



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 sixth one is the problem of **raising the bar**. And don't worry if you miss a week as back copies can be found at: www.sixthsenseconsulting.co.uk/blogs

Raising the Bar

- **Too consultative?** In everyday interactions where junior staff ask your advice, experiment with encourage them to come up with ideas themselves. Try to hold back from offering solutions yourself immediately, instead use questions to prompt their thinking.
- **Too polite?** Be willing to give accurate, prompt and honest feedback, for both positive and negative situations. Describe EEC: the Evidence (what you have seen), the Effect (what the impact was) and what to Change / Continue as a result.
- **Stuck?** Find a mentor with whom you can discuss your own progress. Look for someone with a reputation for developing people, a wide range of contacts and good knowledge of the organisation.
- **Blind spots?** Seek feedback from other teams / areas / functions on your team's performance. Identify positive points and areas for improvement.
- **Passive?** Encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own development. Prompt them to consider both technical and soft skills, to set actions, and to take ownership of making progress.

- **Too specialised?** Consider opportunities to set up a secondment for one of your people in order to broaden their awareness of other parts of the business and extend their experience. It may also help to bring knowledge of your area into another area.
- **Stagnant?** Review your team, thinking about skills for the future: what additional experience or training will be needed to ensure the team will be ready to meet future demands? Think also about succession, taking steps to ensure that people are being developed to fill more senior roles in future.
- **Narrow-minded?** Help connect others to the bigger picture by drawing the links between their individual goals, the teams or functional goals, and the organisation's destination. Help get others clear on how exactly their actions help activate the overall strategy. Articulate to your team why this matters to you both personally and professionally and aim to connect them with why it should be important to them, too.
- **Lacking team spirit?** Involve the whole team in creating the plans to achieve the overall business strategy and help them be part of translating this into everyday activities they will all be responsible for achieving. Invite them to share their ideas as well as concerns and listen attentively and respectfully to both and build them into the plan so you mitigate any potential problems with either surfacing at a later stage.
- **Lacking stakeholder focus?** Help others keep their stakeholders' needs in mind all of the time and reflect on a regular basis on how what they are working on day-to-day help deliver upon both internal and external stakeholder requirements and connect them with what to underlying purpose of having a clear view to this is for them feeling that they work is an important part of an overall important whole.
- **Too demanding?** Build in regular time to coach both individuals within the team and then team as a whole and offer the surroundings to allow others to grow through and understand the value in having challenging expectations placed upon them. This includes drawing their attention towards what they can achieve if only they put their minds to it as well as being extremely clear about the stretch targets you set for them and what you expect out of them.
- **No support?** Make sure you offer others your support in terms of sharing your own previous experience and knowledge and any other resources you may have that could be helpful for them to work successfully on meeting their individual or team goals. What have you learnt in the past that it might be beneficial for you to share with your team? What have you learnt from a previous course, conference or learning intervention that you could share with others?

Further Reading

Books

The Inner Game, by Timothy Gallwey. A well-established, popular series of books on 'the inner game' – how our mental world impacts our success

What did you say? The art of giving and receiving feedback, by Seashore, Seashore and Weinberg (Bingham House Books, 1996). An older tome, but very insightful into the dynamics and challenges of giving and receiving feedback, and tips for developing this skill.

The power of personality by Gareth English (Createspace, 2015). This book starts with an overview of a common model of personality and then devotes chapters on various topics, including coaching, decision making and managing stress. Managers can gain useful tips on how to adjust their style to cater to differing personalities in the team.

Other Resources

Videos

Organisational Politics.

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“Dr Richard Kwiatkowski, Cranfield School of Management, shares the outcomes of his recent study on organisational politics within the House of Commons and outlines what other organisations can learn about influencing with integrity.”

Provides useful insights into influencing with integrity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLNrpplQ93Q>

The stop-start-continue model of feedback.

<http://managefearlessly.com/sites/default/files/appraisal-form.pdf>

A simple model for shaping feedback