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How To Provide Feedback That Has an Impact

By [Susan M. Heathfield](#)

Make your feedback have the impact it deserves by the manner and approach you use to deliver feedback. Your feedback can make a difference to people if you can avoid a defensive response.

Here's How:

1. Effective feedback is specific, not general. (Say, "The report you turned in yesterday was well-written, understandable, and made your points about the budget very effectively." Don't say, "good report.")
2. Effective feedback always focuses on a specific behavior, not on a person or their intentions. (When you held competing conversations during the meeting, when Mary had the floor, you distracted the people in attendance.)
3. The best feedback is sincerely and honestly provided to help. Trust me, people will know if they are receiving it for any other reason.
4. Successful feedback describes actions or behavior that the individual can do something about.
5. Whenever possible, feedback that is requested is more powerful. Ask permission to provide feedback. Say, "I'd like to give you some feedback about the presentation, is that okay with you?"
6. Effective feedback involves the sharing of information and observations. It does not include advice unless you have permission or advice was requested.
7. Effective feedback is well timed. Whether the feedback is positive or constructive provide the information as closely tied to the event as possible.
8. Effective feedback involves what or how something was done, not why. Asking why is asking people about their motivation and that provokes defensiveness.
9. Check to make sure the other person understood what you communicated by using a feedback loop, such as asking a question or observing changed behavior.
10. Effective feedback is as consistent as possible. If the actions are great today, they're great tomorrow. If the policy violation merits discipline, it should always merit discipline.

Tips:

1. Feedback is communication to a person or a team of people regarding the effect their



behavior is having on another person, the organization, the customer, or the team.

2. Positive feedback involves telling someone about good performance. Make this feedback timely, specific, and frequent.
3. Constructive feedback alerts an individual to an area in which his performance could improve. Constructive feedback is not criticism; it is descriptive and should always be directed to the action, not the person.
4. The main purpose of constructive feedback is to help people understand where they stand in relation to expected and/or productive job behavior.
5. Recognition for effective performance is a powerful motivator. Most people want to obtain more recognition, so recognition fosters more of the appreciated actions.