



Performance Feedback Guidelines

15 Top Tips for Performance Management

These top tips for performance management will help you to give difficult feedback positively and enable the recipient to avoid being defensive and accept the feedback as not only a positive step but as an opportunity for learning and development.

1 Time it

Feedback is most effective when it's given as soon as possible after the situation being described. Don't save it up. Give the person the benefit of it immediately and don't surprise them with it when it comes to more formal feedback sessions.

2 Set a goal of ongoing dialogue

When you discuss performance and goals regularly, people always know where they stand. They are more likely to raise issues with you themselves.

3 Solicit feedback. Don't impose it

Always ask the other person if you can give them feedback. If they say no, respect that this may not be a good time. Agree another more convenient time with them.

4 Prior to the meeting review your comments

Review the situations in question, the relevant behaviours and the effect they had on you and others in the group. Make sure you understand how your comments relate to agreed goals and expectations.

5 Establish a safe environment

Find somewhere you and the other person can share information that is positive, objective, constructive, realistic and future-oriented. Be open and honest, but tactful.

6 Offer your comments as perceptions

Offer your comments as perceptions so they can be discussed for clarity and understanding, rather than whether they are true e.g. "In my perception what you are doing is... Be alert and considerate about issues over which the other person has no control.

7 Don't overload

Choose one or two critical issues or behaviour to focus on.



8 Focus on specific behaviour the person can change

Explain the impact of their behaviour or attitude on the project, the team or on other individuals. Or explain its effect on you. Don't make judgements about whether it was good or bad. Keep it objective. Don't get personal. Avoid blaming. Deal with the facts. For example: say, "...when you cut me off in yesterday's meeting, I felt powerless..." instead of "...you were really rude...".

9 Be specific

It's best to describe exactly what happened rather than general impressions, so talk about the facts. Avoid exaggerating, being vague or offering emotional accounts. Relate only what you have personally observed or experienced. Focus on specific behaviours and their effect.

10 Communicate your acceptance

Make sure the other person knows you respect his or her right to be different to you. If they become defensive or emotional, avoid trying to justify or impose your information or perspective.

11 Check the feedback

Make sure your understanding is accurate and fair. Check with the other person and others to ensure you haven't misjudged the situation. If there are difficult issues to address, avoid compensating for this by giving too much positive feedback.

12 Give the other person the opportunity to explain and offer a solution

Listen carefully, using attentive body language. Paraphrase and repeat key points. Frame the whole discussion as a problem to be solved. Ask the other person to offer solutions. The more self-prescription there is, the better the outcome.

13 Include observation on constructive behaviours too

People need to understand what success looks like. Providing them with feedback on positive aspect of their performance is a good way to do that. Research increasingly suggests that it is significantly more productive to focus on strengths.

14 Offer specific suggestions for improvement

Make your own suggestions about what will improve the situation. Where possible, build on ideas suggested by others.

15 Summarize and express support

Offering encouragement and ending on a positive note sets the stage for improved performance. Offer feedback with the positive intent of helping the other person.