

# Providing Motivating Feedback

As a manager, one of our responsibilities is to provide our team members feedback on a regular basis. Providing feedback that will motivate your employees to improve their performance is not difficult as long as you keep these five points in mind:

## 1. **Provide feedback for performance, not personality.**

Feedback will never be constructive if you reprimand or attack the employee. Do not attempt to provide feedback if you are planning to engage in blame behaviour or if you are more concerned with punishing the person rather than helping them to improve. Keep your discussion focused on their performance.

## 2. **It must be supportive.**

Avoid starting sentences with the words, “you” or “your” as this will generally put the other person on the defensive. Allow the individual to express themselves, avoid lecturing them. Be prepared to listen. Your goal should be to allow the employee to do at least 80% of the talking. This will keep them involved, provide you with further information, and help you both reach an equitable solution. It is also important that your tone of voice and words are supportive when you address the employee.

## 3. **Be direct and maintain confidence.**

One of the most common mistakes managers make is that they are afraid of being direct with their employees. Maintain eye contact and avoid fidgeting. Ensure that your body language and tone of voice matches your message. If you have taken the time to properly plan and prepare beforehand you should be confident in your ability to achieve the desired outcome.

## 4. **Involve the employee.**

Enlist the employee's assistance for determining suggestions for improvement. It is not necessary that the solutions always come from you. In fact, if the employee provides the solution you will have a greater level of buy-in because they will have been part of the decision-making process. The best solutions do not always originate from the manager. Keep your ego in check.

## 5. **Conclude with a specific agreement.**

At the end of the discussion, it is important that you both leave with a specific agreement. Watch for evasive phrases such as;

*“I’ll do my best.”*

*“I’ll try.”*

*“I’ll give it my best shot.”*

*“I’ll see what I can do.”*

These phrases are not commitments. If the employee fails to make the change or improvement, they can later say to you, “Well, I only said that I’d try.”

These five guidelines are major components of an open communication management style. To ensure maximum performance from your team on a daily basis it is critical that you remain open, objective, and supportive. Remember: ***The primary purpose of providing feedback is to improve performance.***

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