DELIVERING PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

A beginner's guide for providing constructive and effective feedback.

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INTRODUCTION

Delivering performance feedback is imperative to the workplace. Providing constructive feedback is critical for employees' development and is one of the most extraordinary things a leader can provide. Effective feedback can help encourage, energize, and involve others to accomplish goals and enhance their skills.

But how do you provide effective feedback?

This guidebook will precisely discuss this and what leaders shall do to provide their employees with constructive feedback without anxiety. Let's begin!

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK?

Providing and receiving feedback are vital skills any leader shall possess. Feedback can help motivate our personal and professional development; however, delivering effective feedback to others can be challenging. According to DDI (Development Dimensions International), a leadership development group, effective feedback needs to be:
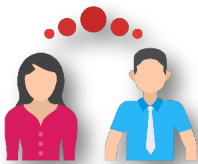
Intentional

Providing feedback should be intentional and well prepared. Identify the purpose behind your feedback, plan how you will deliver the feedback and what you say in advance.

Specific

Delivering feedback should always be specific and clear. Consider using the STAR or STAR/AR method to provide a framework for your feedback.

Considerate

Feedback is best received if you are considerate of emotions and how you communicate. Pay close attention to others' emotions, and address personal needs to feel appreciated and understood.

Timely

Providing feedback should be delivered promptly. You can provide feedback on the spot, during 1:1s, or scheduled separately when longer discussions are needed.

5 KEY PRINCIPLES TO EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

01. Maintain or enhance self-esteem

Maintaining or enhancing self-esteem entails recognizing ideas and accomplishments, expressing and exhibiting confidence, and being transparent and genuine. One way to maintain or enhance a team member's self-esteem is to show gratitude by thanking them for their hard work.

02. Listen and respond with empathy

Listening and responding with empathy can foster more effective communication and help establish trust and respect with a team member. As a leader, you can listen and respond with empathy by showing acceptance, defusing negative emotions, and reinforcing a favorable situation.

03. Ask for help and encourage involvement

Asking for help and encouraging involvement is critical as a leader. Begin by asking for ideas and perspectives from other team members and encouraging their involvement before expressing your thoughts. For example, you can ask a team member's thoughts on how they should approach an upcoming project.

04. Share thoughts, feelings, and rationale

Trust is foundational to building relationships and can be developed by sharing your thoughts, feelings, and rationale. For example, you could explain to your team member why you were concerned about their current project (feelings) and why you would like to delay the launch of the new product (rationale).

05. Provide support without removing responsibility

Providing support without removing responsibility begins with a leader avoiding assuming ownership over a project or assignment, even if they have good intentions. Leaders shall focus on providing support by guiding and receiving results from others rather than completing the work themselves.

THE STAR METHOD

The STAR method, adapted by DDI, is a technique that provides a framework for effectively communicating in an interview or providing constructive feedback to others. The STAR method is based on three components and reminds a leader to describe the **Situation** or **Task**, **Action**, and **Result.**
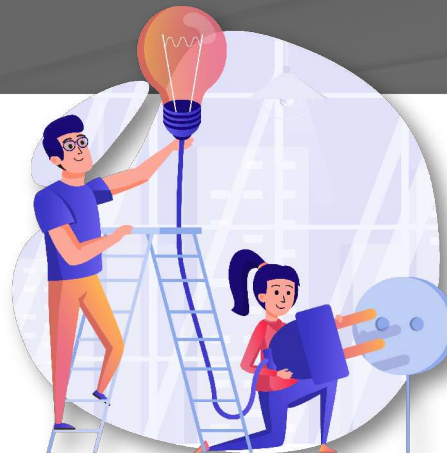
SITUATION OR TASK

Explain the situation or task, so others understand the context.

ACTION

Provide details about what you or another person did to handle the situation.

RESULT

Describe what was achieved by the action and why it was effective.

STAR FEEDBACK: EFFECTIVE VS. INEFFECTIVE

EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Situation/Task: *Sarah, the initiative you took when an angry customer called in about their HVAC system.*

Action: *You followed the Nexstar process impeccably and provided excellent customer service.*

Result: *By the end of the appointment, the customer was ecstatic about your service and provided a five-star rating on Google. You ultimately made their day.*

This feedback is **specific** because Sarah knows the situation, the specific actions she took, and the results of her actions.

INEFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Situation/Task: *John, you did an excellent job coordinating the holiday event.*

Action: *Not provided*

Result: *I am incredibly pleased, and others have been saying the same thing. Someone even mentioned you should coordinate the following holiday parties.*

This feedback is **not specific** because the manager does not include John's action regarding the event. There is no way for John to comprehend what specific actions he took to receive praise from others.

THE STAR/AR METHOD

Developed by DDI, the STAR/AR method is an extension of the STAR format for providing developmental feedback. A leader describes the STAR and then offers an **Alternative Action** and **Enhanced Result**.

SITUATION OR TASK
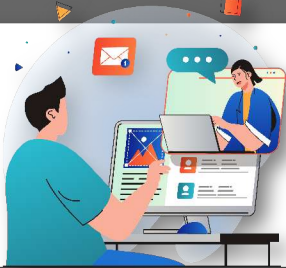
Explain the situation or task, so others understand the context.

ACTION

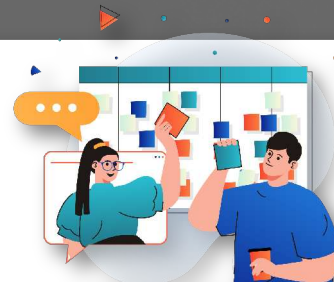**Provide details about what you or another person did to handle the situation.**

RESULT

Describe the consequences, and why the action was ineffective.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION

Discuss what could have been done differently to handle the situation.

ENHANCED RESULT

Share how a different action could have produced a better result.

STAR/AR FEEDBACK: EFFECTIVE VS. INEFFECTIVE

EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Situation/Task: *Laura, when the deadline was approaching, Jan asked you for final revisions by the end of the week.*

Action: *However, you told Jan you would not be able to send her the revisions until the following week.*

Result: *Jan was surprised and frustrated.*

Alternative Action: *If you shared your time constraints with her...*

Enhanced Result: *Both of you might have worked something out.*

This feedback is **specific** because Laura knows her actions and results. This feedback also offers an alternative action to reach a more effective result.

INEFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Situation/Task: *Daniel, you were called out to a customer's home about a jammed garbage disposal and an old water heater.*

Action: *However, you did not try to build a connection with the customer.*

Result: *The customer went with a different company.*

Alternative Action: *Not provided*

Enhanced Result: *Not provided*

This feedback is **not specific**. Even though Daniel knows his actions had an effect, the manager did not recommend an alternative action to provide an enhanced result. Discovering an alternative action and providing an enhanced result can encourage team members to adjust their behavior in the future.

5 TIPS ON FEEDBACK

01 Top performers crave feedback too

Regardless of the employee, everyone needs feedback, including top performers. Feedback can help motivate, strengthen, challenge, and encourage top performers to develop their skills and prepare for what comes next.

## 02 Consider *why* you may avoid a discussion

There are many reasons why a leader may avoid giving feedback. Start thinking about why you may bypass a discussion and seek alternative actions to improve your approach.

03 Five positives for every negative

When providing feedback, there need to be more positive interactions than negative ones. Positive feedback can help develop more significant and productive relationships between team members.

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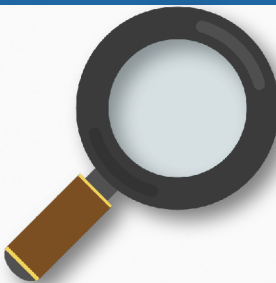
04 Clarity drives behavior we want to see

The more specific your feedback is, the more likely you will see a positive behavior change. Using STAR and STAR/AR formats can help provide specific feedback.

05 Handle serious discussions appropriately

Disciplinary discussions should be held separately, confidentially, and with HR presence if warranted.