Inclusive and Empowering Feedback: An Interactive Session

Advancing Women in Leadership Symposium
University of Arizona Commission on the Status of Women
Rachele Peterson, MS
November 4, 2019
Let’s transform our culture and lead by example.

Objectives:

1. Build awareness of unconscious bias and its effects in the feedback process.
2. Articulate best practices in creating an inclusive and empowering culture of feedback.
3. Implement a practical framework for building employee capacity for self-directed performance improvement.
The Power and Peril of Teams

“There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves.” President Lyndon Johnson

The Wrong Person in the Wrong Place = Regression
The Wrong Person in the Right Place = Frustration
The Right Person in the Wrong Place = Confusion
The Right Person in the Right Place = Progression

The Right People in the Right Places = **Multiplication**

*Source*: The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork
University of Arizona Career Conversations

ACKNOWLEDGING ACCOMPLISHMENTS
At least 3 of my notable accomplishments during this reflection period

Click or tap here to enter text.

Supervisor’s Response:
Click or tap here to enter text.

HIGHLIGHTING KEY STRENGTHS
At least 3 key strengths that make me effective in my role and examples of how I have applied them

Click or tap here to enter text.

Supervisor’s Response:
Click or tap here to enter text.

SETTING GOALS FOR SUCCESS
At least 3 goals I would like to work toward during the next 6-12 months

Click or tap here to enter text.

Supervisor’s Response:
Click or tap here to enter text.

MAKING SMART CHANGES
3 things I want to do more, do less, start, stop, or change to be even more effective in my role (focus on behaviors, practices, etc.)

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2. Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Click or tap here to enter text.

Supervisor’s Response:
Click or tap here to enter text.
Bias in Workplace Performance Reviews

• Women are 50% of US Population and earn over 60% of US undergraduate and master degrees
  • But they are only 6% of CEOs, 31% of full professors, and 25% of executive and senior managers
    Source
• Both sexes tend to overestimate contributions of men and underestimate contributions of women
    Source
• Women’s performance reviews are more than 2 times as likely to refer to team accomplishments (vs.
  individual) and use words like “supportive, collaborative, helpful” Source
• Men are three times more likely to receive feedback on business outcomes and twice as likely to be
  recognized for technical expertise Source
• Women’s performance is more likely to be attributed to characteristics such as luck or ability to spend
  long hours in the office, perceived as commitment, rather than abilities and skills Source
• Non-majority groups tend to be scrutinized and penalized more harshly for mistakes Source

Be aware of your own implicit bias
• Take the Test: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
What Can We Do in Positive Performance Reviews?

• Be careful with adjectives and linguistic double standards
  • Go back and re-read with an eye towards gendered stereotypes
    • Assertive vs. strident
    • Firm vs. stubborn
    • Independent vs. collaborative
• Strive for objectivity with examples and behaviors – not subjectivity
• Focus on specific accomplishments and recognize the individual’s role, skills, and expertise which enabled the success
• Print out your direct report reviews and look at them side-by-side
**WILDCAT JOURNEY**
Preparing students with the skills and mindsets to lead in the 4th Industrial Revolution

**GRAND CHALLENGES**
Tackling society's biggest challenges by enabling discoveries that will fundamentally shape the future

**ARIZONA ADVANTAGE**
Advancing our land grant mission to drive social, cultural, and economic impact

**ARIZONA GLOBAL**
Setting the standard for a global university in the digital age

**INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE**
Living our values and innovative culture to enable a high performing institution
Purposeful Praise of Diversity & Inclusivity Actions

• In your performance feedback and one-on-one check-ins, specifically praise your employee’s actions to foster inclusion and create a welcoming environment for all:
  • “Promotes teambuilding and invites/embraces others, including those who are different or new to the team”
  • “Discourages and actively confronts disrespect, bullying, racism, and microaggressions”
  • “Works hand in hand with everyone when implementing programs”
  • “Treats everyone the way they wish to be treated and never alienates others”
  • “Welcomes and considers the ideas and views of other people”
  • “Encourages the implementation of strategies that attract a more diverse pool of applicants for vacant positions”

When is the last time you received constructive feedback at work?
When is the last time you gave direct, constructive feedback to someone on your team?
Why is feedback painful to receive?
Physiologically Primed

• The **FIGHT** response causes people to lash out or become defensive, especially if the feedback feels like an attack...on their work ethic, intelligence or experience.

• The **FLIGHT** response causes people to want to run away. At work, they may exhibit a strong desire to leave the room, shut down the conversation or postpone the topic again and again.

• The **FREEZE** response causes people to physically or mentally stiffen up. It may cause people to lose their train of thought or have difficulty finding the right words because of the loss of cognitive functioning.
Avoiding Fight, Flight, and Freeze Responses

• **Tighten Your Timing**: Don’t hoard feedback and save it for annual summaries! Share your insights as close to the time of the causal event as possible. In-the-moment feedback is more understandable and actionable, plus it feels more fair. Employees sense when something is wrong. The longer managers wait to give – avoid – feedback, the more the tension builds.

• **Keep it Simple**: Don’t overload the message. Piling on will increase tension and trigger a stress response. Instead, use a well-known structure of SBI (Situation – Behavior – Impact) to be sure your message is concise but complete, and deliver the message with professionalism, respect and emotional intelligence. Keep the conversation to less than 30 minutes, always.

• **Private not Public**: Never correct an employee in front of others, no matter how benign the feedback is. It will embarrass the receiver, and observers will feel nervous, leaving an undercurrent of continuing stress as they all wonder when it will be their turn to be publically humiliated.

• **Human Nature**: Your goal is to address two essential human needs – 1) their drive to learn, and 2) their longing for acceptance.
Radical Candor

• Feedback can be received when supervisor demonstrates a sense of caring and sincere belief that the employee can improve their performance.
The Feedback Gap

A reaction where employee and supervisor reinforce and stimulate each other to neither receive nor give feedback regarding performance, perpetuating a workplace culture that precludes organizational learning.

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<th>Micromanager</th>
<th>Conflict Avoider</th>
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Approaches to Avoid

• Sandwich
• Sugar Coat
• Caving in because the employee is upset
• Using an overly formal or forceful opening (trigger)
  • Furious, instead of curious
• Assuming they should know better or that there may be information you don’t have
• Stating you’re unhappy without specific picture of behavioral changes needed
• Deciding on / prescribing the solution or action plan without their ideation, input, or agreement
• Waiting until annual performance review summary conversation
Steps in the Feedback Process

• Step 1: State the Problem

• Step 2: Ask Employee to Understand and Resolve the Problem

• Step 3: Get Their Stated Commitment to Action
Step 1: State the Problem

- **Situation**: Describe the context in which the behavior occurred.
  - I have observed...which causes...to occur and impacts your team members...
  - It has come to my attention...resulting in...
  - Last Thursday...this caused our faculty and students...

- **Behavior**: Use specific statements describing the behavior.
  - Because I know you want to advance/grow...
  - I want to support your growth/success. This behavior...

- **Impact**: What was the effect of the behavior on others, process, or results?
Step 2: Understand and Resolve the Problem

- Listen to the explanations for behavior
  - Could you explain...
  - Why do you think this happens?
  - What changes could you make to prevent this from happening again? And what else?
  - What steps and behavior are we agreeing on?
  - What is the impact if this behavior doesn’t change?

- Use silence and be comfortable with it

- Explore alternatives rather than answers

- Probe for open-ended ideas, rather than you giving any advice or prescribing an answer
Let’s be honest.......it is not that easy!
Defensiveness

• Employee feels threatened or attacked
• Self-protection takes over
• Energy focused on a defense not on listening
• Negative reactions:
  • Aggression
  • Anger
  • Competitiveness
  • Avoidance
  • Blaming

Disconfirmation

• Employee feels incompetent or unworthy
• Attempts to reestablish self worth take over
• Energy spent on self-importance, not listening
• Negative reactions: withdrawal, denial, anger, blame, loss of motivation
Step 3: Getting Commitment to Action

• Ask open-ended questions - the answers to which, are what you want them to do differently

• Don’t answer your own questions

• Ask for the change you want, but they tell you how it will occur

• Ensure understanding, have them repeat the plan and commit
Interactive Activity
Interactive Activity (4 minutes)

• In your group of 3, introduce with your:
  • Name, Role, Unit
  • If applicable: how many people you supervise
  • Would you describe yourself as a conflict avoidant, micro-managing, or zero tolerance manager archetype, if you had to box yourself into one category? Why?

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<td></td>
<td>Takes over</td>
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<td>Expert in finding fault</td>
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<td>False-consensus bias (supervisor’s way is the only/best way)</td>
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Interactive Activity (12 minutes)

• Pick one of these scenarios on the handout:
  • 4 Minutes: Review, assign roles (Supervisor, Employee, Observer) and take 3 minutes to silently prep.
  • 5 Minutes: Initiate role play. Ask open ended questions while someone listens and another acts as receiver.
  • 3 Minutes: Debrief and share observations.
Suggested Reading

• The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork by John C. Maxwell
• Radical Candor by Kim Scott
• It’s OK to Be the Boss: A Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming the Manager Your Employees Need by Bruce Tulgan
• The One Thing You Need to Know...About Great Managers, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success by Marcus Buckingham
• The Discomfort Zone: How Leaders Turn Difficult Conversations into Breakthroughs by Marcia Reynolds
Thank You!

Questions?

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