

HOW TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

Fact Sheet

It is important to remember that feedback is not a one-way street. Employees should “manage up” and give leadership feedback as well. But this can be a very uncomfortable process.

Keep these 4 steps in mind next time you are on the receiving end of feedback:

1. FEEDBACK IS A GIFT

No matter how painful, think of feedback as a gift – you must treat the ‘giver of feedback’ appropriately. So that’s a big NO to rolling your eyes, or slamming the door shut mid-sentence!

Instead, maintain good eye contact and keep your body language open. When the person has finished, summarise what you heard and use questions to clarify anything that is unclear.

2. SAY THANK YOU, EVEN IF YOU DISAGREE

When you feel like you have been wrongly criticised – it is very tempting to go immediately on the attack. But don’t. Even if you’re right, and the feedback was wrong – defending yourself sends the signal to the giver that you are unreceptive. This can land you with the ‘un-approachable’ label in your team. Instead – say thank you.

3. LET IT SINK IN

Evaluate the feedback slowly. Think it over for a day or two. You might find your initial feelings towards the feedback change over time as you reflect on your behaviours. The next time you find yourself reacting to unwanted or unappreciated feedback, come back to it after your emotions have settled. Saying something like, “I appreciate your feedback. I’d like to give what you’ve said some real thought and get back to you,” and then adding, “Is there anything else I should know?” will demonstrate that you take what you’ve been told seriously and will ensure that there’s been nothing left unsaid.

4. CLOSE THE FEEDBACK LOOP

If you feel the criticism was justified and you are better off for it, don’t forget to close the loop and share your progress with the feedback giver.

TAKEAWAY

Whilst positive feedback feels good, it’s constructive criticism that aids personal and professional development. Whether it’s from your employees, a mentor, your boss, or even from family and friends, being receptive to feedback is essential.