# **Feedback Guidelines**

**A performance appraisal process involves human assessment of human performance. Performance feedback at the work place comprises of environment factors, behaviors, effort, skills etc. Because of the above, the performance appraisal feedback process would always have elements of subjectivity.**

Feedback is most useful within a culture of learning and development. While it is easy to appreciate someone, it is harder to offer constructive criticism to a team member. Feedback helps us to become more aware of what we do and how we do it.

To be helpful, feedback needs to be given in a concerned and supportive way and to include both positive and negative observations. The amount of information should be limited to what the receiver can use rather than the amount the giver would like to pass on.

If on the receiving end, it gives the receiver an opportunity to change and modify in order to become more effective.

**Some things to consider when giving feedback**

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| Invite the individual to self-assess **against the defined performance goals set at the start of the project or appraisal cycle** | For instance, “what do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of your analysis?”  **What have you achieved on your key deliverables?** |
| Comment on positives | Whenever possible, try to give some (genuine) positive feedback – it makes the negative easier to bear.  **Articulate the feedback in a manner that highlights in which situation the person has demonstrated that positive outcome and what did the action result in** |
| Focus on the behaviour not the person | For instance, “I think that the draft you’ve given me needs more thorough editing here, and here”, rather than “Your writing is really shoddy.”  **“ At the meeting with Mr. X, you had prepared a report on the work of the NGO, which was very well prepared “** |
| Be specific and clear; if possible, suggest concrete ways to make improvements | The feedback should be constructive. For instance, “The proposed method does not align well with the methodology. Are there studies in the literature that can provide guidance? |
| Own the feedback | Use ‘I’ statements rather than ‘you’ statements, e.g. “I find your description confusing” rather than “you sound confused here”. |
| Timing | Feedback is meant to be given in real-time, as close as possible to when the performance incident occurs so that the events are fresh in everyone's minds. Immediate feedback is the most valuable. If this is not possible, give it as soon as you can. When feedback is given well after the fact, the value of the constructive feedback is lessened. However, do consider the context. Giving someone negative feeback in front of a group, for example, is usually not appropriate as it can result in embarassment for the receiver and can hurt team morale. Also try to give feedback when there is time for a brief discussion about it. If you catch the recipient off- guard and don’t give an opportunity to respond, it may not be effective and can even hurt or confuse the recipient. |
| Recognize that an immediate response to negative feedback may be defensive. | Be prepared for these kinds of responses, since without addressing them the feedback is unlikely to have much effect. Understand that the recipient may be upset by negative feedback, or that s/he may have an explanation or information that you were not aware of. |
| Manner & attitude | Manner is how you give the constructive feedback. Often, how you say something and your motivation carries more weight than what you have to say. Manner and attitude are important elements when giving feedback. Make sure that you maintain a neutral or gentle tone so the recipient does not feel attacked or overly criticised. |

**Some things to consider when receiving feedback**

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| Self-assess your ideas and work beforehand | Prepare some specific questions that you want the other person to provide feedback on. **Considering you are the leader, the questions should cover specific areas on leadership abilities on a long and short term basis.** |
| Ask for help in finding solutions to difficulties | For instance, “Can you tell me what you think would work better?” |
| Practice Active listening | Feedback, however painful, is truly a gift so treat the “giver” appropriately. While receiving feedback, maintain good eye contact and keep your body language open—no crossed arms or legs! |
| Remember that it is easy not to “hear” feedback, particularly if it’s negative. Hence make an effort to avoid getting defensive. | There are several ways in which individuals may prevent themselves from taking in negative feedback. They may justify (e.g. “Well, you’d have done the same thing in that situation”) or explain (e.g. “Well you don’t really know the situation”), deny or become angry or hurt. |
| Remind yourself that all feedback, even negative, can be useful. | Take notes so that you can think through more thoughtfully the specifics of any negative feedback you receive. |
| Check that you have fully understood the specifics of the feedback. | Summarize what you heard and ask clarifying questions.  For instance, “So the main things I should focus on are xxx, yyy, etc.” |
| Reflect and use relevant feedback | Take time to reflect on given feedback. Take those points that are relevant and plan to work on them. |