



## 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](http://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 third one is the problem of **building engagement**. And don't worry if you miss a week as back copies can be found at: [www.sixthsenseconsulting.co.uk/blogs](http://www.sixthsenseconsulting.co.uk/blogs)

---

## Building Engagement

- **No team spirit?** Consider fixing a team build event for you and your staff. What could you do that brings people together and gives them a chance to get to know each other beyond a task-level?
- **Lacking personal relationships?** Spend time with each team member to show positive interest in them and what is important to them.
- **Thinking too narrow?** Join a working party or project where you work alongside people outside your usual range of influence to gain exposure to a different range of personal styles. How to other people gain influence and build commitment?
- **Imbalanced views?** Before a meeting, think through all of the pros and cons about the situation to be discussed. Think through how to put your points across constructively, so that concerns are balanced by what you can do or by your commitment to an overall goal.
- **Lacking influence?** Take a short video of yourself putting a point across and watch it back. How clear were your points? What was your energy level like? What was the balance of logic and feeling coming across? If

you turn the sound off, how compelling was your body language or facial expression? Identify a couple of things you could do more effectively next time you need to influence someone.

- **Blind spots?** Ask respected people for feedback on how well you engage and motivate people. What do they think you could do to be more effective?
- **Opinionated?** Practise active listening. Take time to absorb people's ideas and perspectives without prejudging situations. Avoid interrupting people and make sure that your next point takes account of what they have just said.
- Encountering resistance? Identify what motivates the different people you need to engage. If appropriate, have a conversation with them about situations where they felt motivated or demotivated. Be aware that different people are motivated by different things.
- **Stuck?** Identify a colleague who appears to be effective at motivating others. Discuss how they go about motivating people and adopt any useful ideas.
- **Failing to pick up on cues?** Pay attention to your listener's body language when you are talking. Watch their eyes, their facial expression and their posture to help you gauge their reactions to your points. Follow up on it if you are not getting a positive reaction, e.g. "you look concerned, what are your reservations?"
- **Need inspiration?** Watch other people during a group meeting and make note of what works well and less well in communicating.
- **Struggling to show sympathy and concern?** In your life outside work, think about how much you listen to and understand those around you. How do you show you are concerned about them? How do you resolve disagreements? See if there are any behaviours you could usefully bring from home life into work life.
- **Fights escalate?** Watch a TV programme where people disagree. Make critical notes of behaviours that help to resolve the situation and which make it worse.
- **Too directive?** Evaluate your own approach in terms of how directive you tend to be. Aim instead to be more collaborative in your approach to setting clear goals and inspire others to commit. Identify shared goals that everyone can commit to and show a clear line for everyone down to what they are specifically working on to show clearly how they help drive the overall organisational goals.
- **Not sure how others feel about things?** If so, make sure that you encourage open communications within your teams or work groups and identify what people feel strongly about in order that you can address it and gain their commitment through dealing with what is important to them.
- **Apathetic environment?** Recognise and reward others who open up and share their knowledge, opinions or concerns and show that you are serious about listening to others input and take it into account. Practice asking open and probing questions that demonstrate to others your true interest in their perspective and what matters most to them.
- **Individualist culture?** Help others understand what the value of developing each other throughout the organisation will be upon us all being able to drive more competently towards the overall goals and objectives. Help them connect in their minds employee development with successfully achieving the organisations main aims and instil pride in both parts of that process.
- **Not taking off?** Make sure that you role model the kinds of behaviours you want to see in others. Find time to listen, create development opportunities and be open and transparent with others and show your own strong commitment to the overall functional or company goals.

## Further Reading

### Articles

*Emotional Intelligence*. Daniel Goleman – ‘What makes a Leader?’ Harvard Business Review On Point, product number 3790

*Emotional Intelligence*. Jackie Switzer – ‘Boost your Emotional Intelligence’ Evening Standard, 10 Feb 2015

### Books

*Crucial Conversations*, by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler (McGraw Hill, 2012). New York Times bestseller – tools for talking when stakes are high

*Influence – The Psychology of Persuasion* by Robert Cialdini (Collins, 1984, 2007). A very readable guide to engaging people

*How to be brilliant at Public Speaking* by Sarah Lloyd-Hughes (Pearson, 2011). A practical, UK guide to being more confident in front of an audience. You can also sign up to email tips at [www.gingerpublicspeaking.com](http://www.gingerpublicspeaking.com)

*Assert Yourself* by Gael Lindenfield (Thorsons, 1986 and subsequent reprints).

## Other Resources

### Videos

*Science Of Persuasion*.

A short animated video that describes the six universal Principles of Persuasion from Cialdini’s book, *Influence*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFdCzN7RYbw>