

Catch Someone Doing The Right Thing

Employees now have a greater role in developing strong customer relationships that inspire loyalty and performance. Therefore, employees need to have the best skills, use sound judgment and feel competent in their job. To do this, they must always be learning, thinking and improving. They need information about the quality of their decisions, and to know if they are making good decisions.

This means managers must be alert to what is happening. They need to catch employees doing great things and then provide positive feedback to sustain the performance. At the same time, managers need to be aware of problems as they occur, and use these times as teachable moments to help the employee improve and develop stronger skills.

Feedback Can Improve Skills

Feedback is the way to guide, coach and educate employees to improve or sustain performance. Employees want feedback; be sure to provide the right kind-feedback that builds their skills, confidence and commitment to perform at their best.

Successful performance feedback has rules to ensure its effectiveness -- done poorly, it can do damage to the manager/employee relationship. Employees don't want to be told what to do or to be scolded. They want meaningful information to help them improve.

1) Find The Hook

Find the "hook" or the "attention-getter" for the feedback recipient. Describe the impact and consequences of the problematic behavior, noting the effect the behavior had on results, customers or employees. Be specific and quantify details. The more detailed and accurate the information, the more meaningful the feedback is for the recipient. Realize that no adult changes his behavior unless he sees a personal reason to change. The impact in this case should not only deal with the organization, but should also be a personal hook for the employee.

2) Be Open To Suggestions

Create a plan to continue great behaviors or change negative behaviors and let the employee have a voice in the response. Work with the employee to suggest options to improve a negative event or keep a good event going; be sure the employee has a voice in the process.

3) End With A Cookie

Regardless of the nature of the performance feedback (positive or negative), employees will process the message better when it starts and ends on a positive and personal tone. Reassure the employee of the value of the discussion. It sets the stage for an open and honest relationship and dialog about performance.

Source: Jay **Forte** is a speaker, consultant and author. His first book is *Fire Up Your Employees and Smoke Your Competition*.