



Working with Feedback – Ideas from Sixth Sense

It's the start of the year. That often means feedback on what we have done over the past 12 months and/or you giving feedback to others. Feedback is great but where next? Here are some practical ideas from the business psychologists at Sixth Sense. You'll find these and many more on our website at www.sane.works and if you have your own favourites, get in touch and we'll add your ideas in.

The bold text represents some feedback that you might have had or that you want to give. The text that follows suggests what you should do about it or the guidance that you could offer to others.

Each week, for the next six weeks, we will tackle a common theme. Our second one is the problem of **managing**. And don't worry if you miss a week as back copies can be found at: www.sixthsenseconsulting.co.uk/blogs

Managing

- **Stuck?** Talk to people you regard as successful people managers. Discuss how they approach goal-setting for their teams and how they have subsequently achieved their goals.
- **Providing too little direction?** Ask each of your team members how clear they are about their goals and objectives. What do they think you could do to be more effective at providing them with a sense of direction?
- **Disorganised?** Consider the use of visual management techniques if you don't already use them. Talk to colleagues who use them or look at what you can see around different offices to help people track progress. If you don't have a public space to use for visual management, consider the use of a shared

access spreadsheet where individuals have to update their RAG status (red, amber, green against goals) on a weekly basis.

- **Stressed?** Think through situations that have caused you stress in the last year. What are the triggers of stress for you? Think through anything you can do to reduce, avoid or redirect those triggers. Think about your reaction to the stress – what might be a better approach? And think about what it took to get you back to equilibrium again. Draw up a list of actions that you can use in times of stress to help get back on an evenkeel.
- **In your own bubble?** Ask trusted colleagues for feedback on how well you handle pressure. What do they see working well and less well?
- **Criticised?** Think of times when you have been criticised. Make a list of your constructive ways of responding and what was less effective. Look to develop your ability to respond constructively.
- **Overly sensitive?** Identify someone you regard as a resilient character. Talk to them about how they cope with things. Can you adopt any of their tactics?
- **No-one to help you?** Draw up your personal Board of Directors (a good template can be found on the Strengths Partnership website): having a range of people you can draw on can both build your resilience and help to handle stress when it arises.
- **Losing control?** Learn to recognise and monitor your own stress symptoms, e.g. shoulder tension, too much alcohol, sleeping problems. Act as your own stress thermometer and take steps to manage the pressure.
- **Not achieving goals?** Ensure that your ideas become reality by following them up with appropriate plans for how to implement them with clear accountabilities and follow up built in to avoid running out of steam. Make the related project or plan visible, keep progress in everyone's mind by posting it regularly on intranets or within the office space creating a visual model or time line.
- **Stuck in your comfort zone?** Make sure you take reasonable risks and think big enough to ensure that what you get measurable results rather than just the usual incremental thinking. Push yourself to go beyond your own comfort zone of what is possible to achieve.
- **Overwhelmed?** If you feel overwhelmed by what is in front of you, make sure you focus yourself on the priorities and plan what you will do when and avoid unwanted distractions such as interesting but unnecessary conversations or meetings that zap your time and takes it away from what you should be doing.
- **Losing track?** If you struggle to keeping on track of everything you need to do to move things forward identify some systems, tools or processes that will help you stay on track of everything and chart your progress. That will make completing tasks more satisfactory and make it visible when you complete a new one. Make it part of how you organise yourself and the things you need to achieve.
- **Digressing?** Remember to take the time to reflect on present achievements and how far you have come in relation to how far you still have to go. Refocus yourself on your end goal if you feel yourself wavering and losing your drive or interest before the end result is achieved.

Further Reading

Books

Good Boss, Bad Boss: How to Be the Best ... and Learn from the Worst by Robert I. Sutton (Business Plus, New York, N.Y., 2010).

Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World, by Williams and Penman, (Piatkus, 2011). Practical book, by two leading experts, on mindfulness, a process based on solid research evidence that enables individuals to manage anxiety and stress, as well as providing other personal benefits

Staying Sane in Business, by Welford and Sykes (sane.works, 2015). A very readable guide to sanity, success and satisfaction at work, based on theory that is translated into accessible, practical guidance and associated website www.sane.works

Flourish by Martin Seligman 2011. An interesting guide to managing your happiness and wellbeing.

The Luck Factor (Century, 2004) by Richard Wiseman. A very readable book that has several chapters around managing worry and managing negative expectations in order to improve your luck.

Other Resources

Videos

Good Boss, Bad Boss: A Peek inside the Minds of the Best (and Worst).

Stanford University – a lecture given to Engineering Alumni

Professor Robert Sutton draws on his book, *Good Boss, Bad Boss*, to describe the mindset and moves of the best (and worst) bosses.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmBSh1FGQyY>

Introduction to Mindfulness at Work with Dr Jutta Tobias.

Cranfield School of Management

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efskulZvZTU>

Building personal and organisational resilience.

London Business School

Richard Jolly, Adjunct Professor of Organisational Behaviour at London Business School, speaks about building personal and organisational resilience.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nbcaGyQrf4>