



10-minute books

Be the manager you always wished you had

3 – Increasing individual performance and satisfaction: Feedback and coaching



When do you talk about individual performance with your employees?

Ask a company's executives when they talk about individual performance with their employees. The most common answer is: "At the year-end performance review meeting".

Then ask those of them who play team sports if their coach also calls them in once a year to discuss their performance and areas of the game in which they need to improve. Of course, they laugh at the remark: Their coach gives them during every practice and often after every game feedbacks on how to improve their performance. The idea of only discussing this once a year with him seems ridiculous and obviously completely ineffective ... and yet this is what they practice with their staff.

What is obvious in sports - giving regular feedback, constantly trying to help someone develop his or her skills - seems unnatural and very complicated to do in business.

Know your employees and the performance levers

Like a coach, a manager must know the strengths and areas of development of each of his employees, those that will enable him to increase individual and team performance. Experience shows that this is rarely the case.

You cannot help your employees to progress if you have not made a clear analysis of their situation. Take the time to reflect in a structured way on each person's performance:

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
In what areas is he/she good and how can it be strengthened and developed?	In what areas of its current activity does he/she need to improve?	What could be new tasks and what does he/she need to learn?

These can be technical or social skills, efficiency, collaboration, analysis and problem-solving, decision-making, initiative, commitment, ... it's up to you to find the relevant categories.

How to give feedback – The FIRA method

As in sports, the best way to increase an employee's performance is to give regular feedback, whether positive (reinforcing feedback) or corrective.

Giving feedback has five phases. With a little experience, feedback takes less than 30 seconds - so it is neither long nor complicated.

Permission

- Always ask permission to give feedback! This increases the receptivity of the person and greatly reduces the risk of the feedback being perceived negatively.
- Feedback should always be given with a caring attitude. Your intention is to help your collaborator to progress and this should be felt. Never give feedback when you are angry or upset!
- Typical phrases: "*Can I give you feedback?*"; "*Do you have two minutes for me?*"

F

Facts

- To give convincing feedback, you need to rely on facts. Describe the concrete situations you are referring to. Phrases such as "you are always ..." are subjective and have little chance of being accepted
- Describe the behaviors you observed, without accusations, interpretations, and especially without judgments about the person ("you are not thorough"). There should be no possible disagreement on these facts: "Yesterday, at the team meeting, you arrived 10 minutes late"; "There are many errors in your report, for example ..." ...
- Typical sentences: "*What I observed...*"

I

Impact

- Often the person is unaware of the impact of their behavior. Describe it: On you, on the team, ... "Because you were late, the whole team lost 10 minutes. Six people, that's an hour of work lost! "
- It can also be emotions or your personal interpretations: "When you interrupted me several times in front of the customer, I felt that you didn't take me seriously and I hesitate to do customer meetings with you again." However, leave the door open for explanations you did not consider.
- Typical phrases: "*because of this, ...*"; "*The team had to ...*"; "*This forced me to...*"

R

Request

- Express a clear request for what you suggest the person continue to do, to do more often (reinforcing feedback) or to do better or differently (corrective feedback).
- "I wish you would..."; "You should..."
- You can also invite the employee to reflect on improvements themselves: "Your presentation was clear and the important messages were well presented. However, you could have had more impact by using numbers, knowing that your client is very analytical. What numbers do you think you could have added?"
- Typical phrases: "*What can you do differently next time?*"; "*What solution do you see to this problem?*"

A

Action plan

- A request is not enough, a concrete action plan is also necessary. Think together and agree on the actions to be implemented and how to monitor progress.
- Typical phrases: "*What could you/we do to make it happen...*"; "*Here's what I suggest to make sure it changes...*"

Feedback is not a criticism and is always aimed at progress

The purpose of feedback is to "encourage effective future behavior". If your intervention focuses on mistakes made and the past, it is not feedback. If your employee feels threatened or judged rather than encouraged, it is not feedback.

Feedback is not judgmental. It is neutral as such, it can be positive or corrective, but it always aims at progress.

The most effective way to increase performance AND employee satisfaction

Feedback optimizes individual and collective performance. There is no better way to quickly and sustainably influence the performance of your team:

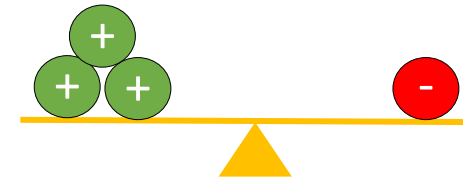
- Employees gain autonomy, confidence and motivation
- They make continuous progress and learn to better self-assess their work
- Their actions are valued and clearly included in the objectives pursued by your team and the company
- The manager also progresses in his practices

Numerous studies have shown that employees become disengaged without feedback and that, conversely, the most motivated employees receive feedback at least once a week.

Give more positive feedback than corrective feedback

Reinforcing feedback brings more change (the desired behavior is achieved more often) than corrective feedback. Studies done with youth soccer teams show that those who received only reinforcing feedback improved more than those who received only corrective feedback. Giving positive feedback means valuing the employee.

In business, a good measure is at least three reinforcing feedbacks for one corrective feedback.



Three times more positive feedbacks than corrective feedbacks!

Caution! It is important to use the FIRA rules for reinforcing feedback: observed facts, positive consequences, behavior to reinforce, and not a simple "well done!" or "good job!".

When? The normality of feedback

Feedback should be given as soon as possible after the observed behavior, at the latest within three days. I advise the managers I work with to use weekly one-on-one meetings to give feedback. It should be normal for an employee to receive feedback at least once a week from their manager.

Expect to give a feedback several times. Changing a habit is difficult and it is usual to give the same feedback four or five times before achieving a lasting change in behavior.

COACHING

Feedback can be used to reinforce or correct behaviors. But what if the employee needs to develop more complex skills? For example, how do you make convincing presentations in front of clients? Or for a young salesperson to develop his or her customer meeting preparation skills?

Such developments are in the field of coaching, which, in order to develop a given skill, can be spread over several months.

I often suggest using a proven coaching model: the GROW model. GROW is an acronym for Goal, Reality, Options, Will.

G Goals

The objectives must be

- Specific: What is the specific result expected? e.g. "Deliver technical presentations that are positively received by client representatives".
- Measurable: How do we measure the achievement of the results? e.g. "3 presentations in a row with a participant rating above 6/10"
- Temporally defined. e.g. "Until February 28th of next year".

R Reality

Description of the current situation

- What are the strengths and weaknesses?
- What are the resources, internal to the employee and external (possible help)
- What are the barriers? Where do they come from?

O Options

What are the options to get to the desired outcome?

- I recommend doing a brainstorming to list as many possibilities as possible and then sorting them. Make a list of all possible solutions, big or small, complete or partial
- For example: Take a training course, watch training videos on the internet, watch videos of good presentations on the internet, find someone in the company as a mentor, get a coach, practice internal presentations with feedback from colleagues, ...

W

Will

What is the action plan? The motivation and possible obstacles?

- What are the concrete actions to be implemented?
- What is the action plan, precise and dated? No individual action should last more than two weeks, this allows you to better follow the implementation.
- On a scale of one to ten, what is the employee's estimation of the ability to carry out the agreed actions?
- What is preventing him/her from reaching the score of ten?
- How can you help?

Good luck with the development of your employees!

Contact

Do you still have questions? Teams to develop? A transformation to manage? Do not hesitate to contact me.



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