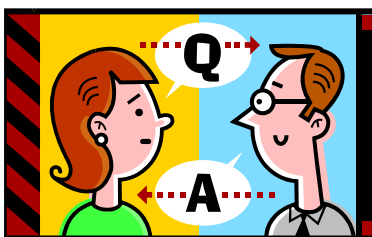


## Criteria for Effective Feedback



When employees receive feedback on their performance, they are more likely to understand what is expected of them, to repeat successful performance, and to improve their work when necessary. To be effective, feedback should be:

### **Descriptive rather than evaluative.**

Describe what you observe. Avoid making value judgments.

- “Your report was not formatted according to standard practice and the content was based on data which is a year out of date.”
- “That was a very poor report. I wish you were more committed to doing a good job.”

### **Specific rather than general.**

Being specific is helpful to improving performance because the employee learns what behaviors to change.

- “This project was completed three weeks later than agreed upon. The result is that our client is thinking about bringing in an outside consultant next time.”
- “This was not your best work.”

### **Describe the impact of the behavior.**

When an employee understands the impact of his/her performance, he/she can “buy in” to its importance.

- “Everyone on the team appreciates the way you facilitated today’s meeting. You identified areas in which we were confused, summarized to help us stay on track, and maintained your neutrality. As a result, we were able to come to a decision today rather than haggling over details for another week.”
- “Terrific job with the meeting today!”

### **Well-timed.**

Feedback is most useful when it is delivered as close to the behavior or event as possible. However, keep in mind that feedback about performance in need of improvement is best delivered in private.

### **Helpful.**

When giving feedback, communicate by your words, body language, and tone of voice that your intention is to help the employee succeed.

**Feedback should be given both when a behavior needs correcting  
and when a task or behavior is done well!**

## Conducting Effective Performance Feedback Sessions



There is no best way to conduct a performance review discussion; effective methods and techniques vary with each manager's individual style. There are, however, certain principles and actions which have proven to be effective.

- **Inform** the employee of the meeting several days ahead of time.
- **Allow** sufficient time when you schedule the meeting.
- **Meet** in a private area where you won't be interrupted.
- **Establish** a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Reduce any physical barriers. Sit next to the employee instead of behind a desk.
- **Encourage** the employee's participation. Make it a discussion, not a monologue. Try to speak no more than 50 percent of the time.
- **Check** to see if the employee agrees with your evaluations. If the employee does not agree, let the employee discuss the differences.
- **Be specific.** Be prepared to give reasons, facts and examples to back up your evaluations. Avoid generalities.
- **Discuss** the employee's performance as compared to the job expectations you have communicated to the employee throughout the performance period. Focus on the employee's job performance, not on the person.
- **Balance** the discussion. Discuss areas where the employee may need to improve, but also focus on areas of positive performance.
- **Be fair.** Do not bring up problems that are not within the employee's control. Avoid using terms that produce emotional reactions and raise defenses. Instead, explain specifically what can be improved about the employee's performance.
- **Listen** actively. Ask questions and restate the employee's viewpoints to ensure you understand.
- **Close** the meeting by summarizing its major points. Repeat any agreements that you and the employee have made and the next steps that are involved.

**Effective managers understand that  
performance feedback is an essential part of managing.**