

The 4 Types of Feedback

Everyone likes to know that what they do matters on a daily basis. At work, employees crave feedback from their manager. To them feedback, good or bad, means that at the very least, someone is watching and someone cares.

Managers give four types of feedback. Let's start with the one they give most often, silence.

1. Silence

Managers are often surprised to learn that silence is a form of feedback. How can a lack of feedback be a form of feedback? Even when you offer no response or reaction, you are sending a message. Unfortunately the message is left for the teammate to imagine or assume.

Think about when you get a drastic hairstyle change or do something in your life that most people would say is out of character for you. How do you feel when people don't even acknowledge the change? Often, we take it personally.

When you don't react to positive behaviors, your employees may think you don't care. A "why bother" attitude may begin to take hold. Over time, their confidence may be shaken or eroded completely. With regard to poor performance, employees may decide that if you don't care, neither should they. Or, worse yet, they may not even know their performance needs improvement, which makes appraisal time an ugly affair.

When mixed with other, more positive feedback, silence isn't always harmful. It would be exhausting and unrealistic to comment on every behavior all of the time. Silence is only negative when it is the primary form of feedback your team members receive.

2. Critical Feedback

Critical feedback is the most damaging form of feedback. This kind of feedback focuses solely on the negatives and ignores all the positives. It is commonly called, “Broken Tile Feedback;” in a room full of perfectly laid tiles, all that is noticed is the one with the broken corner. To be criticized as an adult is humiliating. Managers who criticize behaviors will find it difficult to keep good employees. They may have several employees who have already quit mentally but decided to hang around and collect a paycheck.

3. Constructive Feedback

Based upon the root word, “construct” or to build, this kind of feedback is all about noticing and encouraging positive efforts, growth and results. It is a powerful form of appreciation because it shows your team members that you care and that you believe in their abilities and their growth. Constructive feedback that is timely and specific begins a continuous positive loop in the performance of the employee, because

WHAT GETS NOTICED, GETS REPEATED.

4. Praise

This one can be quick, easy, and fun. Praise is a universal motivator because when it’s delivered sincerely and in a manner that suits your team member, it’s uplifting.

Praise builds people up. It shows them you noticed. It tells them you care. It makes it likely they will continue to perform well. **Catch your employees doing things right every day.**

You can praise:

- Spontaneously, with a verbal compliment when you notice good performance.
- Purposeful, by seeking out a team member.
- Formally, with a written note.

- Publicly, at a staff meeting
- Lavishly, with a presentation during a company meeting.
- Purposefully, commenting about their good work in front of their peers.
- Strategically, with a comment to your manager in front of your team member.

Whatever you do; don't make it complex, just make it often.

ARE YOU GIVING YOUR TEAM MEMBERS ENOUGH FEEDBACK?

Ask yourself these 5 questions about each member of your team.

- 1.** What has this team member been doing lately that I should praise?
- 2.** What are this team member's strengths and how has he/she used them lately?
- 3.** What has this team member done to meet or exceed expectations?
- 4.** Is this team member working on something new or working on something that isn't meeting my expectations? If so, what kind of constructive feedback can I offer?
- 5.** When did I last praise this team member?

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