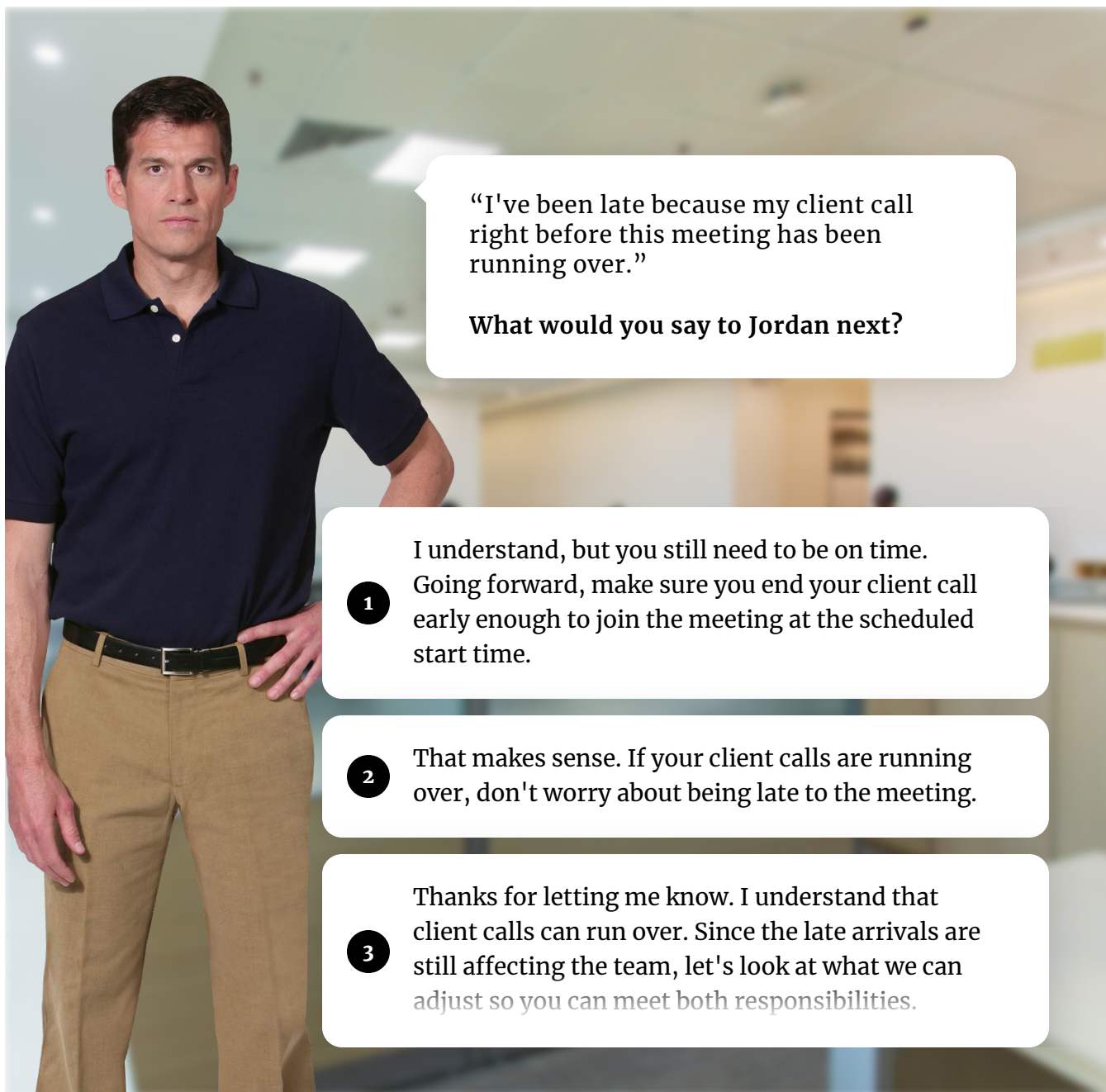
Listening Doesn't Mean Abandoning Accountability

Listening helps you make sure your response reflects the full situation. You can consider the employee's perspective while still setting clear expectations for what needs to happen next.



Scene 1 Slide 1

Continue → Next Slide



"I've been late because my client call right before this meeting has been running over."

What would you say to Jordan next?

1

I understand, but you still need to be on time. Going forward, make sure you end your client call early enough to join the meeting at the scheduled start time.

2

That makes sense. If your client calls are running over, don't worry about being late to the meeting.

3

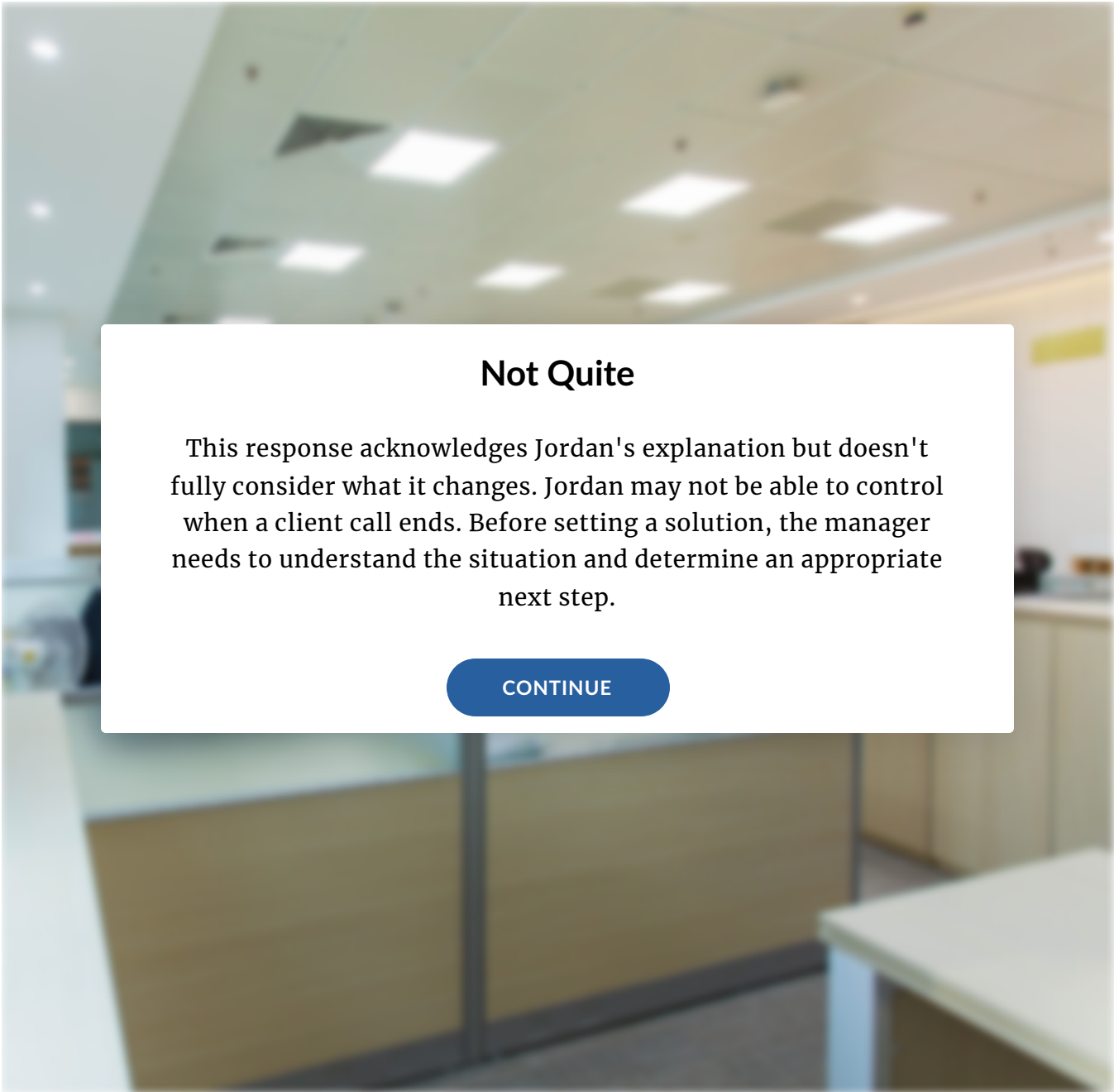
Thanks for letting me know. I understand that client calls can run over. Since the late arrivals are still affecting the team, let's look at what we can adjust so you can meet both responsibilities.

Scene 1 Slide 2

0 → Scene 1 Slide 3

1 → Scene 1 Slide 4

2 → Scene 1 Slide 5

A blurred background image of an office interior, showing a ceiling with square light fixtures and a desk area with a white table and a brown partition.

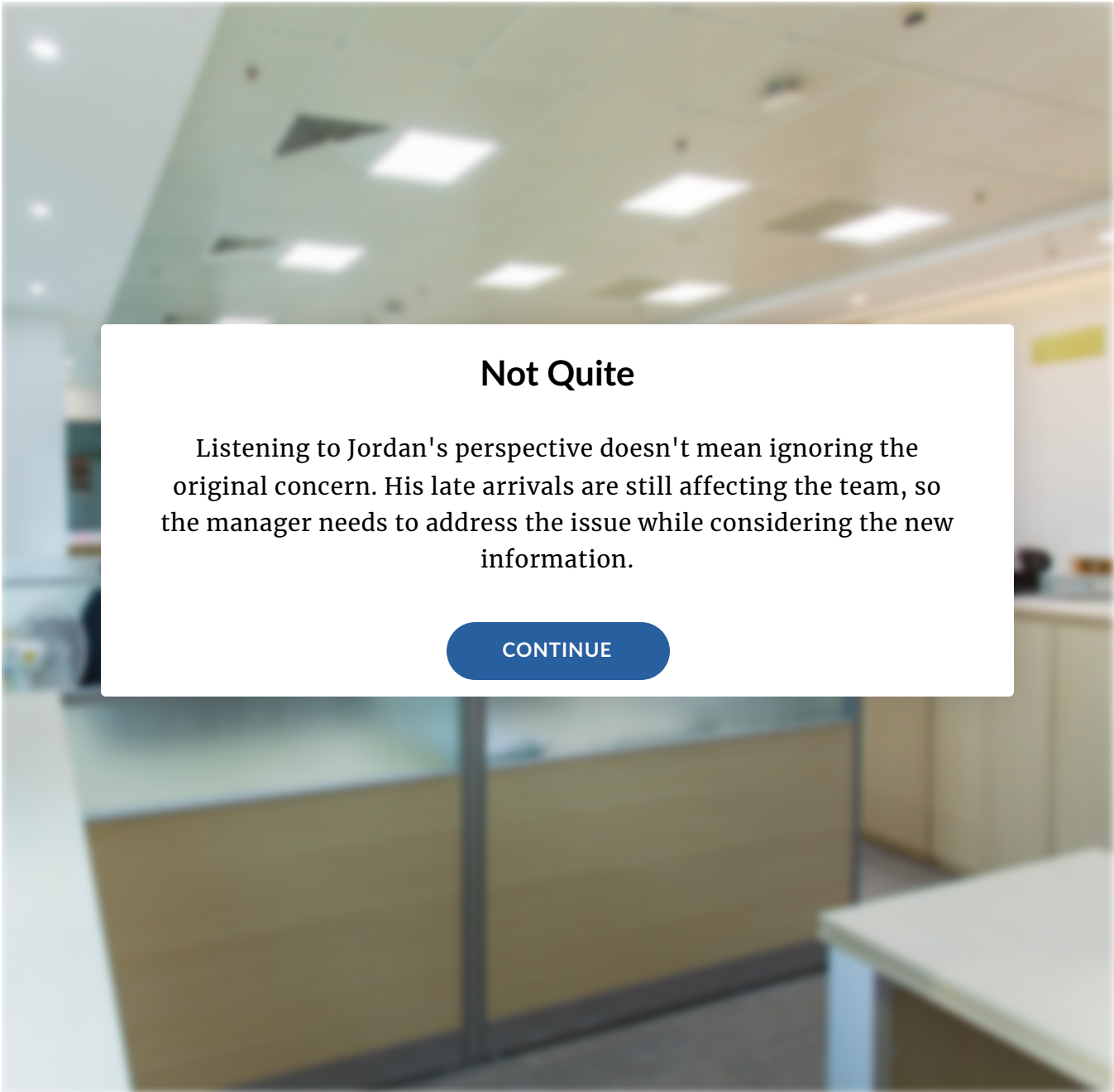
Not Quite

This response acknowledges Jordan's explanation but doesn't fully consider what it changes. Jordan may not be able to control when a client call ends. Before setting a solution, the manager needs to understand the situation and determine an appropriate next step.

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 3

Continue → Scene 1 Slide 2

A blurred background image of an office interior, showing a ceiling with square light fixtures and a desk with a glass partition in the foreground.

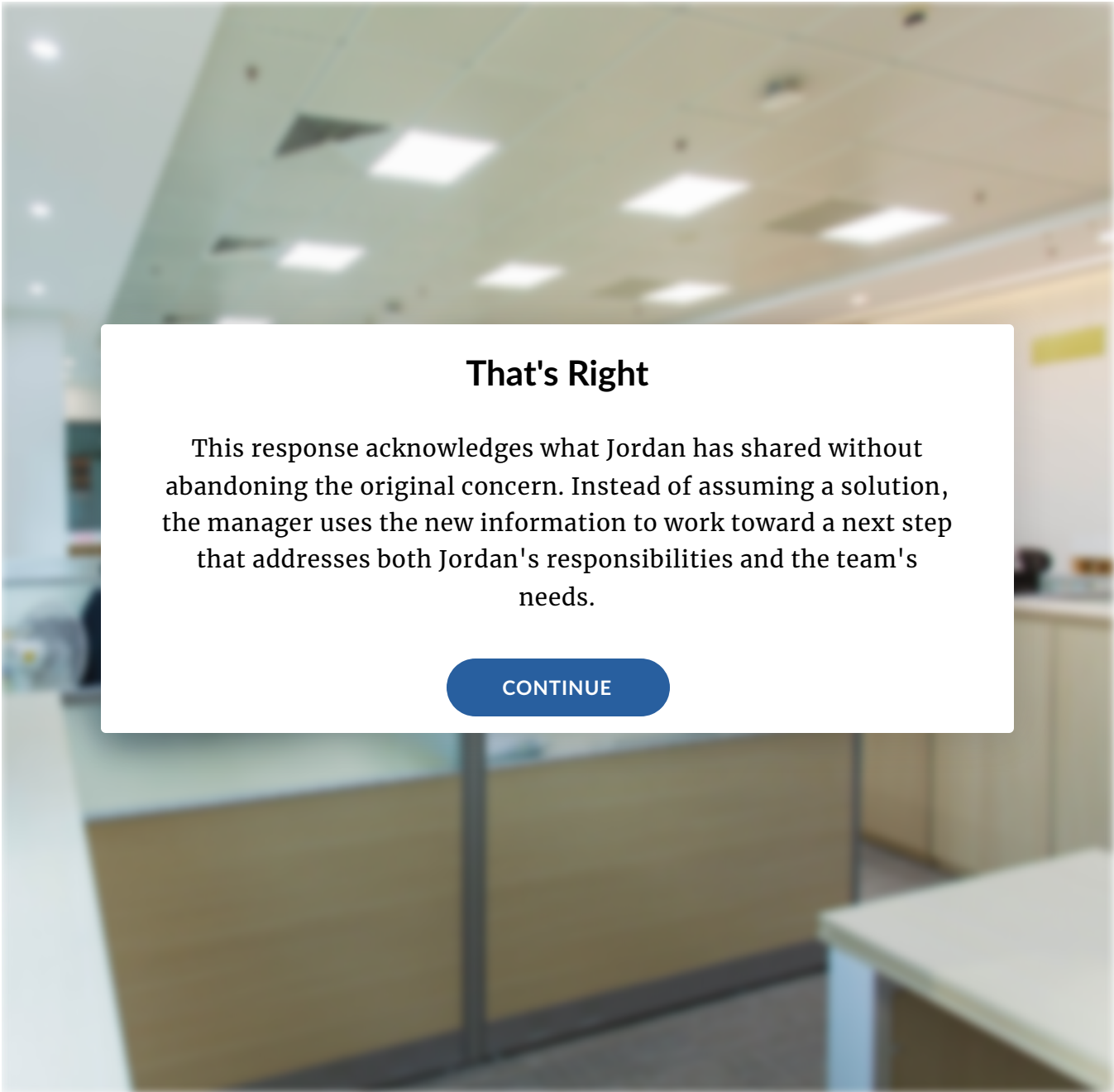
Not Quite

Listening to Jordan's perspective doesn't mean ignoring the original concern. His late arrivals are still affecting the team, so the manager needs to address the issue while considering the new information.

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 4

Continue → Scene 1 Slide 2

A blurred background image of an office interior, showing a ceiling with square light fixtures and cubicle walls.

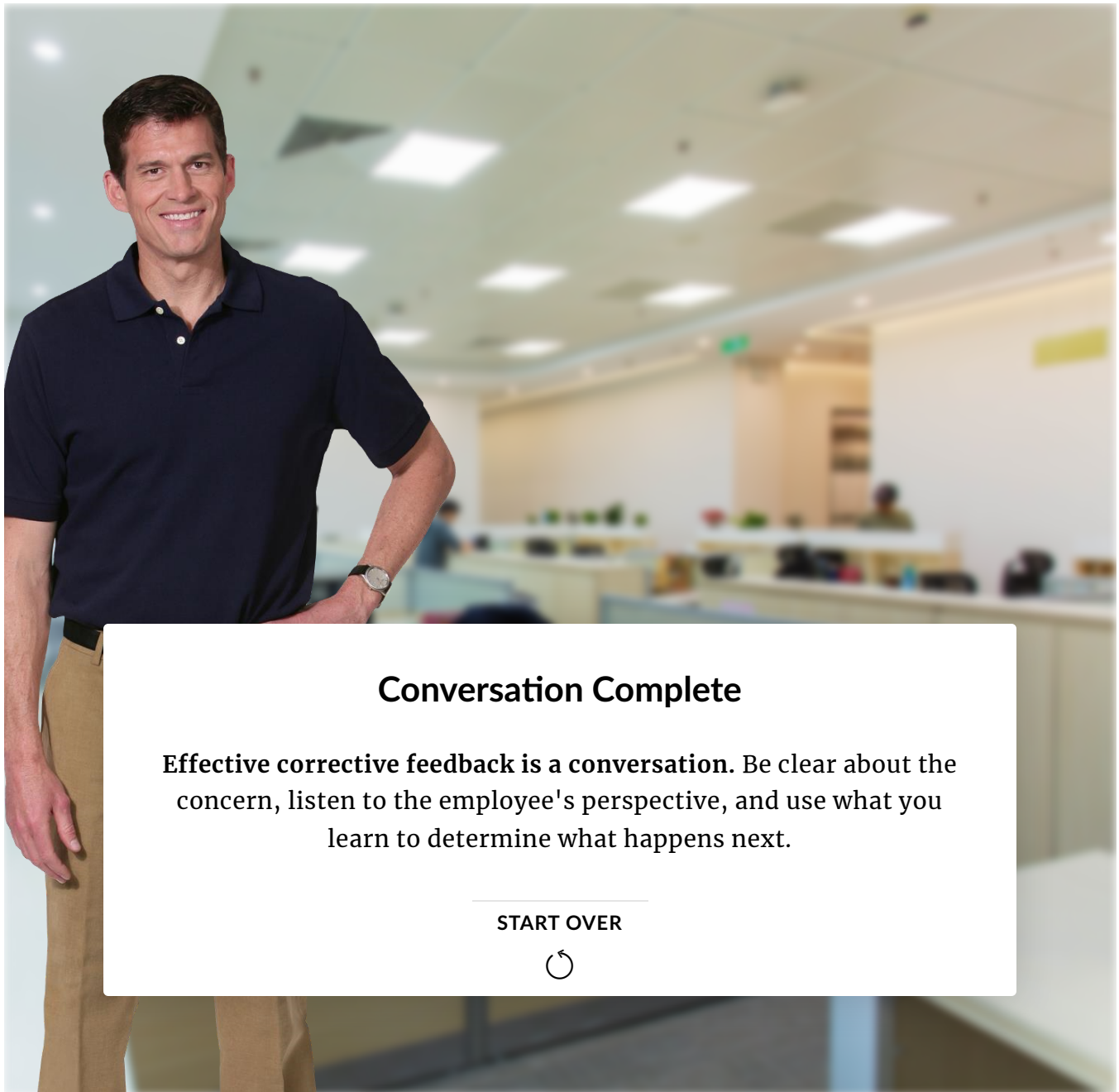
That's Right

This response acknowledges what Jordan has shared without abandoning the original concern. Instead of assuming a solution, the manager uses the new information to work toward a next step that addresses both Jordan's responsibilities and the team's needs.

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 5

Continue → Scene 1 Slide 6



Conversation Complete

Effective corrective feedback is a conversation. Be clear about the concern, listen to the employee's perspective, and use what you learn to determine what happens next.

START OVER



Scene 1 Slide 6

Continue → End of Scenario

Before You Go

How you communicate feedback can be just as important as the feedback itself. Be clear about the behavior, its impact, and what needs to happen next.

And remember: feedback doesn't end once you've delivered the message. Listen to your employee's perspective, consider what you learn, and use that information to determine the appropriate next steps.

Be clear. Listen. Then decide what comes next.