

Improve Employee Performance through Informal Feedback

Informal Feedback Drives Performance

Informal feedback is ongoing, in-the-moment development advice given by managers to employees outside of the formal performance review. Informal feedback that is fair and accurate can **improve performance by up to 39.1%**.

Provide Continuous Feedback

Managers should proactively provide feedback as soon as possible after the event to which the feedback is related. For help identifying opportunities to provide informal feedback, see the Council's Manager Guide for Identifying Opportunities to Provide Informal Feedback.

Five Key Characteristics of Informal Feedback

Ensure that the feedback you provide meets the following five criteria for quality informal feedback:

Specific

Feedback should reference specific actions the employee took or specific pieces of their work.

Timely

Give feedback as soon as possible after the action or event.

Proactive

Provide feedback proactively, not just when employees request it.

Relevant

Feedback should help the employee do their job better and be within the employee's power to improve.

Constructive

Development feedback should be framed as an opportunity to improve performance rather than as a "weakness."

Utilize All Available Feedback Channels

Don't let the challenge of finding time for face-to-face interactions limit the amount of feedback you provide. While face-to-face conversation is the most common method of delivering informal feedback, it is not the only method at your disposal. Other feedback channels have been shown to be just as effective as face-to-face, including:

- E-mail
- Instant messaging
- Phone conversations
- Written notes

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➤ Avoid Common Mistakes

Making Assumptions

Feedback should be limited to the employee's behavior without making assumptions or interpreting the behavior as a sign of something else.

Example (Making Assumptions):

"I've noticed that you don't like doing administrative work."

Example (Observing Behavior):

"I've noticed that recently you haven't been submitting your administrative paperwork on time."

Providing Vague Feedback

When feedback is specific and detailed, employees are more likely to repeat desired behaviors or stop incorrect behaviors.

Example (Vague):

"You're doing a great job at being a team player."

Example (Detailed):

"Thank you for volunteering to complete the project for Sandra while she was out sick last week. Your willingness to step up and help your colleagues when they need it makes you a great team player."

Over-Emphasizing Development Feedback

Feedback should be provided on strengths as well as development areas.

Example (Focus on Development):

John only provides feedback when he is correcting mistakes, adjusting behaviors, and addressing inefficiencies.

Example (Balanced Feedback):

Gary provides informal feedback on areas for improvement, but also provides feedback when he thinks his employees perform well, improve in a development area, or go above and beyond his expectations.