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# 10 Examples of Effective and Ineffective Employee Feedback



Dan Hoppen / 11.28.18

Giving employee feedback in a constructive way takes practice, according to Stanford GSB lecturer Carole Robin. And although most can agree on the importance of constructive feedback, few are practicing regularly.

This post outlines some of Robin's tips for giving and receiving employee feedback, along with actual examples of the good and the bad taken from companies using an [employee feedback platform](#).



Get your free copy of the ebook here: [360 Feedback Questions](#)

## Be vulnerable.

Receiving feedback often puts an employee in a vulnerable position. Using a bit of humility creates a relationship where the receiver can “hear” feedback better, as they’re not the only ones being vulnerable in the exchange.

- Good: “I remember having a conversation with my manager just like this a few years ago and it really helped me become a better writer.”
- Bad: “Your writing is far from where it should be at this point. What are you doing to improve?”

## Lead with intent.

Use phrases such as, “The reason I am telling you this is ...” or, “I am hoping the result of this conversation will be ...” Preface your employee feedback with phrases like these to show where you’re coming from and explain why you’re giving feedback in the first place.

- Good: “The reason your performance rating was lower than normal is because I know you’re capable of producing much more than you have been lately.”
- Bad: “Your productivity is lacking.”

## Focus on the behavior.

Discuss how an employee’s behavior impacts you and/or the organization. This will keep the conversation from derailing to a place of hurt and blame.

- Good: “Constantly submitting late work makes me think you don’t understand our team’s goals.”
- Bad: “You’re the only one who’s ever behind on projects.”

## Have a conversation.

Make sure the conversation goes both ways as opposed to a one-way dump. Find feedback software that makes it easy to have continuous, 360-degree feedback conversations.

- Good: “When you don’t respond to my emails for a few days, it makes me feel like you’re not committed to our projects. Can you tell me a little bit about your views on timely responses?”
- Bad: “Your slow response time to my emails is frustrating.”

## Focus on the future.

While it's important to look back at what's already happened, the purpose of feedback is making adjustments that influence future performance. Keep your conversation centered on the actions that need to be taken in the coming weeks/months.

- Good: "Let's create some goals for you to start tracking over the next few months."
- Bad: "We really need to look at what went wrong last quarter."

## Check your language.

Avoid using matter-of-fact phrases such as, "You're too sensitive," or, "You're not good at taking constructive feedback." Instead, use "I" language to share your opinions (but keep in mind that saying things like, "I feel like you're too sensitive" is cheating).

- Good: "I find it difficult to give you feedback because I worry you're taking it negatively."
- Bad: "You make it difficult to give you constructive feedback."

## Accept feedback.

Feedback isn't a one-way street. These meetings should be a conversation, not a list of demands. Accepting and acting on employee feedback will improve your relationship with your employee and make them feel heard.

- Good: "Is there anything I can do to help you? How can I communicate better?"
- Bad: "Let's sit down and talk about all the ways you need to improve."

## Ask what you can do to help.

Don't simply offer areas of improvement to an employee. Offer tangible areas they can work on, and offer your aid to help them reach their goals.

- Good: "I think taking this online course would really help you increase your output. If you have any other questions, feel free to ask."
- Bad: "Your numbers are down. That needs to change."

## Stick to facts.

There's no arguing with cold, hard data. Employees can disagree with your evaluation of their performance, but it's much more difficult to refute statements backed up by statistics.

- Good: "Your sales are down 30 percent this month. What, in your opinion, has influenced that drop, and what can we do to improve it?"
- Bad: "Your performance has been lackluster recently."

## End on a positive note.

Receiving feedback, even when it's helpful, can be difficult and uncomfortable. Employees can leave a meeting worried about their job security or workload. End your conversation with a compliment or affirmation that you believe in them.

- Good: "I'm excited to see how you take on these new challenges. We all know you'll do great."
- Bad: "If changes aren't made soon, we might need to evaluate your fit with the organization. Get after it."

Remember – feedback is a gift. It is data. Organizations that don't implement feedback are essentially flying blind, which causes unnecessary stress for everyone involved.

Giving feedback isn't something that comes natural to most of us. It takes practice to become a skilled feedback giver (and receiver). That means you can't give feedback once a year during annual reviews and expect to improve. Leverage a program that turns giving feedback into a routine and start getting into the practice of giving and requesting feedback on a regular basis.

Want more advice on giving (and receiving) employee feedback? Download our resource, [A Practical Guide to Giving and Receiving Employee Feedback](#), below!



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