



Giving Constructive Feedback.

Constructive feedback is information that calls attention to a problem or a potential problem. It is motivated by an honest attempt to help the staff member improve performance so that he or she is successful in meeting expectations. The key is maintaining mutual respect and learning.

EXERCISE 10.11 LEARNING FROM PAST FEEDBACK SESSIONS

The purpose of this exercise is to review past situations that promoted a constructive feedback session.

What were performance indicators that gave you clues that there was an opportunity to provide feedback?

There are five steps for providing constructive feedback

1. Convey your positive intent
2. Describe explicitly what was observed
3. State the impact of the behaviour or action
4. Ask the other person to respond
5. Focus the discussion on solutions

STEP 1 - CONVEY YOUR POSITIVE INTENT

This is important because many people assume constructive feedback means criticism and they'd rather not hear it. Expressing your intent makes it easier for the other person to hear your message. Put yourself in a positive state of mind. Pick a good time. Briefly, say what you'd like to cover and point to a common goal.

STEP 2 DESCRIBE EXPLICITLY WHAT WAS OBSERVED

This helps the other person believe what you say is real and convincing. This will happen if your comments are specific and concrete. Use facts and figures wherever possible. Focus on the behaviour. Avoid using "you" (this puts people on the defensive). Limit your feedback to one issue at a time.

STEP 3 - STATE THE IMPACT OF THE BEHAVIOUR OR ACTION

This shifts the focus to being objective. Link the behaviour or actions to goals like customer satisfaction, business goals, amount of rework, personal development, costs, etc. If appropriate state the impact on others and you. State only one or two of the consequences (the intent is to be helpful, not destructive) and maintain an objective tone.

STEP 4 - ASK THE OTHER PERSON TO RESPOND

This will get the other person involved. Invite them to respond to pauses and open questions. Listen and summarise their key points.

STEP 5 - FOCUS THE DISCUSSION ON SOLUTIONS

This moves away from who is right or wrong to moving ahead. Listen to what the person is saying. If they need your help and advice give it. Leave the action or responsibility for action with the other person. Ask - 'what will work for you? What ideas do you have? What could we try? Ask directly for the change you want.

EXERCISE 10.12 PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

The purpose of this exercise is to plan to use the above information or a situation where you will be giving constructive feedback.

Using the 5-step process above, record what you will say. Then practice the steps with your coach and ask them to give feedback on what you did.
