



Providing feedback

Feedback is commentary regarding the product or behavior of another person, with the purpose of indicating your evaluation of that behavior (or product).

You can do this because you appreciate this particular behavior or product and want to acknowledge this to the other person. What's more, you may hope that this person will continue to display the same behavior in the future, or supply a product with the same level of quality. You could also be providing feedback because you are not happy with the product or behavior and want to see a specific improvement.

When

It's always best to respond to situations swiftly, as they occur. This ensures the subject of the feedback is as clear as possible to all parties involved. In other words you can provide feedback often, you don't have to wait for an official occasion.

In some situations, specifically when the feedback is intended to indicate changes you'd like to see, it is recommended to sit in a separate space with someone, and make a specific appointment to do so. You could also do this on a regular basis.

The annual job performance review is an official occasion at which you provide feedback on a number of topics that have occurred in the past year.

What

You can provide feedback on a range of topics. It may concern behavior, work/products, development, progress and prospects.

Behavior of your colleague or boss. You can use feedback to indicate what you appreciate when working together, and what you feel could be improved.

Work/product of a person, for example an annual report, a draft article for a science journal, or an education plan.

Development. At an official evaluation interview (for example the annual job performance review) it is important for supervisors to think about an employee's development process and provide feedback on this specifically. How does the employee relate to the competencies described in the job profile? Is any progress visible? With PhD graduates in particular, you can give them feedback on the progress of their PhD project. Where do they stand at this moment?

Future in the organization. In an official evaluation interview the supervisor will want to provide feedback on how well someone fits into the team, the organization, and what his or her prospects are within the organization.



Provide feedback

- Positive as well as negative (keep it balanced)
- Begin with the positive
- Be concrete, provide feedback on behavior (what did you hear, what did you see)
- Give some examples
- Indicate what effect the behavior has on you
- Suggest alternative behaviors

Example: I see you do this, that makes me feel that.... and I would like you to...

- Only provide feedback on behavior that can be improved upon
- Give the other a chance to respond

Receiving feedback

- Ask for explanation or examples
- Do not argue
- Do not respond by giving feedback in return
- If feedback is one-sided ask explicitly for positive or negative feedback
- Say thank you for the feedback