

How to Request, Give, and Receive Feedback

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Introduction

We can all think of a time when key feedback was delivered in just the right way, at just the right time, that helped us get to the next level of our craft. But many of us also have a story of feedback that was not delivered so well. This kind of feedback can be painful, if not harmful. Rather than making us better, it often makes us shut down or get defensive, and can cause interpersonal strife between the feedback giver and recipient.

Feedback

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Information about reactions to a product, a person's performance of a task, etc. which is used as a basis for improvement.

If you're not paying attention to whether feedback is being shared in an effective way at your organization, it could mean you're not getting the most out of your people. So how do you ensure feedback is effective and impactful, both for your employees and your business? How can you create a culture with less bias, built on a foundation of continuous feedback? And how do you do all of that while maximizing productivity and efficiency, both throughout the year and during your review seasons?



This simple and interactive workbook gives you the tools to help employees, managers, and leaders become feedback champions.

Section 1: Feedback Principles

Making the Case for Feedback

1. It creates a culture of continuous **improvement**.

Individual, team, and company performance increases when employees can exchange feedback on an ongoing basis – not just during performance reviews. Feedback also provides an opportunity to talk about what employees can do differently, what they do well, and what they can build on in a supportive manner.

2. It helps drive **impact**.

Sharing feedback aligns expectations for how we work together to achieve business and individual goals. As communication expert Deborah Grayson Riegel, writes, “By giving more helpful feedback, you’ll be providing [others] with the data they need to do more of what’s working, less of what isn’t, and with fewer opportunities to make up their own stories.”

3. It demonstrates **investment**.

When someone takes the time to share a meaningful piece of feedback, it’s a sign that they care and that they want the other person to succeed. Feedback is just another way for colleagues to build relationships, embrace their shared goals, and invest in one another.

Building a Foundation for Effective Feedback

Psychological safety is the belief that we won’t be punished for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. There are a few reasons why psychological safety is the foundation for a successful feedback culture:

- It builds trust between employees, teams, and leadership.
- It encourages employees to share ideas and take risks.
- It creates a safe environment for employees to be honest.
- It motivates employees to be more engaged and confident.
- It can lead to business breakthroughs.

There are a few ways that leaders and managers can go about establishing a psychologically safe space for feedback:

1. Set expectations.

To help set boundaries and create safe spaces, align your team around specific expectations. Discuss (and follow through on) what happens when we take risks and make mistakes, what is acceptable vs. unacceptable behavior, and what kind of feedback they can expect to receive under what circumstances.

For example, not going deep enough on some research, establishing a process that is not entirely efficient, or creating an artifact that is unclear are all circumstances that warrant coaching and encouragement. Conversely, unacceptable behavior such as inappropriate remarks, repeatedly showing up late, or poor follow-through on commitments are examples of circumstances that warrant more direct guidance, warnings, or disciplinary activity.

2. Develop trust.

Building trust is easier said than done. You can start by checking your mindset: Are you approaching feedback conversations from a place of curiosity vs criticism? Have you requested their feedback as well?

3. Don't over-personalize.

In social psychology, “fundamental attribution error” is the tendency for people to overemphasize personal-based explanations and under-emphasize situational factors in judging others’ behavior.

For example, if someone shows up late to a meeting, we might be inclined to blame them for their tardiness. On the other hand, if we were to show up late to a meeting, we might be more inclined to blame external factors, like traffic. Being mindful of your own bias is important for giving and receiving feedback in an open and effective way.

4. Create and reinforce norms.

Not all feedback is created equal. Before getting started, employees should receive training on how to (and not to) share feedback. Scientists recognize **constructive** and **destructive** feedback as distinctly different, each with its own specific characteristics:

Constructive Feedback	Destructive Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivered considerately• Focuses on specific aspects of work• Guides improvement and growth• Builds trust and psychological safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivered inconsiderately• Focuses on personal traits• Doesn't offer suggestions for improvement• Elicits feelings of failure, anger, or distrust
Example: "I loved your presentation, but the timeline for the different deliverables isn't clear to me. Can we go over it again?"	Example: "You only care about how you look to the CEO and always take the credit for our hard work."

It's also important to check in with managers, direct reports, and peers to establish their feedback preferences. Some questions you can ask are:

- How do you like to receive feedback?
- When do you like to receive it?
- Do you or your team have a goal for the amount of feedback to give and receive each month?

Lastly, a crucial thing to consider is visibility. There are pros and cons to different levels of feedback visibility:

Public (All Employees)	Private + Manager (You and Your Manager)	Private (Only You)
Get eyes on feedback that highlights your alignment with company values, leads you to new opportunities, and provides tangible data for future reviews.	Your manager might be able to help you contextualize the feedback you get or help you track your progress toward goals.	You may not feel fully comfortable with your manager seeing the nitty-gritty details of how you get work done. But they're there to help you. Chat with them about it if you're unsure.

Empower your team with feedback that's **fair**. Check out [People Success in Practice: Giving Feedback that's Equitable and Actionable](#).

Section 2: Requesting Feedback

Who it's for:

All employees (including the CEO)

Why it matters:

Research shows that we should create a mentality to actively seek out feedback rather than waiting with dread for it to arrive unsolicited. A recent study by the [NeuroLeadership Institute](#) indicates receiving feedback that's been asked for is significantly less stressful, inducing a heart rate spike 50% lower than when feedback comes unsolicited.

In strong feedback cultures, giving feedback and asking for feedback are company-wide norms. People don't always feel they have permission to give feedback — so why not give them permission? Not only does it help increase belonging and build connections, it helps you develop in the direction that you want.

When it makes sense:

- Anytime, or as work gets done — no need to wait for a review cycle.
- Before, during or after a project — whenever input from a colleague will help you do better work.
- On a regular cadence. To build the feedback request muscle, it needs to be exercised regularly. Consider setting aside 30 minutes each week as your feedback window.

How it's done:

STEP 1: Think about what you are trying to improve. What specific competencies are you working on from your personal goals or [individual development plan](#)(IDP)?

STEP 2: Identify who is best equipped to provide feedback on the competencies you outlined above.

Tip: Your direct teammates aren't the only valuable source of feedback. Consider including some **cross-functional requests** to get a broader perspective!

STEP 3: Set aside time each week to request feedback from these individuals about the areas you are most interested in hearing about. Consider using the examples and templates below to guide you.

Tip: Remember to ask for **specific** feedback vs. open ended requests, such as “how am I doing?”

Examples:

1. Would you mind reviewing this 10-min snippet from a call with Customer X? I've been working on honing my project management skills. Thank you in advance!
2. We just had our team meeting, and I'd love your thoughts on:
 - a. Whether my introduction was too long
 - b. How I could have introduced the new team members better
 - c. How I could have made the demo impactful without taking up more time
 - d. When would have been right to introduce my upcoming PTO
3. We just had our second kick-off call with Customer X, and I'd love your feedback. Would you mind sharing one thing I did that you thought had a positive impact, and one thing I could have done differently? Also, I'm working on my conciseness in communication, and would love your thoughts on how to make the demo shorter but still impactful. Thank you!

Templates:

1. I'm working on [insert competency or behavior here]. From your perspective, what's one thing that I can do differently to increase my effectiveness by 10% in this area?

2. We just collaborated on [insert meeting/project]. I'd love some feedback on how my participation landed for you. What is one thing you appreciated, and one thing I could have changed to be more effective?

Section 3: Giving Feedback

Who it's for:

Employees who have enough context on a given person's contributions or on a piece of work. Newer employees are welcome: Just because you don't have the full history of something doesn't mean your context is less valid — you might have a clear-eyed perspective to provide.

Why it matters:

Feedback is the fuel that powers everything else. Or maybe it's the spark. Light it well, and you may have an outsized impact on a person's career or work product. Do it poorly, and you may burn down someone's hopes or confidence.

Employee recognition throughout the year — both formal recognition programs and informal praise for a job well done — can do a lot to build up individual confidence and morale, and create a positive organizational culture. All of these elements set employees up for success and lead to a more positive review.

When it makes sense:

- Anytime or as work gets done (no need to wait for a review cycle)
- Immediately after a meeting or when a project completes
- When you see behaviors that you'd like to **reinforce** or **redirect**
- On a regular cadence (set aside 30 minutes as a weekly feedback window)

How it's done:

STEP 1: Start with a short but important yes or no question (also known as a “micro-yes”).

Examples:

- Can we do a quick check-in on _____ ?
- Do you have some time to talk about _____ ?
- I have some thoughts on _____. Can I share them with you?
- How do you like to receive feedback?
- Would you like me to include your manager?

STEP 2: When giving feedback, be specific when sharing what you appreciate and what can be improved.

The **C**onversation, **O**bservation, **I**mpact, and **N**ext steps (**COIN**) model for feedback is a great way to cover all of these bases.

Tip: Remember the fundamental attribution error! Check your unconscious bias by focusing on **what** they do, **not** who they are. Avoid feedback based on personality or character traits or “blurry” words that can be misinterpreted.

The COIN Feedback Model:

Context: Clarify the situation you're referring to, providing clear and specific context about when and where it occurred.

(Example: "This morning at the 11 a.m. team meeting...")

Observation: Describe the precise behavior that you witnessed, relying on facts rather than opinions or judgements.

(Example: "I noticed that you were on your phone during..." rather than "You didn't seem to care about...")

Impact: Explain the impact of the person's behavior on you, the team, and/or the organization.

(Example: "As a result, I felt like the meeting wasn't a priority for you, which made me wonder if it should be a priority for the team as a whole.")

Next: What might be a reasonable next step, given the observation and impact that you've reported?

(Example: "This might be a good time to re-center ourselves as a team on meeting norms. Would you be willing to lead that session in our next team meeting?")

Effective Feedback Phrases:

Instead of	Try
Can I give you some feedback?	I'd love to share something that I noticed earlier — is now a good time?
Good job!	Here are three things that really worked for me. What was going through your mind when you did them?
Here's what you should do.	Here's what I would do.
Here's where you need to improve.	Here's what has worked for me in the past, and here's why.
That didn't really work.	When you did ____, I experienced ____.
You need to be more responsive.	When I don't hear from you, I worry that we're not on the same page.

Source: Adapted from [The Feedback Fallacy](#)

Common Feedback Mistakes:

Mistake	Instead of	Try
Personality, not performance	"You are always so nice at the start of your calls, no wonder all your teammates love you."	"I appreciate the time that you dedicate at the start of each project call to check in with us as humans. I know how tempting it is to just get into the agenda, but I have seen how much more connected you are with your teammates as a result."
Blurry, not specific	"You did phenomenally on that presentation. I'm in awe of your brilliance!"	"I expected that meeting to be hard to manage — you had a lot of material to get through and a lot of opinions coming at you. But you stuck to your agenda, and you had a system for fielding questions that let you not get derailed. I think the team's (and my) trust in you shot up by a mile as a result!"

Judgment, not observation	“You were being pretty pushy on that call, like you weren’t listening to what the team was trying to say.”	“I think it’s important to have a balance of voices between you and the client to establish a partnership. On this call, I heard you interrupt or talk over them a few times, and if I were in their shoes, I would have felt bulldozed.”
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STEP 3: Close the gap between intent and impact by posing follow-up questions and creating space for dialogue.

Examples:

- What are your thoughts on what I just shared?
- Is there any important information I am missing?
- How do you see the situation that I described differently?
- What can we change in our approach going forward?
- How can I best support you if this issue arises again?

For more tips on navigating feedback conversations, download our [Constructive Feedback Agenda template](#).

Section 4: Receiving Feedback

Who it's for:

All employees

Why it matters:

Learning to take feedback well is a skill that takes work to develop. You have to figure out how to manage your feelings, ask questions to ensure you understand the other person's suggestion, and evaluate how to enact changes. Otherwise feedback can leave you feeling awkward, ineffective, or downright disengaged.

But giving feedback takes courage, and how we respond matters. Even if you only agree with some of it — or disagree with it completely — developing the skill of receiving feedback well can vastly improve your work relationships and impact your growth, so it's worth investing the time and effort to do so.

When it makes sense:

- In the **flow of work**
- During a regular **review cycle** from managers, direct reports, or peers
- **Immediately** after a meeting or when a project completes
- Anytime you have **requested feedback** from someone

How it's done:

STEP 1: Be honest about your mindset.

Make sure you're in the right frame of mind. If you're not, feel free to ask for a rain check: "I'd love to hear your feedback, but do you mind if we schedule some time in a couple of days?"

STEP 2: Capture the feedback.

Whether you're just jotting it down into a notebook, playing it back to the feedback-giver, or updating your conversation in a tool like Lattice, the act of capturing feedback shared with you shows that you are listening and taking it seriously.

STEP 3: Empathize with the feedback-giver.

Whether you're sharing it with a peer, direct report, or authority figure, giving feedback can be hard or uncomfortable. While receiving feedback without judgment is its own challenge, it's also an opportunity to remember the feedback is likely coming from a place of good intent. Giving feedback is as hard a skill to learn as receiving it, so try to demonstrate gratitude and focus on the content of the feedback rather than the way it's provided.

STEP 4: Commit to following up.

It's okay to take time to process feedback – no one expects change to happen overnight! What's important is demonstrating a commitment to putting that feedback into motion by **asking follow-up questions** and **outlining follow-up actions**.

Follow-up questions should help you get to the root of the feedback so that you can evaluate its validity and determine what you want to do about it from there. See below for some examples:

Feedback:

- A team member wants you to help foster connection on the team.

Follow-up questions:

- Is there a timeline you had in mind for this?
- Are there specific team members I should be reaching out to?
- Are there any activity guidelines I should be mindful of?

Follow-up actions:

- Carve out 15 minutes in next week's one-on-ones to understand what this means for each teammate.
- Organize a low-stakes shared project to create opportunities for collaboration.
- Start each morning meeting with an icebreaker activity.

Additional Follow-up questions:

Can you be more specific about what _____ means to you?

Can you say more about your expectations for _____?

Do you have any suggestions for what I can do differently to _____?

Use the following template and try this exercise yourself:

Feedback:

Follow-up Questions:

Follow-up Actions:

Looking for more resources on how to build a feedback culture?

Download [The Ultimate Guide to Feedback](#).

Section 5: Using Lattice for Better Feedback

Good feedback helps enhance the employee experience and improve team performance. But choosing the right tools for gathering feedback is also crucial. If you want to ensure better results in building a feedback culture, you need to build processes and systems to make feedback easy, and also keep everyone honest about results.

Solutions like Lattice empower HR teams to record all feedback in one place, making it easier to identify trends across the employee experience, take action to make changes, and track new issues over time.

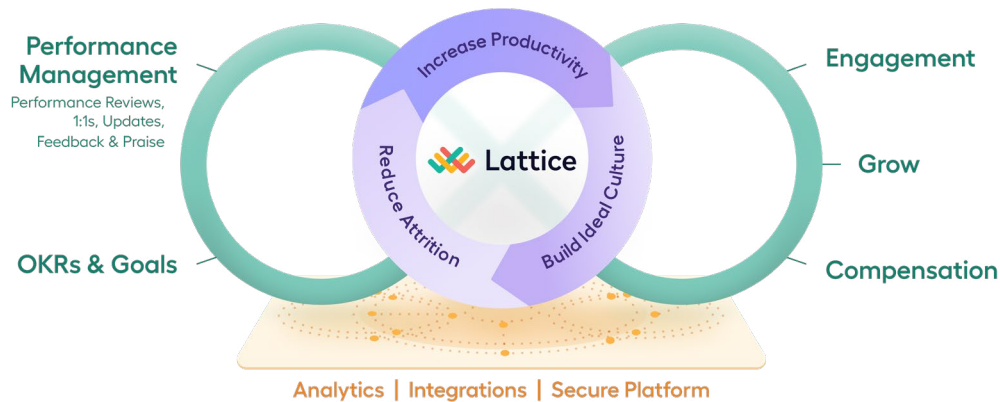
When to use it	Tool		
	Public or Private Praise	One-on-One Meeting + recap with Private Praise	Reviews (Performance and Developmental)
	Reinforcement	Redirection	Realignment
	When you observe behaviors with a positive impact that you'd like to see more of.	When you observe behaviors with a negative impact or opportunity to improve.	When you reflect on periodic progress toward established goals and identify opportunities for adjustment.

Our feedback tools are specifically built to promote continuous feedback that boosts employee engagement and provides real-time insights – all while seamlessly integrating into your existing daily workflows.

Curious how our platform works? [Schedule a free demo](#) with one of our experts.

About Lattice

Lattice is the people success platform that enables HR leaders to develop engaged, high-performing teams. By combining continuous performance management, employee engagement, development, compensation, and growth in one solution, organizations get powerful, real-time analytics that leads to actionable insights turning managers into leaders, employees into high performers, and companies into the best places to work.



The Lattice People Success Platform

Lattice works with companies that aspire to put people first. Whether redefining the beauty industry or building self-driving cars, all of our customers have one thing in common: They value their employees and want to invest in the development and success of their people. To see Lattice's platform in action, [schedule a product tour](#).

Trusted by the best places to work

Discover how Lattice empowers thousands of companies to build award-winning cultures.

[Request a demo](#)

