

## **SKILL BOOSTER 4: GIVING FEEDBACK**



**REIGNITE DEVELOPMENT**  
Reflect, Refocus, Results

### **Tips for giving feedback**

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If it is to be useful, the person receiving the feedback must understand and accept it, and be prepared and able to act upon it. To achieve this, the feedback you give should be:

#### **Timely**

Regardless of whether you are giving positive or negative feedback, the timing of your feedback is critical to its success. Giving feedback too quickly after the event may come across as though you are 'jumping on the person's back', as well as risking the feedback not being sufficiently thought through. Conversely, if you delay giving the feedback for a long period of time it could lose its impact. You should therefore give the feedback at an appropriate point after the event, once you have fully considered the structure and content of your feedback.

#### **Conducted in the right environment**

Take the person to one side. This way, you can give the feedback privately and it is less obvious to other people whether you are giving positive or negative feedback.

#### **Fair and constructive, not damning and destructive**

Individuals must be made aware of their development areas and mistakes as a first step in helping them to find ways to improve. Ensure it is delivered constructively and in a way that is helpful for the person to understand.

#### **Given in the right amount**

Humans can only assimilate a relatively small amount of information at a time, so the feedback you give should concentrate on the two or three most important points.

#### **Appropriate and specific**

Providing specific examples from the individual's performance in that specific area of work should be the focus, and not vague or irrelevant.

#### **Actionable and objective**

It is pointless concentrating on feedback that relates to aspects of performance over which the individual has no control, e.g., the late arrival of a delivery from a supplier. The feedback must relate to something that the person can take action to change.

Your view of individual performance clearly forms the backbone of feedback. You should however resist making subjective judgements or introducing your own personal preferences for the way things should be done.

### Asking for ways of improvement

People will be more willing to make the effort to improve when they have recognised and accepted that they need to improve. This is most likely to happen when they have drawn the relevant conclusions and have proposed their own way of resolving problems. If the person is struggling for ideas make some suggestions, trying not to force your ideas onto the other person.

### Confidence boosting

During feedback, you need to recognise the support each individual needs in order to improve their performance. For example, a person may be worried after making a mistake in their work. If you discuss with them how the mistake occurred, offer support and guidance and explain that you have confidence in their ability to tackle those tasks next time, you will provide encouragement and boost their confidence.

### **“However, that’s all well and good, but.....” - one final tip!!**

Avoid using the words “however” and “but” when giving feedback, particularly when used as link words in the transition of positive to negative feedback, as the individual is able to detect the introduction of negative feedback and may become defensive.

When moving from positive to negative feedback, simply finish your sentence when focusing on the positive feedback, take a momentary pause, and start a new sentence with the introduction of the negative feedback. For example:

“I really liked the way you trained Sally on giving refunds today, your instructions were clear and precise. I noticed you didn’t give her the opportunity to have a go herself and practice. By letting her practice, this will show you that she understood and can repeat the action. Next time, could you plan in some practice time for her?”.

By avoiding the words “however” and “but”, the feedback comes across as being totally constructive and supportive, rather than having a clear positive and negative feedback break.