

Feedback

Is the breakfast of champions

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Feedback is the breakfast of champions says Ken Blanchard... Why don't you give the gift of feedback?

You have written a good report, however, it omitted visual aids to summarise the data. It may be helpful to include a graph or photograph to capture the content easily.'

Feedback is a gift to let the person know what they are doing well, and where they can improve. When a person deserves constructive feedback and you remain silent, a mistake will be repeated.

Yet, many managers find it difficult to give constructive feedback as it can be associated with criticism. Done correctly, well thought-out and tactful feedback opens communication with a shared understanding between both parties, commits to quality standards, and builds the relationship to assist the individual to improve on their work practice.

Effective feedback needs to be delivered carefully and with tact. It is situation specific, timely as close to the event as possible, and clearly understood by the other party. When feedback is delivered continuously as part of your communication as a learning experience, rather than when mistakes are made, it will create a positive learning environment, rather than a negative connotation to feedback.

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Feedback is a TWO-WAY process between you and the other party as you deliver the message. It is based on your observations, rather than being judgemental, critical or harsh where the person can feel belittled. Offer a solution approach with a plan on how the performance can be improved. During the feedback process, ensure that the individual is given the opportunity to express his or her views on the feedback.

An important skill when you provide feedback is to reframe a negative situation into a positive and constructive message. The FEEDBACK SANDWICH technique is a three-step process to provide a structure to giving feedback. The sandwich feedback method involves discussing corrective feedback that is 'sandwiched' between two layers of praise.

The Sandwich Feedback Model (KKK)

- **Kiss** – praise
- **Kick** – corrective feedback
- **Kiss** – praise

The benefit of the sandwich model is that it confirms two positive messages, and 'softens' the impact of the corrective feedback.

Tips for Constructive Feedback

- Prepare your comments so that you are clear, and there is less room for ambiguity
- Focus on the behaviour instead of the person, and make sure you give feedback to support rather than hurt them
- Feedback will need to be given in a suitable setting, preferably in private and face-to-face. When this is not possible, offer online or telephone communication
- The phrasing and tone of the feedback is important, because HOW you say something often carries more weight than what you say
- Limit the information to two or three items. If you overload the person, they can disregard what you say
- Feedback can be confronting and powerful. Be aware and sensitive of the effect of your feedback
- Follow up on the feedback to monitor the progress to what changes have been made

Learning to give and receive feedback takes time. The gift of feedback is your opportunity to let the person know what they are doing well, and how they can develop. This is a lifetime gift that can validate the individual, and lead to their personal growth and success.

NOTE: Feedback is usually on the spot – and does not replace the need for formal Performance Reviews



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