

Member's Quarterly

Fall 2018 Edition

Feature

Reorientate Managers to Feedback

It's all about the Feedforward

May I give you some feedback?" Who among us wouldn't experience at least a little jolt of concern as we prepare ourselves for what might follow? Most of us have been conditioned to brace ourselves when receiving feedback that is often delivered without skill and perhaps without clarity.

What if "feedback" became synonymous with "insight leading to well-informed action"? Instead, when we hear the word "feedback", we'd also hear "I have some information that may provide insight to help you achieve what you care most about." Who wouldn't run to hear these gems?

Without feedback, we are information poor. We can be hard pressed to know our most effective next steps.

It is important to gain perspective through feedback and reflection on past events to better understand our choices, actions and responses. However, this knowledge is pointless if we do not use it to support subsequent actions and endeavours. The past serves to inform the future, hence my emphasis on "feedforward."

As leaders, whatever feedback we offer, either through observation or data collection, should serve current goals and our team's future success. It should never serve to allocate blame or lay guilt. A leader's motivation in offering feedback should be a desire to help generate insight, which in turn is applied strategically to create a wanted result.

This new result moves us forward toward our ultimate destination. Without feedback, we would struggle to situate ourselves. With continuous feedback, we can nimbly adjust to generate fresh ideas and gain further traction.

Traditional feedback focuses on the past and sees shortfalls; today's leaders focus forward and see growth and opportunity.

Give feedback daily. Every interaction is an opportunity to coach. Keeping feedback (in its many different forms) flowing will ensure that your team as well as its individual members orientate themselves to be productive and progressive. Feedback becomes an activity that feeds forward, helping people grow and learn to build future success.

Feedback in its essence is information. That information when shared should support the team or the individual's performance through a wide variety of situations. It will at times appeal to our intellect; at other times, to our emotional well-being. Making full use of all types of feedback will enable you to engage fully the hearts and minds of those on your team.

Management books have focused over the years on the type of feedback designed to close the gap between desired performance and actual performance. Many management programs have been designed to help managers deliver difficult messages, often in the context of performance appraisals. Although this is an important form of feedback, there are many other ways to provide your team members with valuable information that will assist them in achieving their goals and objectives.



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I developed "The 10 Types of Feedback to Feedforward" over the course of many years of working with teams. Traditionally, feedback has been restricted to pointing out gaps. However, if you think of feedback as information you need to help you succeed, then it is easy to see all of the missed opportunities for feedback that help build a culture of achievement.

Here are my 10 types of feedback:

- 1. Encourage the Heart** – Reassure your team member that efforts will pay off and that she/he is doing the right thing
- 2. Align to Meaningful Goals** – Focus your colleague on the goal and why it's meaningful, especially when they are experiencing confusion or doubt
- 3. Track for Impact** – Confirm with your team member that she/he is on the right path and underscore the value being generated by their actions
- 4. Revisit Plans** – Assess results to date and support the person in modifying his/her action plan if needed
- 5. Assert Standards** – Emphasize standards for success (tasks and behaviours) and address any short-falls as soon as possible
- 6. Correct to Stay the Course** – Share your observations and facts that you perceive as blocking your team member's success; assist in creating a modified course that will lead to the desired outcomes
- 7. Value Effort and Commitment** – Appreciate the person's effort and quality of work
- 8. Build on Strengths** – Shine a spotlight on strengths to create further momentum
- 9. Develop for Career Progress** – Help employees prepare for new opportunities through clear development goals and action plans
- 10. Celebrate to Uplift and Reward** – Add fun and uplift spirits by celebrating successes

Remember that feedback encompasses a broad range of information that achieves different effects. Use the full range of feedback tools listed above. Taking time each day to provide each team member with some form of feedback will go a long way in producing results more quickly and more effectively.

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