

Planning and Giving Feedback

Early intervention through constructive feedback can stop a minor issue becoming a major problem, but giving feedback when it's needed is not always easy. Too often it is seen as criticism, so here is a checklist to help you to plan and give effective feedback.

1. Check you have positive intent:

- Is the person really responsible for the act in question?
- Can I identify (with examples) and accurately describe the behaviour or performance I am looking to redirect or reinforce and the impact the current behaviour or performance is having on an individual, the team or the organisation?
- Am I being a good 'critical friend' and doing this because I want to help and support them?

2. Start with Why?

- Why was that good or bad?
- Why is the performance, behavior or incident an issue?
- Why do I feel giving feedback would help (them, me or the working relationship)?

3. DATA is key: remember this as you plan out how and when you will give the feedback

D – Discussion

A – Acts (it is about facts - avoid the use of 'attitude')

T – Timing

A – Action (future focus)

4. Use the BIFF Feedback Model:

Behaviour – be specific about the events, facts or behaviours you have seen or have been told about and the effects they have had. Back this up with data – what specifically was said and done? Explain the impact it had and what you or others observed but don't judge.

Impact – what impact has the action had on other people or the organisation? Back this up with data – what are their and your thoughts, opinions or conclusions as a result?

Feelings – how do you or others feel about the situation (not about the individual)?

"I feel pleased ..."

"You made X feel proud ..."

"I feel worried ..."

"I feel it comes across that ..."

"When you said this to X, they said that it made them feel..."

No one can deny other people's or our own feelings and why it is personally important to you or someone else.

Future – what is the desired outcome or result of this? Be clear about the results this feedback is intending to produce? What do you want to reinforce, change, do or stop? The intent should always be to focus on the future.

5. Think about When:

- Have I put off giving feedback for a long time?
- Have I set aside enough time to go through the feedback without rushing?

6. Think about How:

- How open will they be to receiving feedback from me – have I thought about mine and their personal style?
- How will you know that the person receiving the feedback understands the expectations for their future performance?
- How can you work with the person to develop an action plan to help them meet the required change in behaviour or performance?

Feedback Tips

Giving:

- Have a goal for the meeting, an action plan to discuss during it and book in follow up for afterwards.
- Explain the purpose and positive intent – that whilst it may be a difficult conversation, the overall aim is for it to be a constructive experience with an effective outcome.
- Encourage the recipient to be open and involved in the discussion – use open questions.
- Keep your emotions in check, remain calm and keep your voice even.
- Don't become emotionally involved or argue – take a 'time out' if needed.
- Listen, listen and listen even more!
- Stick to specifics, don't generalise – this is where thorough data preparation comes into its own.
- Focus on the recipient and bring the focus back to them if they look to blame others.
- Remember it is a discussion, not a cross examination.
- Keep in mind how the recipient will feel and how they want to be treated.

Rather than giving feedback, you may find yourself receiving it. The tips below will help if you find yourself in that situation. They can also help you to keep in mind what someone you are giving feedback to may be experiencing and feeling.

Receiving:

- Ask questions and probe for more information if necessary to ensure you have sufficient detail and understanding of the feedback.
- Ask for positive and negative aspects of your behaviour or performance. With a negative - don't get defensive but do look to analyse your own actions.
- Keep your emotions in check, remain calm and keep your voice even - take a 'time out' if needed.
- Don't look to find someone else to share or deflect the issue to (unless they are genuinely complicit!)
- Have a positive intent towards feedback regardless of your opinion of how it was given.
- If the feedback is negative – don't shut down and not listen or just take it to get it over and done with, or overreact to it. Ask about what positives can come from this and what support is available to tackle the issue raised.
- Try to learn from the feedback and agree the next steps or an action plan.
- Take the next steps and ask for more support or information or an update at a later date to see how things are going.
- Don't forget that you can ask for other feedback from line managers, peers, senior managers and friends.

If you need to know more about planning and delivering effective feedback, call Michelle Prescott on 01488 639 728 or email her at mprescott@personapm.co.uk.