7 Ways to Deliver Feedback with Finesse

Feedback is part of daily life, but there are ways to deliver feedback that can change the way it's received and used. Here are 7 pointers to delivering effective feedback with finesse.

01. Find the Right Time

When it comes to colleagues, not everyone will be receptive to feedback. Make sure the person is open to receiving it at that time. A simple, "Do you mind if I share something with you?" or "Are you open to my thoughts?" may help them be more open to listening. If you're a leader, it's part of your responsibility to deliver feedback to your team regularly. In this case, you might ask them if right now is a good time.

02. Take it Offline

Always give feedback directly to the person in a private space or meeting. Create a safe environment for them to receive the information, it's likely a dialogue so ask questions or discuss some potential other ways things could have been handled.

03. Demeanor and Delivery

Deliver the feedback with compassion and a helpful point of view. We're all different people, who interpret and handle circumstances in our own unique ways. It's important to hear the person out as to why they handled the situation or project the way they did. Being open-minded could open your eyes up to your communication style, or perhaps your direction wasn't clear. We're all learning and evolving.

04. Positive and Negative

Give as much positive feedback as you do constructive feedback, if not more. Everyone likes to receive positive feedback, and it can help build confidence and solidify positive behaviors that you want to continue. 65% of employees say they want more feedback,[1] even constructive feedback, especially as they gain more experience in an area. However, receiving too much constructive feedback can also be overwhelming, so adhering to a balanced ratio avoids giving them too many areas to work on all at once.

05. Timely

43% of highly engaged employees receive feedback at least once a week.[2] Highly engaged team members can be critical to your organization's success. Making sure feedback is timely allows the person to act on it immediately while it's still fresh in their mind. This is why any constructive feedback, in particular, should focus on recent happenings and current areas for improvement.

06. Specific

Be very specific about the feedback you give. Vague feedback is not helpful and can leave recipients confused. Focus on specific behaviors

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1   20 Essential Employee Feedback Statistics, Zippia.
2   20 Essential Employee Feedback Statistics, Zippia.

and not the person, and use facts, dates, times and examples to back up your rationale. Try not to overwhelm them with too many things, and stay focused on only a couple of key points.

07. Provide Suggestions

When giving constructive feedback, provide concrete suggestions on how they might improve in that area, skill or task. Give them ideas to help solve the problem or have them take another approach. If there is a skill needed, consider how you can help them learn that skill. That could be through mentorship, cross-functional projects, or courses in the area.

Giving feedback can help reinforce positive behaviors and address areas for improvement. But providing that feedback isn't easier for some. It's important that leaders think about both sides, meaning providing feedback could be just what that team member needs to advance to the next level. Try these tips out the next time you need to give feedback.

Being an effective leader is multi-faceted; one skill is delivering feedback tactfully. Looking for more tips on how to lead? We've got some ideas you might not have thought of.

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