

Why Don't Managers Give People Feedback?

You know you need it - you might even look forward to the performance review that has been rescheduled six times by your always busy boss because it's your one opportunity to find out what your boss thinks.

Conversely, if you are their manager, you might have lots of reasons why you don't often offer feedback: lack of time, lack of communication skills, avoidance of conflict, or not wanting to hurt people's feelings.



Regardless, it's your job to give employees constructive and frequent feedback and your employee's right to know what you think so that they can grow and develop.

Bosses, here are two ways to make it much easier:

1. When you first hire a new employee, tell them that you will be letting them know their strengths and weaknesses on a regular basis, as well as how they can improve. We all have weaknesses - even superstars - and the key is to make sure that everyone knows you will be offering that to them so they can develop themselves and their careers. Then, when you focus on a problem with an employee, you can remind them of your usual way of giving feedback - focusing on the good AND the bad - and it won't seem so scary to them or to you.
2. From the first day on, let new employees know your expectations and goals for them and have them email back to you what they heard. Be prepared to be depressed! You will think human communication is hopeless because what they tell you will frequently sound like they weren't even in the room, but it allows you to correct their misunderstandings. Do this periodically - ideally once a month - telling them what's working and what's not working, and then have the employee email back their understanding. *Voila!* They're doing all the documentation work which makes performance reviews and other feedback so much easier.

If you use these methods, providing feedback becomes more like housework: annoying, but easier to do in small bites than when the house looks as if a tornado hit.

For more ideas about employee feedback, check out my book: "*We Need to Talk: Tough Conversations With Your Employee*," or call about one of our workshops focusing on management skills, challenging conversations or conflict management.

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