NEOGOV



MASTER THE ART OF

DELIVERING VALUABLE FEEDBACK

WITH THESE REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES



According to a Harvard Business Review study from 2014, ***72% of employees indicated that they believed their performance would improve if their manager gave corrective feedback.***

Whether you're a first-time manager or have decades of experience, the art of giving valuable feedback to your employees is a skill that can always be refined. While providing clarity, setting actionable goals, and creating accountability are also important, learning how to effectively coach employees is where managers have the biggest opportunity to impact both the organization and the personal career growth of the individual. In addition to tips for establishing the right cadence, timing, and tone, we've also included examples of scenarios and recommended phrases that can be adapted to fit your personal management style.

WEEKLY ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS:

YOUR MOST POWERFUL TOOL

Managers should schedule a regular standing meeting with each direct report on a frequently recurring basis – just the two of you, in a one-on-one environment. While you may hold weekly or even daily stand-ups with your entire team, your employees may have questions or problems they don't feel comfortable sharing in front of the entire group. Similarly, it's not an appropriate forum for providing critical feedback. Weekly check-ins offer a more private environment to build trust and speak candidly.

*"Employees who regularly met with their managers were nearly **three times as engaged** as their counterparts who didn't get much one-on-one face time."*

-Gallup

KEEP AN EVEN TONE & BE CLEAR

When addressing problem areas, stay solution-focused and avoid statements that could be perceived as personal attacks or value judgments. Actionable feedback that reinforces the manager's belief that an employee is capable is always preferred over comments that don't present any suggestions for improvement.

On the flipside, it's also important to be clear and direct about what you want from your employee; being vague or going "too soft" about where you want them to improve can lead to confusion and frustration. Professor and lecturer Brené Brown, PhD in a SHRM keynote speech noted that reluctance on the manager's part to be perceived as "mean" led to less worthwhile feedback that the employee could benefit from.

*A recent OfficeVibe study found **83% of millennials** don't find their managers' feedback meaningful.*



WEEKLY ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS:

YOUR MOST POWERFUL TOOL

GET YOUR EMPLOYEE'S BUY-IN

Once you've given feedback, you should pause to give your employee the opportunity to explain their thought process and ask additional questions. You can then ask them for ideas on how they think they can take steps to improve, and anything they need from you to achieve goals. Making sure your employee understands the feedback and is comfortable with it, but that it is also based on specific metrics, will make success more likely.

*"**Engagement increased 3.6x** among employees who felt their manager involved them in goal-setting."*

-Gallup

FOLLOWING UP POST-FEEDBACK

If you've already had a discussion with an employee on a given area for improvement, allow them time to demonstrate that they are taking your feedback constructively and applying it without micromanaging them.

Conversely, if you have a model employee who never causes problems and consistently puts forth good work, you should continue to motivate them by giving them praise as well as presenting them with new responsibilities and challenges to keep them engaged.

Once you leverage recurring one-on-one meetings, you will find all sorts of situations in which they can be used to help guide your employees in the right direction. On the following page are some scenarios that you've likely experienced as a manager or will at some point, and how to handle them using the best practices we've covered.



JOB WELL DONE

*According to Harvard Business Review, positive reinforcement of improved performance in the workplace **worked better overall than punishment.***

ONE-ON-ONE

FEEDBACK SCENARIOS

OVERTALKS OTHERS

Todd always dominates the conversation in group discussions, to the point that Sarah and Bilal feel they have no say in team goals. You appreciate that Todd is passionate; you just need him to be more collaborative.

DON'T SAY: "You're talking way too much in meetings and the rest of the team is growing frustrated with you."

DO SAY: "I really value your contributions to the team. I think you could benefit from actively giving the others a chance to weigh in, as well. Taking the collaborative approach is really going to elevate all of us and help your individual growth."

MISSING DEADLINES/GOALS

Steven seems to be juggling more than he can handle right now, and as a result he is slowing down productivity and missing deadlines, or not meeting goals.

DON'T SAY: "This is the third deadline you've missed this month. We need to take some of your responsibilities away."

DO SAY: "I know you have a lot going on right now. Is there anything I can do to help you achieve your goals? If you need suggestions on prioritization, or for us to take a step back and realign your goals, I think that could be helpful."

POOR COMMUNICATION

Jisela tends to work in a vacuum – you never know where she might be having trouble because she is hesitant to speak up and now it's impacting the rest of the team's workflow.

DON'T SAY: "If you had a problem or couldn't meet a deadline, why didn't you tell me sooner?"

DO SAY: "You should always feel comfortable coming to me if you're running into an issue – that way I can give you the help you need and the whole team can continue to work smoothly, too."

NOT DETAIL-ORIENTED ENOUGH

Kiara is excellent at presenting big picture concepts and overall vision, but she struggles with details. In the past month, typos or incorrect figures have been present in important work she's submitted.

DON'T SAY: "Having to constantly correct these minor mistakes is costing us a lot of time."

DO SAY: "I love how you always have the big picture in mind, and you consistently present solid work. However, I need you to keep the small things in mind too – make sure you proof your work before you submit it. Making a checklist might also help you stay on top of things."



DOESN'T CONTRIBUTE

Hector doesn't seem to like to play an active role in contributing to the conversation when the team is brainstorming or being asked for their opinions and ideas.

DON'T SAY: "I don't like how you never contribute in brainstorming sessions."

DO SAY: "I would like to challenge you to be more proactive when we are brainstorming."

POOR PERFORMANCE/ATTENDANCE

Anuj is demonstrating decreased productivity where he previously flourished – additionally, he's begun missing meetings or not showing up to work much more frequently.

DON'T SAY: "Your recent performance and attendance at work is not acceptable."

DO SAY: "I noticed you've missed work and some important meetings lately, and you seem to be struggling with delivering on projects. I really value your role on this team and want you to tell me what I can do to help you get back on track."

NEGATIVE ATTITUDE

You've caught wind that Marie has been voicing complaints about her role, you as a manager, or the organization as a whole. In a recent meeting, she rolled her eyes at Nate and displayed other behavior that decreased team morale.

DON'T SAY: "I've heard from others that you aren't happy, and your attitude is bringing down the whole team."

DO SAY: "You seem unhappy lately, and I'm genuinely concerned with how I can help. What issues do you have that I should know about? It's important you voice concerns with me so we can work together to address them instead of letting them fester."

THRIVING EMPLOYEE

McKayla has been meeting goals, working collaboratively and showing initiative when given new responsibilities or challenges.

DON'T SAY: nothing! It's important for your employees to feel appreciated or recognized on a regular basis, whether they have recently improved in a given area or are consistently putting forth good work.

DO SAY: "I want to tell you what a great job you've been doing on your recent projects. You help hold our team to a quality standard that I really appreciate."



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