

How to create a “Positive Workplace Culture”: Step 1

Leadership is the single-most important building block in developing and maintaining highly productive teams and creating a positive workplace culture. It is the “unknown unknowns” that have the potential to destroy a work culture. One of the biggest or most challenging “unknown unknowns” is **Constructive Feedback**, which, if not correctly addressed, can be destructive.

1. What is constructive feedback?

Constructive Feedback refers to communication that aims to improve the outcome of an employee’s performance or work habits and achieving a positive outcome.

2. Why is it important?

Effective performance management behaviour positively affect employee engagement and bottom-line results.

When explaining to your employees how their work fits into the company’s goal and vision, and what an important role they play in your pursuit to success, they will want to better their job performance which will automatically increase staff morale.

Various studies and research showed that majority employees want feedback on a regular basis. When employees start getting feedback, they feel they are part of the company, and this sense of recognition boosts performance and maintain high levels of engagement.

The following can be achieved by giving your employees frequent constructive feedback:

1. **Increased motivation.** Automatically when an employee realises, they form part of a bigger picture and actively contributes to the success of the company, there will be increased motivation to reach their goals.
2. **Greater performance.** Employees’ work will reach a higher standard when they know their efforts are valued and when they receive feedback that highlights areas for improvement.
3. **Continuous learning.** Quite often, we fall into repetitive, monotonous work routines and we stop learning new skills. By giving constructive and frequent feedback, particularly if it includes areas to improve, you learn your employees’ new skills or a new way to do certain tasks.
4. **Personal growth.** Positive and negative feedback shows employees their strengths, as well as areas for improvement. This makes them more self-aware and provides them with invaluable opportunities for personal improvement.
5. **Increased confidence.** When you give your employees positive feedback and let them know when they have done a good job, you increase their confidence in their work, which also makes them excited to come to work.

3. How to give constructive feedback?

- **It should be aimed at behaviours or actions, not persons.** Your employees need to understand that you are not criticizing them personally, but rather giving suggestions on how to improve the outcome of their actions.

For example, instead of saying “You are sloppy”, you could say:

“When you omit the details of our marketing strategy in your report, the leaders get an incomplete picture of the whole teams’ effort. Please provide as much details as possible in your report.”

- If feedback is delivered in an appreciative tone, the receiver understands the “actual” meaning behind the words.
- If the feedback comes from a place of clear and good intentions, the recipient realize that you are on their side, and this will also avoid any misinterpretation.
- Instead of criticizing someone’s work and providing one-way constructive feedback, the company’s communication should always be a two-way street.

This means that you should:

- **Ask for your employees’ opinions on your feedback** and offer them a chance to give suggestions on how you and your company can help them do their work.
- **Suggest improvements or course of action.**

So, instead of saying: “You are missing your targets”, rather say:

“I noticed you missed a couple of your targets that we have set together last month. Why do you think it happened?” What if we redesign your sales strategy for next month so you could focus better?

- Choose the right time and place for feedback: Small bits of praise and appreciation can be shared among the wider team. On the other hand, criticism that is shared in front of your employee’s peers will be shameful and embarrassing. Criticism is much better delivered in a one-to-one meeting.

You should consider the timing of the meeting. It is best to give feedback as soon as possible while the reference points are still clear. Feedback is less constructive the longer you wait to arrange the meeting.

- Give suggestions for improvements: It may be worth creating an action plan and arranging more meetings in the future to check on performance. This part of the feedback should be to support the employee in the areas they are not performing in and focus on reaching a positive outcome.

Conclusion:

It cannot be overstated that feedback should be ingrained in everyday communication with your employees.