



The Importance of Feedback

Part of the supervisor role is to provide continuous feedback to employees.

Feedback should be given regularly and summarized on the employee's annual performance assessment. Some of the many benefits to providing regular feedback include:

- Further develops outstanding performers
- Mitigates employee relations issues
- Strengthens team effectiveness
- Increases Morale

Tips for Providing Effective Feedback

1. *Choose the right moment.* Feedback generally is most useful when the person is ready to hear it, and as soon as possible after the event that triggers the feedback.
2. *Choose the right place.* A useful, though not universal, rule of thumb is "praise in public and criticize in private."
3. *Choose an appropriate communication style.* Know your own communication style, as well as that of the receiver. Determine what is most appropriate for the situation.
4. *State the purpose of the feedback and where it fits into the broader organizational goals.* Convey how the feedback (whether positive or critical) is related to the success of department or University goals.
5. *Focus on key performance issues, behavior the receiver can do something about, and only one or two issues at a time.* Frustration may be increased when the receiver is faced with too much or irrelevant information over which there is no control.
6. *Be specific rather than general.* Provide observable, recent examples of behavior, and avoid generalizations (such as "always" and "never").
7. *Be descriptive rather than evaluative.* Present data graphically if possible, and avoid evaluative language such as "bad" or "worse" than can create defensiveness.
8. *Provide positive feedback, not just criticism.* In the words of Spencer Johnson and Ken Blanchard, "Catch people doing something right."
9. *Describe your feelings, if appropriate.* It may be appropriate to share your feelings regarding the situation that demands feedback.
10. *Check that the receiver has understood the feedback as intended.* Ask the receiver to rephrase what he or she heard you say.
11. *Encourage a response.* Ask open-ended questions such as, "What do you think is going on?" or "How can I help?"
12. *Give time to react.* You may learn something new and be able to help the person find effective solutions.
13. *End on an encouraging note.* Discuss how the organization will benefit from efforts to change; show confidence in the receiver's abilities; and let the employee know you are available for questions and to discuss necessary resources.
14. *Follow-up on the feedback session.* Remember to notice and acknowledge an employee's change in behavior. Avoid holding onto previous perceptions of the employee after behavior has changed.

Caproni, P. *Management Skills for Everyday Life: The Practical Coach*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 2005.
Ivanecvich, J. *Human Resource Management*. McGraw-Hill: Boston, 2007.