

Giving Feedback

Four essential steps to success

1. Choose the right time and place

- ✓ The most effective feedback is immediate. Leaving feedback for performance review is unlikely to assist the employee to understand what or how they need to change.
- ✓ Sometimes, however it is necessary and therefore important to collect the facts before committing to a point of view and providing feedback.
- ✓ Choose a time and place which will not make the employee uncomfortable or inappropriately disclose confidential information.
- ✓ As a general rule, feedback should be provided in a private and confidential way as soon as all the relevant information has been gathered.

2. Be Constructive

- ✓ When performance is satisfactory or better, use constructive feedback to reinforce strengths and further build upon standards of performance.
- ✓ When performance is below expectations, provide constructive feedback that focuses on positives as well as where improvement can be made, not just on what was unacceptable.
- ✓ Provide information and guidance that will support improvement. Focus for example on observations such as 'what' or 'how' something was done.
- ✓ Don't ask why as this will provoke defensiveness. Avoid the phrases such as "you should have" or "why did you"
- ✓ Instead try asking "is there anything you could have done differently?" or "how do you think you could improve things the next time around?"

3. Tailor your approach to each individual

- ✓ Understand each of the people on your team. Spend time talking to and working closely with them in order to understand their character, circumstances, experience, intentions and consciousness.
- ✓ Choose to provide feedback a time most likely to lead to a positive outcome. For example, feedback is more likely to be received well if delivered when both you and your team member are calm.
- ✓ Provide a confidential, private and comfortable setting to have feedback related conversations. This is especially important when providing constructive feedback.
- ✓ Be prepared to adapt your communication style to the character and circumstances of each person.

4. Be fair and consistent


- ✓ Be consistent over time. Constantly shifting expectations and standards creates confusion and undermines your ability to hold people accountable.
- ✓ Apply consistent standards of expectations across your team. Doing so is critical to your ability to build and maintain the trust needed to influence the way people choose to think, feel, behave and ultimately perform.

Handling Feedback Pushback

There are many reasons why someone is resistant to receiving feedback and chooses to 'push back'. After questioning and confirming your understanding of the team member's reactions, use these tips to respond;

If your team member:	Try:	Example:
Disagrees with your description of the situation ...	Provide more accurate or objective observations, which include the team member's experiences, along with other facts the team member may or may not be aware of.	"So, what happens is that Marketing gives you specs that conflict with ours, and you don't know how to reconcile them. This makes it hard for you to proceed on schedule. Is that right?"
Agrees, but cites factors that were beyond their control ...	Provide and ask for some suggestions for things to do that are within their control. Identify ways you can help.	"I understand you feel you can't help it if customers change their minds after production has started. Have you tried? Maybe I could help you by...?"
Agrees, but does not see why it is important ...	Describe the importance of the issue – how it affects the team, you personally, and/or the team member themselves.	"I know forecasting our time doesn't seem important to you. The reason it's important to the team is that it allows us to...."
Agrees, but says their intention was different ...	Offer observations on the difference between the person's intention and the actual results of the behaviour or performance	"I see your intention was to be helpful, but when you...others on the team see it as doubting their ability. Maybe you can be more helpful by...."

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