

Effective Feedback

leadership.quick tips

Effective
Feedback

“The fear of criticism is the
kiss of death in the
courtship of achievement.”

-James Agee

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To be Useful, Feedback Should

- *Be specific, rather than general* – give concrete examples.
- *Be observational, not judgemental* – describe what the person has done, rather than inferring why the person did it or what kind of person they are.
- *Focus on the consequences* – tell the person how it made you feel.
- *Be practical and actionable* – concentrate on behavior the receiver can do something about.
- *Be manageable* – receiving a mountain of feedback in one meeting can be daunting. Focusing on 3 things the receiver is doing well and should continue and 3 things the receiver could do better in makes it much less frightening a prospect.
- *Sandwich positive and negative feedback* – so the receiver hears both. Remember that the objective is to help the receiver grow, not to demoralize them with all the things they could do better.

Make feedback an ongoing two-way process to avoid surprises, maximize your working relationships, and create the best organization possible.

Giving Feedback

Give feedback regularly—every day is not too often! Don't worry, it may feel uncomfortable at first, but you'll improve with practice. And the best part is, people will respond to your feedback—especially if you praise liberally!

- Praise publicly, critique in private.
- Concentrate on the behavior not the personality.
- Critique appropriately based on skill level standards.
- Focus on the cause and related effect.
- Ask questions and listen so you thoroughly understand the situation from the other person's point of view.
- Indicate the specific change in behavior you want and how it leads to the desired outcome.
- Frame the feedback in emotionally neutral terms.
- Support your message through your tone, gestures, and body language.
- Get buy-in from the recipient; e.g. "Yes, I will do this by Monday."
- Document your feedback session.

When Receiving Feedback

- Try to listen without interrupting- don't try to defend yourself. Allow the person to tell you how they feel.
- Keep an open mind.
- Try to learn as much as possible.
- Take action on the areas where you agree with the feedback. Think through why your action had the consequence it did, if there was a misunderstanding how that came about and how you might want to approach the same situation differently in the future.
- Give feedback in return.
- Separate the message from the messenger. Pay attention to the speaker, but listen to the message.
- Ask for specific examples.
- Rephrase the message to confirm that you understand what the speaker intended.
- Indicate your willingness to work together toward a solution or improvement.
- Don't react and become defensive; accept the feedback graciously.

10 Steps of Action When Giving Feedback

1. Identify the problem clearly and specifically.
2. Select an appropriate time and place.
3. Set the stage.
4. Describe the behavior.
5. State your case.
6. Hold your ground.
7. Explore the issue fully.
8. Describe the positive consequences.
9. Describe the negative consequences.
10. Plan for change.

