Top 10 Tips

How to Provide Effective Feedback

Staff members benefit from receiving ongoing feedback about how well they are carrying out their roles. This regular dialogue with managers can help to steer a path through the many changes which take place during the year. Regular specific feedback helps to motivate staff by letting them know their contribution is appreciated and also provides pointers for improvement.

1. **Understand task, goals and objectives**

   Staff can benefit from clear feedback on how they are performing in relation to their roles. A manager can assist the development of staff by providing specific observations on staff behaviours. Be clear which parts of the role you are providing feedback on, look for examples of good practice or instances where the staff member is falling short of what is required.

2. **Informal feedback – provided on an ongoing basis**

   Take opportunities to provide feedback at the time you observe good practice or problems with the way a staff member is carrying out tasks and/or activities. Feedback which is provided immediately is far more effective.

3. **Positive and negative feedback**

   Some of the best learning is derived from someone pointing out what was good and not good in the way someone carries out a task. Be clear and refer to parts of a person’s role and give examples to support up the feedback.

4. **Establish a dialogue and explore the issues**

   It is useful to help the staff member to analyse the way they carry out tasks by using a range of useful thought-provoking questions. Allow the staff member to provide their version of what happened: what they felt, saw, heard, and would have liked to do differently. Questions to help provide good feedback include:

   “What did you think about the way you carried out that task?” (Followed by your view of what you saw.) “What worked well?” “What might you do differently?”
5. **Keep an open mind**

Be aware when giving feedback that there are always different views of the same event. Be open to changing your view by hearing the staff member’s point of view.

6. **Own the feedback**

“I felt that” and “In my opinion” are far more effective when giving feedback than “Obviously you…” Take ownership of your comments; they are only your perception.

7. **Keep the feedback factual**

Stick to the facts of what happened rather than supposition. For example, you cannot guess what a customer felt about the way they were handled by a member of staff (unless you ask them).

8. **Take the time to provide the feedback**

Providing feedback to staff requires time and a commitment to want to communicate on a regular basis with staff. Managers need to priorities this important activity in a way which is suitable for the circumstances. For example, telling staff that you will be providing regular ongoing feedback on how things are going is a better approach than booking in two meetings a year to discuss performance. Ongoing feedback sits alongside and complements the Staff review and Development scheme as a way of establishing what is required in a person’s role.

9. **Agree the way forward**

After giving the feedback, ask the staff member to agree any actions, for example how they will try to change the way they do the task next time.

10. **Don’t forget to ask for feedback yourself too!**

Asking for feedback on a presentation, project, piece of work, chairing of a meeting etc can be an invaluable source of information. Asking colleagues to provide feedback is also a way of saying that you are always willing to learn. Be specific in your request: “Please can you tell me what you thought of my presentation in relation to the content, the structure and how I handled audience questions” is better than “What did you think of me?”