**RECEIVING FEEDBACK**

*This tool provides some tips on how to ask and receive feedback to improve your relationship with your employees, as well as their motivation and performance. You may adapt it to your business needs and employment conditions.*

For supervisors to improve and make appropriate decisions concerning their behavior and management practices, they need accurate information about how their employees currently see them functioning. To do that, you could use the **SKS method**: simply ask your team/staff what you should ***stop* (S), *keep* (K), and *start* (S) doing**. People are asked to fill in the blanks, limiting their entries to no more than three bullet points under each subhead.

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| **Stop** |
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| **Keep** |
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| **Start** |
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Use SKS regularly and hold yourself accountable for what your team lists. Use the following questions to help you identify the behaviors that are keeping you stuck and the behaviors that will help you move in new directions:

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| **Stop** |
| * Are you hearing that you should quit doing something that you feel is a skill or strength? |
| * Is your first response that quitting this behavior will have catastrophic consequences? |
| * On reflection, is it possible that you’ve fallen into a behavioral rut? If you stop doing one thing, might you have an opportunity to try something new and different? |
| **Keep** |
| * Is there something you’re doing right that people feel you should do more of? |
| * Have you been dismissive of this particular behavior or skill for some reason? |
| * What might happen if you used this “keep” more? How might it impact your effectiveness and satisfaction with your job? |
| **Start** |
| * Are people recommending you do something that feels foreign or scary? |
| * What about it makes you anxious? Is it because you are afraid of looking like you don’t know what you’re doing? |
| * Why are people suggesting you start doing this new thing? What benefits do they feel will accrue to you, your group, or your organization? |

**Once you have received a feedback:**

* **Accept and Manage Your Emotions**

Your first reaction might be a little surprise or shock, quickly followed by anger and then rejection or denial especially in case of negative feedback. Observe your emotions and give yourself time to let them move through you. Do not respond to the feedback giver immediately. Take time to analyze the feedback and determine what you think it means for you. After denial, we usually shift into acceptance and even contentment.

* **Talk With the Feedback Giver(s)**

Talking with the person(s) who gave you feedback is the most important part of the process. This is because feedback is part of building and maintaining healthy working *relationships*. By showing the feedback giver(s) that you care about their perceptions and needs and that you’re committed to making changes that help them do their work better will strengthen trust, respect, and confidence.

* **Demonstrate your openness** by sharing your feedback results with your workgroup as well as your interpretation of what the data means to you.
* **Listen carefully** – paraphrase to make sure you heard the message correctly. This also demonstrates to the other person that you are sincere in wanting to hear his or her feedback.
* **Ask** **Open-ended Questions**: these are difficult to answer with a simple “yes” or “no” response, and indicate your interest in learning more. Avoid asking “why” type questions that can put a person on the spot, e.g., “Why do you think that way?”
* **Ask for examples** – direct the conversation by saying, “Tell me more” or “What have I specifically done to make you feel that way?”
* **Use Silence:** Wait for the other person to respond and finish talking. Then pause rather than respond right away. By not filling the vacuum, you let the other person know you are listening and are interested in what he/she is saying.
* **Acknowledge** – you don’t have to agree or disagree with the person at this time. It’s appropriate to recognize the other person’s input by saying “You’ve given me something to think about.”
* If you believe you were in error, admit it. Treat it as another learning experience.
* **Think About What You Are Going To Do With The Feedback**

You don’t have to act upon the feedback right away. Spend some time thinking about the feedback and then determine what action, if any, you need to take. You could also ask for suggestions, but select only a few changes (up to three) that you genuinely want to make and you think will help improve the working relationship and results.

* **Commit Yourself to Specific Actions by Specific Dates**