

Tips for Giving Feedback

Providing performance feedback should be an on-going process, a way of offering your colleague some information and helping him or her to recognise when some change in behaviour or performance is needed. As in a guided missile system, feedback helps people keep their behaviour and performance "on target". And remember, you can use the feedback process to provide both positive comments and constructive suggestions. You might like to consider the following guidelines when offering your feedback – you may find it results in the other person less likely becoming threatened and reacting defensively

Feedback Guidelines

- 1. Offered with care.** The other person should see that you want to help them by giving him or her this information. It won't work if they believe you are out to hurt them. Ideally, if you are going to be making a suggestion about them changing something they are doing, actually begin by asking them first if you can suggest something.
- 2. Make it specific.** It is not useful to tell someone they are "dominating." You can help the person by saying something like, "During the meeting when we were trying to solve the problem, my perception was that you did not seem to listen to what others were saying."
- 3. Well timed.** Feedback is most useful when it is solicited by the receiver and is sufficiently close to the event so as to be easily remembered by the person to whom you are offering feedback. It is not helpful to say, "Six months ago, you cut me off before I was finished with my statement."
- 4. Readily actionable.** The most useful feedback is directed toward behaviour that can be changed by the person. It is not helpful to a team member to hear that his height and deep voice intimidate other team members. Rather, it would be useful to say something like, "When you both present the problem and give *your* solution as though it is the only way, other team members feel you are not interested in their ideas."
- 5. Prepare.** It is not easy to give good, solid feedback. Therefore, it is useful to take some time to prepare what you would like to say, making sure it is both specific and clear.
- 6. Pick a good spot and a good time.** Give some thought to where you want to present this information - in your work area, her area, over lunch in a neutral site -and when you should meet -immediately after the event, the next morning, a few days later.
- 7. Checked and clarified.** Always try to give the other person a chance to respond, either to explain themselves or even to seek more comments from you. Don't simply tell them your feedback and run.
- 8. Balanced.** Make sure you acknowledge where the person is making helpful contributions, not just where you think they need to improve. People will more likely listen to you if you do not always simply criticise, but also give them some genuine praise and share appreciation when its due.