URBAN SPORTS CLUB

How to give and receive **impactful** feedback

#BeatTheBlues

Table of Contents

"Feedback is the broccoli of conversations. It's not very appetizing and we'd prefer something else if possible, but deep down we know that ultimately it's good for us."

Marc Effron, Publisher, Talent Quarterly

One of the best ways to raise employee morale and **create a more positive and happy workplace environment is with a "feedback culture"**. If your employees feel free to always share what they think about your organization, management, and other employees, they are more likely to be happy and engaged with your organization.

An atmosphere of positivity encourages employee growth and higher performance – while a negative, hyper-competitive culture can stunt the growth of individual employees, lead to higher turnover rates, and much more. So overall **organizations with feedback cultures are investors in talent**.

Every business has guidelines about how and when feedback is handled. A strong feedback culture welcomes feedback and uses it to foster the growth of individuals, teams, and the organization.

1 / 3

Preparation

Before holding a feedback review...

... you should always prepare yourself for the meeting. Think about what you want to talk about with your team member and take some notes.

SOME QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOURSELF IN ADVANCE

- Am I ready to give feedback right now? **(checklist →)**

- What is my perception? What did I observe?

- Why could this (not) be important to her / him?

- What should he/she stop doing?

- Where could he/she still become better? Why?

ENGAGED FEEDBACK CHECKLIST INSPIRED BY DARETOLEAD

I know that I'm ready to give you feedback when ...

- ☐ I am willing to understand and own my part of the situation (rather than sliding it toward you).

- ☐ I'm ready to listen, ask questions, and accept that I may not fully understand the issue.

- ☐ I'm ready to acknowledge what you do well instead of picking apart your mistakes.

- ☐ I recognize your strengths and how you can use them to address your challenges.

- ☐ I can hold you accountable without shaming or blaming.

- ☐ I can model the vulnerability and openness that I expect to see from you.

ThreeStepsToGive ImpactfulFeedback ThatMatters

Implementing the PIW framework

1 **Step 1: Perception**

What did you perceive? **Be as a specific as possible** and describe behavior and facts, not character traits.

"In the last three team meetings you generated impact by bringing in hands-on ideas such as working with the PIW model to give each other feedback in our team."

2 **Step 2: Impact**

Describe what the observable behavior triggered in your inner world. **What did you feel and think?**

"I think that you are very creative and take ownership to improve our team collaboration! I feel happy to have you in our team. I feel relieved to know that I don't need to come up with new frameworks all by myself."

3 **Step 3: Wish**

Formulate a concrete wish that your teammate is able to fulfill.

I would like to invite you to take more responsibility on this subject and develop a first draft for a feedback framework.

Golden sparkling feedback rules

- **Behavior is never unfitting. Always assume that the other person has a good reason for their behavior.**
  Become curious about the other person's motives instead of judging them or taking it personally.

- **Be accurate in your description of the facts! It's rarely reality that gets to you. What stresses us emotionally is our evaluation of the situation.**
  Be honest with yourself and the other person and make a clear distinction between perception and effect.

- **Feedback refers to the here and now.**
  Give your feedback as immediately as possible and avoid digging up old stories from the past that strengthen your position.

- **Solution, instead of being right!**
  Give up the desire to be right. Be open and honest about how you feel about a situation and make a clear statement about what you want.

- **There is something irritating between us, but I am okay and you are okay.**
  Don't attack the other person personally. Feedback is situational.

Performance Review

1. Opening the conversation

Tell your employee where he/she is doing well and also where he/she could become better.

- **Short introduction** before you start giving feedback to your team member

- Ask about how he/she is feeling today? e.g. **"What occupies your mind?"**

- **Is your interaction partner ready** to receive feedback today or would tomorrow / next week be a better time?

- **Show that you have good intentions**, wanting to help them progress

2. Giving Feedback

Tell your employee where he/she is doing well and also where he/she could become better.

- **Make it a dialogue**, not a monologue!

- If you have **company or team values**, integrate them to discuss (un)desirable behavior

- **Ask questions** before making assumptions

- Treat your interaction partner with **respect**

- **Show them that you want to help** them develop

- **Focus on the impact** that you wish to see

- Give **honest**, clear feedback

- Always **use concrete examples** and f**ocus on a specific behavior**, not the person

- Address only **one major improvement at a time**

- **Express confidence in the employee's ability to improve**

3. Asking for their point of view

It's important to talk about both of your views and opinions so you can uncover and talk about possible differences.

To find out about your employee's view you could ask:

- **How do you feel** about the feedback I just gave you?

- Are my points clear to you or do you have **any questions**?

- Where do you see **your main strengths**?

- Where do you want to **become better** and why?

- How **can I support you** in achieving your goals?

- What would be the first thing **you want to start working on**?

4. Talking about concerns and roadblocks

A review meeting is also a good possibility to take some time to talk about where your employee is facing difficulties.

**Some questions you could ask to help start talking about difficulties:**

- Where are you facing **difficulties** at the moment?

- Is there anything that **worries** you?

- **How could I help you** / where do you need more support?
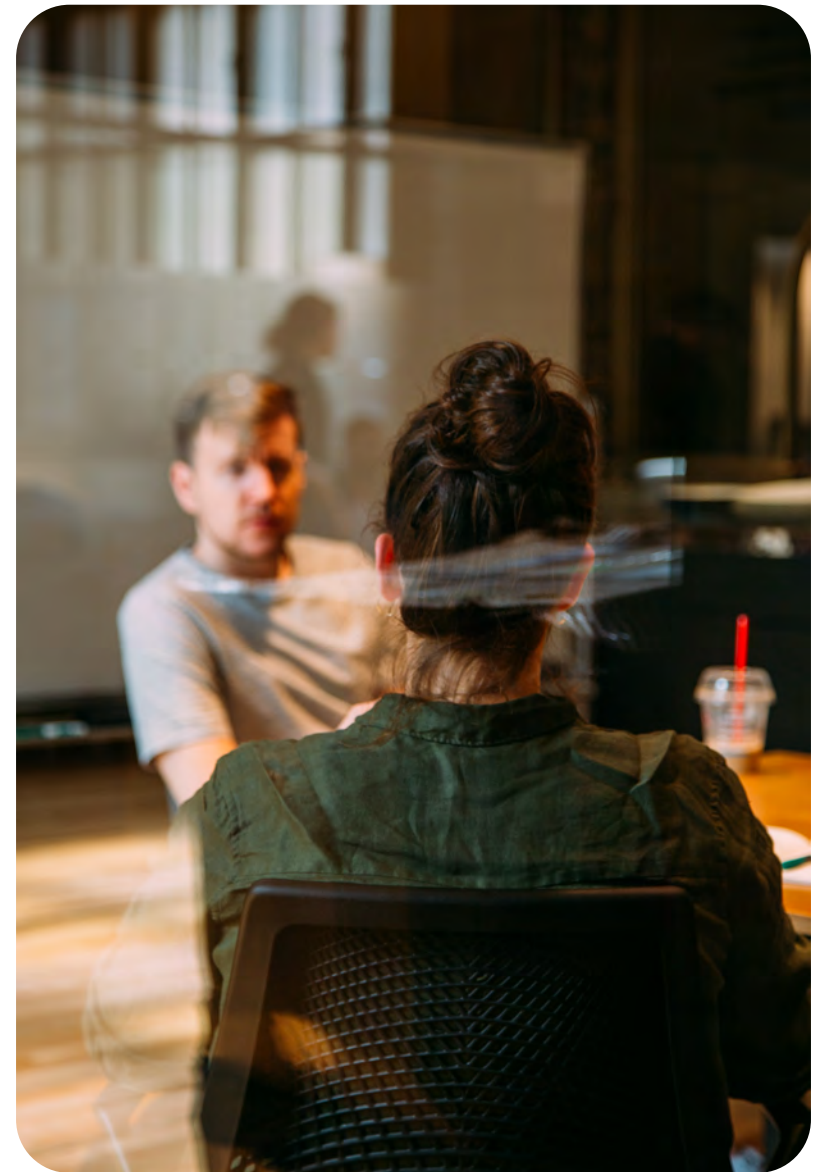
5. Talking about personal development

To find out about your employee's view you could ask:

- What **opportunities** have you had recently to learn something new?

- **What went well** last week / month?

- **Do you feel challenged at work?** Are you learning new things?

- What would you like to learn about in the **future**?

- What skills would you like to develop **right now**?

- Is there an **additional training** need to help you walk your path?
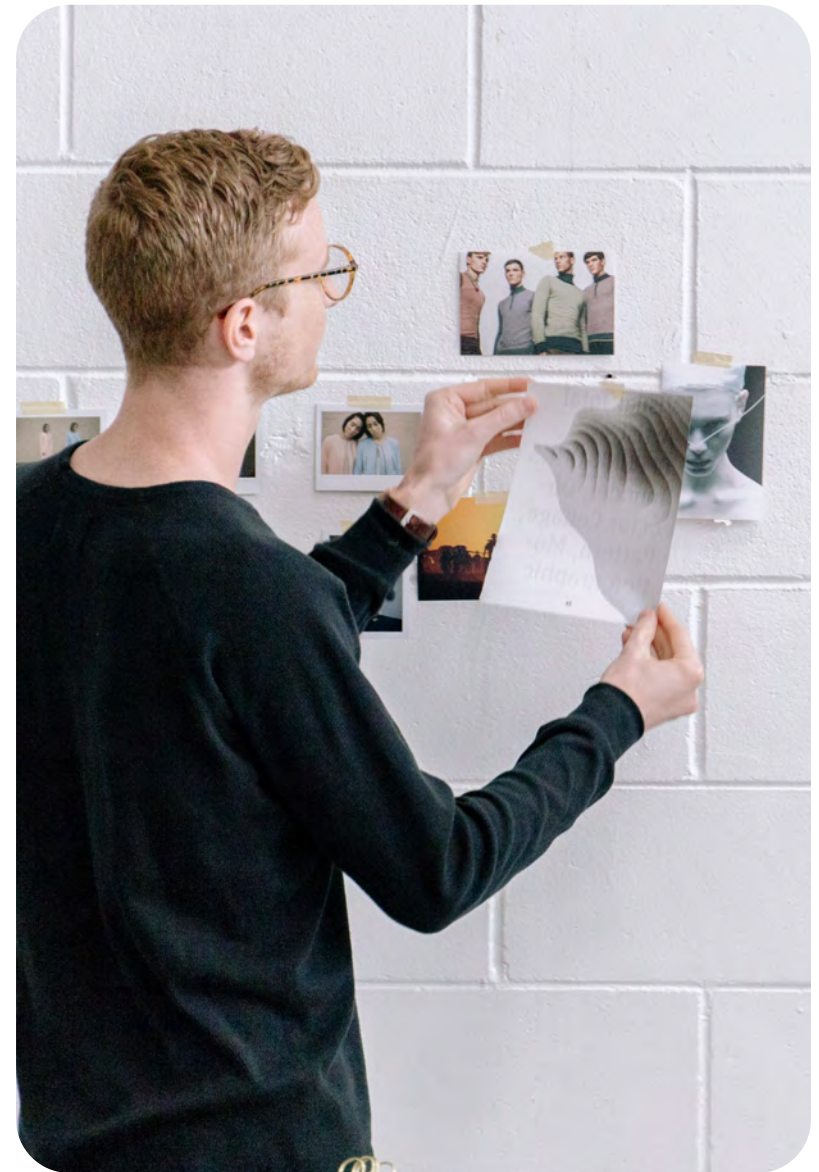
6. Finding a good ending

- **Make sure that you've talked about all the important points**

- **Ask the employee if there is anything else** he / she would like to discuss

- **Never end the meeting in the middle of a discussion**

- **Shortly summarize your findings** from the review meeting **and what is going to happen** based on the feedback (i.e. "what should happen until the next feedback meeting")

ReceivingFeedback

"The feedback giver can utter all the right words at the right time. However, ultimately it is up to the feedback receiver to give truthfulness and a buy in to what is "feed-backed".

So the decisive factor is how the feedback lands emotionally and intellectually on the receiver and its willingness to see it as a gateway for new opportunities.

Why Receiving Feedback Isn't Easy

Before you can work on being more receptive to feedback, it is important to first understand why you might resist feedback. Getting feedback can be uncomfortable, awkward, and even painful, despite the fact that it's usually given with the intent to be helpful, can improve our ability to get along with others, and advance our careers. Why is this? In this section, we'll examine three major reasons why we resist feedback.

Our brain

Let's examine the neuroscience behind why feedback threatens our existence. When we encounter something new, our brain seeks to minimize danger. **If the new information or situation is perceived as dangerous, the brain goes into threat response mode, also known as "freeze, fight or flight."** This is our body's automatic survival mode. Evidence suggests that social situations such as presenting or receiving feedback can also trigger that same threat response.

Our ego

Ego has gotten a bad rep. Truth is: everyone has one and having one doesn't mean you have to be egoistic. Simply defined, **an ego is a person's sense of self-esteem or self-importance**. **Our ego is usually trying to protect us from harm such as embarrassment or shame.** With regard to feedback, most of us would rather play the role of a victim and blame the feedback giver instead of learning about the reality of our performance. So **if we find ourselves getting defensive, we could instead mentally contrast what this reaction is telling me about myself**. This way we are more likely to receive valuable feedback that can help us grow.
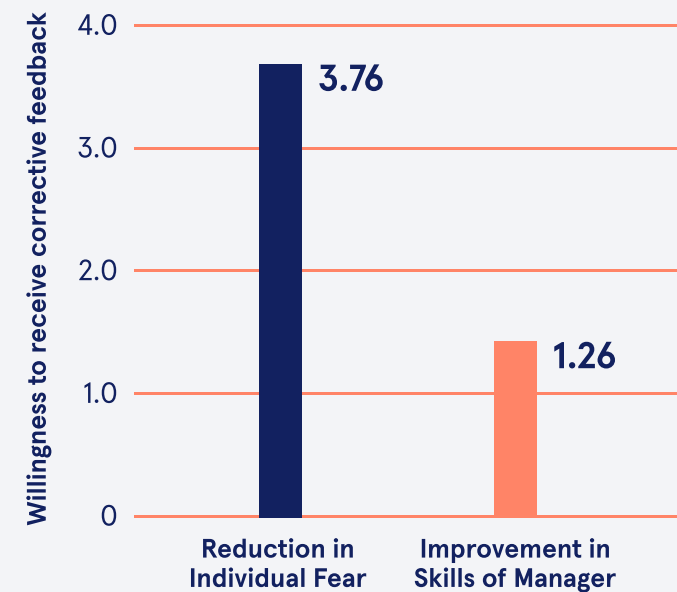
Our fear

When we listen to the words: "Can I give you some feedback on this?", where does our mind wander? Do we wish to have a positive experience with positive emotions or do we anticipate a negative interaction?

Despite the fact that feedback can be positive or negative (and that even constructive feedback (which is often perceived as negative) can have positive endings), **our brain typically expects that receiving feedback will be difficult**. So when we process those words: "Can I give you some feedback?" we tend to operate from a position of fear. **Studies have demonstrated that reducing individual fear has nearly 3x more the impact than improving the feedback skills of the giver**.

**Reducing individual fear
vs. Improving skills of manager**

Willingness to receive corrective feedback

- 4.0
- 3.0
- 3.76 (Reduction in Individual Fear)
- 2.0
- 1.26 (Improvement in Skills of Manager)
- 1.0
- 0

Reduction in Individual Fear | Improvement in Skills of Manager

Source: "From feedback to impact" – J. Zenger & J Folkman, 2016)

How can we use it to our advantage?

- **Seek clarity and try to understand** the feedback to counter uncertainty.

- View feedback as a positive opportunity to improve. **Believe in the feedback giver's good intentions to support you**.

- If the feedback threatens your autonomy, seek to understand the "why" behind the message. Feedback usually comes from a place of purpose. **Ask yourself: "What is the purpose here?"** Reframe the feedback and **shift your attention to how it can help you** generate the impact you desire.

- **Shifting to a learning attitude, where we believe our status will be improved, can trigger a reward response**, instead of a threat.

- Remind yourself of the connection you have with the feedback giver. **Are there supportive memories from past empathetic interactions with this person you can draw trust from?** If you have just entered this new relationship, remember that in order to build trust someone needs to make the first step: and trust first.

The do's and don'ts of receiving feedback

Dos

- ✓ Acknowledge **feedback is** painful but **valuable**

- ✓ **Be curious** (about how you are being perceived)

- ✓ View both positive and corrective **feedback as a gift**

- ✓ Understand that **giving feedback is difficult too**

- ✓ **Practice self-awareness** to recognize, and overcome your triggered reactions or threat responses to feedback

- ✓ Remain calm and **manage your emotions**

- ✓ **Practice active listening** with good eye contact and open body language

- ✓ **Summarize what you heard**

- ✓ Ask clarifying questions to **seek understanding**

- ✓ Spend time **thinking about the feedback**

- ✓ Focus on what you can pull from the feedback to **make a positive difference** in your life and work

- ✓ **Practice receiving feedback**

Don'ts

- ✕ **Close yourself off** from corrective or negative feedback

- ✕ **Only seek feedback to boost your ego** or to conform what you already know

- ✕ **Turn the feedback giver into a villain** who wants to do you harm

- ✕ **Allow your ego, threat responses, fear, or personality prevent you from hearing feedback**

- ✕ **Try to prove who is right** and who is wrong

- ✕ **Become defensive or argumentative**

- ✕ **Passively listen** without responding to the feedback giver

- ✕ **Disengage from the feedback conversation**

- ✕ **Silently disagree or pretend to agree**

- ✕ **Fail to take responsibility** for your next steps

- ✕ **Believe you're a victim** of feedback, unable to control the outcome

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