

The Gift

Feedback has been called a “gift” because it really does help the person who’s receiving it. You can make your feedback an act of giving by taking these steps:

Before Giving the Feedback

1. Clarify your purpose – Ask yourself, why am I giving this feedback – what’s my purpose? The best feedback is given to help an employee be more successful and contribute more. Is the purpose: to encourage continued performance, to improve performance, to correct performance or to develop a new skill? Define as clearly as possible what the employee will gain by listening to your feedback.
2. Take into consideration the employee’s developmental stage. Are they: a new hire or new to a task, moderately experienced or a consistent performer? The less developed an employee is, the more frequently feedback is needed.
3. Tailor the message – Some people need lots of details and 1-2 examples others want a one-sentence statement of the issue. Some want time to think about feedback before responding; others want to sit down and work through the issue on the spot.

When Delivering the Feedback

1. First, present “this is what I experienced.” – To frame the feedback in terms of what you experienced, try using “I” statements. Be as specific as you can in describing what you observed or the results. Describe the impact of the individual’s behavior – without judgment. For example, “When you’re late, others have to cover your phone” instead of “Being late is inconsiderate.” Another example might be, “I saw your presentation yesterday and I thought your facilitation skills were excellent. You were prepared, focused, engaging and able to answer participant’s questions.” Focus on the actions and behaviors, not the person.
2. Check for understanding – Pause and allow the person to react.
3. Present “This is what I feel.” Again, use “I” statements and be as clear and direct as possible. For example, “I’m concerned that others are growing frustrated...” or “I feel disappointed...” or “I am excited to see how you’ve grown as a facilitator.”
4. Pause for understanding – Again give the employee some time to react.
5. Finally, present “this is what I need.” – Define what you want – the desired outcomes. With the employee, talk through alternative solutions. Together, agree on action.
6. Follow up after the conversation. Did the coaching session(s) achieve the desired result(s)?
7. Acknowledge and reward successful coaching results. Celebrate successes, progress and achievement.