

GIVING FEEDBACK – MOSTLY POSITIVE, WITH ONE CORRECTION

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

SETUP

This 5-Step Simulation™ is for managers and individual contributors. A team leader recognizes an opportunity to give one of his or his team members some feedback. The feedback is mostly positive, but there is one thing that the employee should do differently. Handling the mix of feedback is the challenge of this simulation.

This simulation requires a partner. The partner has information that the learner does not have.

Skills/Competencies Applied: Giving feedback, managing performance, gaining agreement, recognizing employees, leading teams.

Time: 30-45 minutes

DEBRIEF

Facilitator Note: While the situation is different, the standards for positive feedback are mostly the same as for other types of feedback. However, meeting the standards for gaining agreement on what to do next may be a lot easier when giving positive feedback messages.

Award Points: One point for each of the seven standards met. Partners (those playing Darren) determine whether the learner met each standard with a simple yes/no rating.

Optional Debrief Questions:

- How did this go?
- (Learners) What did you try in Step 2? How did that work? What techniques or principles would help meet the standards for Step 2? (*Repeat for Step 3 and Step 4.*)
- (Learners) What was difficult about this?
- (Partners) What did you learn by talking from Darren's perspective?
- How does this play out on the job in the real world? What will you try next time?
- What will you do differently on the job as a result of this simulation?

FEEDBACK SIMULATION – MOSTLY POSITIVE, LEARNER INSTRUCTIONS

This is a 5-Step Simulation™. After you and your partner read the scenario, you will practice giving feedback to an employee. What you observed the employee doing was mostly positive and you want him to continue that. There is just one thing you need the employee to do differently. Your partner will play the role of Darren (or Darcy), one of the employees you supervise. You each have different information about the situation.

You have three meaningful decisions to make about how to handle this situation. Use the information provided here to handle this challenge as you would if this were a real situation. This is for practice! Take this opportunity to try new techniques and approaches to this challenge.

There are seven standards that you should try to meet over the course of this simulation. Your partner will rate you on whether or not you met each of these standards after the simulation is done.

STEP 1. SET THE STAGE

You are a supervisor, responsible for a work team of twelve people. Your team has a lot of work to get done each day, and everyone does a pretty good job. You have been proud of their efforts and the results they have achieved over the past year. Darren, one your team members who started out in an entry-level position, was promoted last month to another job in your team with broader responsibilities. You have been watching Darren and coaching him on some of the new tasks and responsibilities.

One of the new tasks he has been nervous about is the month-end productivity reporting. This goes up to senior management and is an important requirement for the department. He has helped you before, but this is the first month he has done this report on his own. To complete the report, Darren has to collect information from other people on your team and from several other teams in the department. This would not be a problem, except that a few of the people on other teams never seem to have the information ready to turn in on time. The employees who are often late entering their data all happen to be top salespeople with a lot of respect and seniority in the company and you know that Darren is a little intimidated by them.

On the most recent month's report that Darren just finished, you were very pleased with how he handled just about everything exactly the way it should be done. He sent out the reminder with specifics on the data he would need several days ahead of time. Then, he followed up to let the team assistants know what he had received and what he still needed. He completed the report and checked the figures against both the department records and the company-wide

tracking system. He caught a couple of errors and worked with the team leaders and assistants to get those corrected the day before the report was due. Finally, he had you check the report and submitted it on time. Throughout the process, he also paid attention to the travel schedules of the people whose information he needed, so that he knew when and where to contact them if he needed clarification or more data. Darren handled this very well, and you want to let him know you appreciate how he handled all of these things.

There was only one thing Darren should have done differently, and you didn't realize he had done it until after one of the salespeople pointed it out to you privately. Darren sent one reminder notice to the salespeople by email after he did not get their data. As time was growing short and he still had not received any response from some of the senior salespeople, Darren sent a message to their bosses asking for help getting the information. This was embarrassing for the person who talked to you directly, and he felt that Darren should have called his mobile number to remind him, instead of "going over his head to the department Director." In general, you agree that a personal call to the salesperson would be more appropriate, if it became necessary to send a third reminder. Darren will need to work with these senior salespeople and a more personal, diplomatic way of handling this would be a better way of keeping those relationships positive.

You have found a quiet moment to stop by Darren's desk to share your observations with him.

STEP 2. MEANINGFUL DECISION: HOW DO YOU START THE CONVERSATION?

Task: Start the conversation with Darren about what you observed.

Conditions: Given what you already know about Darren, and with a partner who has additional information playing the role of Darren.

Standards: (1) Start the conversation in a way that Darren understands your helpful and appreciative intentions. (2) Start the conversation in a way that allows Darren to hear what you are saying, instead of becoming defensive.

This step can move directly into the next one.

STEP 3. MEANINGFUL DECISION: HOW DO YOU HANDLE THE MIX OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK?

Task: Put appropriate emphasis on both the positive and the corrective parts of the feedback you have to deliver.

Conditions: Given the results of the first step, and with a partner who has additional information playing the role of Darren.

Standards: (1) Make sure that Darren knows what you appreciate and want him to continue doing. (2) Make sure that Darren is aware of what—if anything—you want him to do differently. (3) Strike an appropriate balance between the positive and corrective feedback messages—present the positive feedback with sincerity, and not just as a way to soften the corrections.

This step can move directly into the next one.

STEP 4. MEANINGFUL DECISION: HOW DO YOU CHECK FOR AGREEMENT WITH DARREN ON THINGS TO CONTINUE AND THINGS TO CHANGE?

Task: Check that Darren understands and agrees with what to continue and what to change.

Conditions: Given the results of the first two steps, and with a partner who has additional information playing the role of Darren.

Standards: (1) Gain agreement from Darren to ensure that he will continue the things that he is doing well and make changes in the things that he can do differently. (2) Gain agreement to the changes in a way that does not diminish the positive things he is already doing.

STEP 5. REVEAL THE OUTCOME

Award Points: One point for each of the seven standards met. Partners (those playing Darren) determine whether the learner met each standard with a simple yes/no rating.

STANDARDS:

- The team leader started the conversation in a way that conveyed helpful and appreciative intentions. (yes/no)
- The team leader started the conversation in a way that allowed Darren to hear what he or she was saying, instead of becoming defensive. (yes/no)
- The leader made sure that Darren knew what he or she appreciate and wanted him to continue doing. (yes/no)
- The team leader made sure that Darren was aware of what—if anything—he should do differently. (yes/no)
- The leader struck an appropriate balance between the positive and corrective feedback messages, and presented the positive feedback with sincerity, and not just as a way to soften the corrections. (yes/no)
- The team leader gained agreement from Darren to ensure that he would continue the things that he is doing well and make changes in the things that he can do differently. (yes/no)
- The leader gained agreement to the changes in a way that did not diminish the positive things Darren was already doing. (yes/no)

QUESTIONS FOR LEARNING

- What did you try?
- How did that work?
- What will you do differently next time?

FEEDBACK SIMULATION – MOSTLY POSITIVE, PARTNER INSTRUCTIONS

This is a 5-Step Simulation™. After you both read the scenario, your partner will have three meaningful decisions to make about how to handle this situation, and then you will help your partner to understand how well he or she did.

You will be helping your partner practice giving feedback to an employee. You will be responding to your partner as Darren (or Darcy), an employee who has been recently promoted and is learning to do some parts of the job. You have information about Darren's situation that your partner does not have. Use the information provided here to respond to your partner as you think Darren would, if this were a real situation.

There are seven standards that your partner will try to meet over the course of this simulation. You will have a chance to see what these standards are and to rate your partner on whether or not he or she met each of them after the simulation is done.

STEP 1. SET THE STAGE

Your partner is the supervisor of a work team of twelve people. The team does pretty good job and both results and morale are good. Darren is one of the members of this team. He started out a little more than a year ago in an entry-level position on the same team and was promoted last month to a job with more responsibility. He likes his new position and is trying to do great work as he adjusts to the bigger role.

One of the new tasks Darren was nervous about doing is the month-end productivity reporting. This goes up to senior management and is an important requirement for the department. Darren has helped the team leader do this before, but this is the first month he has done it on his own. To complete the report, Darren has to collect information from other people on the team and from several other teams in the department. Mostly, this is easy, except for a few of the senior salespeople on other teams who never seem to send in their information until the very last minute. These employees have earned a lot of respect and seniority in the company, and Darren hasn't worked with them much before, so he is a little intimidated by them.

The report was completed on time, this month, and everything seemed to go well to Darren. He made sure that he gave everyone plenty of time to get their results in, and set aside time for himself to double-check the details. There were a few errors, and a few late responses, but with the help of the team assistants, Darren got everything he needed and had time to get the report reviewed by his boss, the team leader.

Darren was already deep into other tasks when his team leader stopped by to chat.

STEP 2. MEANINGFUL DECISION: HOW DO YOU START THE CONVERSATION?

What Darren knows: Darren felt he did a good job preparing and submitting the monthly productivity report, overall. He is sure there are some things he can do better, and hopes his boss will give him some pointers, but he did not want to go bothering him or her to ask.

How Darren will react: There aren't any tricks or twists to Darren's reaction. Darren will be happy to get the feedback, and he will be eager to hear how his boss thinks it went. He doesn't have any problem having this conversation at his desk, even if he ends up getting a lot of corrections, because he trusts his team leader to treat him fairly. Darren's starting attitude is, "Tell me how I did, and what I should do to improve."

This step can move directly into the next one.

STEP 3. MEANINGFUL DECISION: HOW DO YOU HANDLE THE MIX OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK?

What Darren knows: Darren recognizes and acknowledges the things that he did that worked well. He also acknowledges that he was a little frustrated with the delinquent senior salespeople and figured that their bosses might already have the details he needed, or that they could at least poke them to get their results entered.

How Darren will react: As long as the team leader does two things, Darren will be happy to listen to everything. First, he expects straight talk about what he should keep doing, as well as what he ought to do differently. Second, he expects the team leader to give feedback in the spirit of improvement, and not to scold or reprimand. Darren would like more detail about specific suggestions for what he should do differently, so he will probe and ask more questions to understand what advice his boss has for improvement. If it seems like his boss is scolding him or focusing exclusively on the negative, Darren will fall silent and just listen. If this happens, Darren will feel bad that he did something wrong, and he will be more hesitant to take risks or do things on his own in the future.

This step can move directly into the next one.

STEP 4. MEANINGFUL DECISION: HOW DO YOU CHECK FOR AGREEMENT WITH DARREN ON THINGS TO CONTINUE AND THINGS TO CHANGE?

What Darren knows: Darren has listened to the feedback and agrees with everything that his boss said that makes sense.

How Darren will react: If the team leader has maintained or increased Darren’s respect during the previous simulation steps, he would be very willing keep doing the things that worked and to approach the senior salespeople differently, as applicable. If the team leader has lost some of Darren’s respect or shut down his enthusiasm in the previous simulation steps, he is still willing to go along with suggestions that seem reasonable and fair, but he will just display less initiative about it.

STEP 5. REVEAL THE OUTCOME

Award Points: One point for each of the seven standards met. Partners (those playing Darren) determine whether the learner met each standard with a simple yes/no rating.

STANDARDS:

- The team leader started the conversation in a way that conveyed helpful and appreciative intentions. (yes/no)
- The team leader started the conversation in a way that allowed Darren to hear what he or she was saying, instead of becoming defensive. (yes/no)
- The leader made sure that Darren knew what he or she appreciate and wanted him to continue doing. (yes/no)
- The team leader made sure that Darren was aware of what—if anything—he should do differently. (yes/no)
- The leader struck an appropriate balance between the positive and corrective feedback messages, and presented the positive feedback with sincerity, and not just as a way to soften the corrections. (yes/no)
- The team leader gained agreement from Darren to ensure that he would continue the things that he is doing well and make changes in the things that he can do differently. (yes/no)
- The leader gained agreement to the changes in a way that did not diminish the positive things Darren was already doing. (yes/no)