

Four steps to better feedback

It's an essential ingredient for performance improvement, but people can find the process of giving and receiving feedback difficult. Research buyers and Strategic research consultancies share an opportunity to improve feedback communication.

STRAT7
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1/ Signal in advance

This gives the receiver a chance to prepare themselves, to lower their defences, to open their mind and ears. Or to suggest an alternative date if they need more time.

When you do move to giving the actual feedback, you've improved the chance that the receiver will hear it and act upon it.

"Would it be OK if I shared some feedback with you?"

"Can I give you some positive feedback?"

"When would be a good time to discuss some feedback?"



2/ Start with specific situations

The more specific, the better. Generalisations are harder to act on. Make it about the specific actions or behaviours of the receiver.

"You reorganised our brief into an issue tree with branches of connected questions."

"You synthesised information from various sources into a coherent story. Then suggested clear business actions."

"In your presentation you went into lots of detail about the advanced analysis."



3/ Describe the impact

What was the impact of that behaviour

Importantly think this through at different levels; it could be about the impact on the business, on how the project ran, or on you as a person. All are valid.

"Now we can all see which questions are most commercially valuable to the business. It's clear how to prioritise investment."

"We now have the evidence to build a case to do this. My boss is so pleased with our work on this."

"In our follow-up conversations with people who missed the actual presentation, they are obviously confused."



4/ Offer a suggestion

Now you have the chance to explain how you would like things to be in the future.

For positive feedback, you can ask for more of the same.

For negative, you can suggest a change in behaviour that will result in a better impact. Use questions to explore possibilities and encourage discussion.

"Please can we apply that process to our next project?"

"Where can we find more information about... to build in next time?"

"Next time can we tell a simpler story without all the detail? Please give more help in the report."

Try it. See if you can create more opportunities to encourage what works and improve what doesn't. And if you're feeling brave, stick your neck out to ask for some feedback in return.

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