

## Business Environment: Effective Approach to Giving Feedback

In a business environment it is often necessary to give feedback to subordinates about their performance on the job. Consequently, it is important to give feedback in a constructive and non-threatening way. Giving feedback is usually required during annual or semi-annual reviews, but can also be a useful way to follow up with employees whenever their work is of particularly high quality, or whenever their work falls below par.

### Effective Approaches to Giving Feedback:

- **Recognize the situations in which it is appropriate to give feedback.** In a business environment there is usually a hierarchy in which management or supervisors are responsible for giving feedback to subordinates - though some managers also welcome feedback from employees. Colleagues will appreciate a pat on the back when they deliver a good report or handle a difficult customer particularly well; sometimes it may be necessary to give a colleague negative feedback, but these situations should be handled carefully so that the colleague in question does not feel that they are being harassed.
- **Give positive as well as negative feedback.** Employees will likely respond better to constructive criticism if a supervisor also notices when they perform well. Giving positive feedback will also help employees understand the expectations that supervisors have of them.
- **Don't wait for the yearly review.** Feedback works best if it given as and when needed rather than stored up for the official review. If you notice that an employee has done a particularly good job on a project tell them what it was that you liked. If an employee is not performing to company standards let them know quickly so they have a chance to correct the matter.
- **Stay positive.** Constructive feedback helps employees understand how to perform better. Don't put an employee on the defensive by bluntly telling them what it is they are doing wrong; start by praising something that they do right and then explain how they could apply those same skills in the area of weakness.
- **Keep it private.** Giving critical feedback is best done in private so that the recipient does not feel that they are being attacked or reprimanded in front of their co-workers. An exception to this is if the recipient is of a different gender to the person giving the feedback. In these situations, it is sometimes company policy to have a superior of the same gender sit in as a witness to the feedback session. Positive feedback can be given in front of colleagues.

When giving feedback it is useful to jot down the main points in advance so that nothing is forgotten or overlooked. It is also useful to encourage employees to respond to feedback with questions or comments; feedback should be a dialogue that encourages employees to perform well rather than a one-sided conversation. Above all, giving feedback should be a positive experience for all parties involved; think of this as a time to have an honest discussion with employees and to help them to fulfill their potential.

References: [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM\\_98.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_98.htm)  
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~hrs/manager/toolkit/peoplemanagement/feedback.pdf>