Penn State Performance Management:

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Adobe Connect Seminar: Individual Contributors

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Fall 2017

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Today's session will help you to:
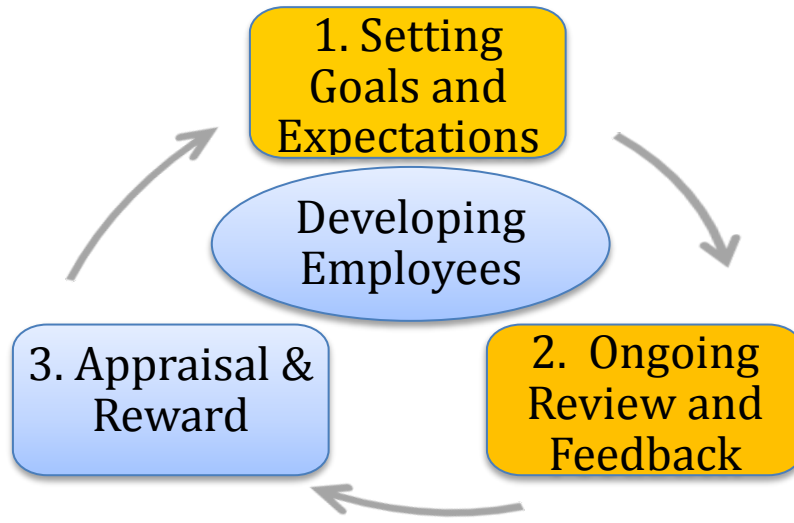
- Gain understanding for how to effectively give and receive feedback

- Identify your role and responsibilities related to giving and receiving feedback

- Familiarize yourself with feedback models and best practices

During this session I will continue to provide information about Penn State's performance management program and review the immediate next steps in the process.

The Performance Management Cycle

Setting Goals & Expectations	1. Clearly communicate expectations re: job responsibilities and competencies (skills) and behaviors 2. Communicate how individual goals align with department and organization goals 3. Help your employees set clear, measurable performance goals
Ongoing Review and Feedback	1. Holds people accountable for meeting performance goals and objectives 2. Provides constructive feedback to help staff improve performance 3. Takes appropriate action to address poor performance
Appraisal & Reward	1. Conducts thorough annual performance reviews 2. Assesses individuals fairly 3. Differentiates high performers appropriately

Roles in Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback

Staff Member
- Monitor own performance, seek performance information, apprise supervisor of successes, shortcomings, and needs
- Act on feedback received

Supervisor
- Provide clear feedback on an ongoing and often informal basis
- Ensure that staff member understands expectations

Shared (Staff Member and Supervisor)
- Agree upon a joint feedback process
  (i.e., when and how feedback will be exchanged on a one-on-one basis)
- Assume best intentions

Institution
- Create a consistent language for getting and giving feedback
- Establish a "No Fear" culture where staff can feel comfortable sharing and receiving frank feedback
- Ensure supervisors model a feedback culture

The Performance Management Cycle:
Ongoing Feedback and Coaching

Feedback has a direct impact on our work:
- Gives us specific information to help us improve
- Makes performance expectations clear from the start
- Heightens efficiency by reducing resentment, buildup, etc.
- Strengthens relationships

Benefits of Positive Feedback
- Gives clarity to the employee about good performance.
- Creates enthusiasm.
- Builds confidence and self-esteem.
- Increases appropriate risk-taking and innovation.
- Demonstrates care and involvement.
- Makes an employee feel acknowledged.

When Positive Feedback is appropriate
- When used to recognize specific job performance that has met and/or exceeded expectations.   (It reinforces and motivates.)

Example of Positive Feedback: "The budget estimates you presented at the last staff meeting were very detailed and gave us good criteria for decision-making."

Benefits of Developmental Feedback
- It lets people know how to execute a task more effectively.
- It steers actions; communicates what needs to change.
- It increases the person's self-awareness.
- It is the foundation of all development.
- It gives a bigger picture to the employee.

When Developmental Feedback is appropriate
- When used to help an employee monitor and correct his or her own behavior.

Example of Developmental Feedback: "My expectation was that you would provide us with more details on the event budget. Because we didn't have enough information, we won't be able to make our final decisions until later this week. What can you do to ensure that we will have the correct information?"
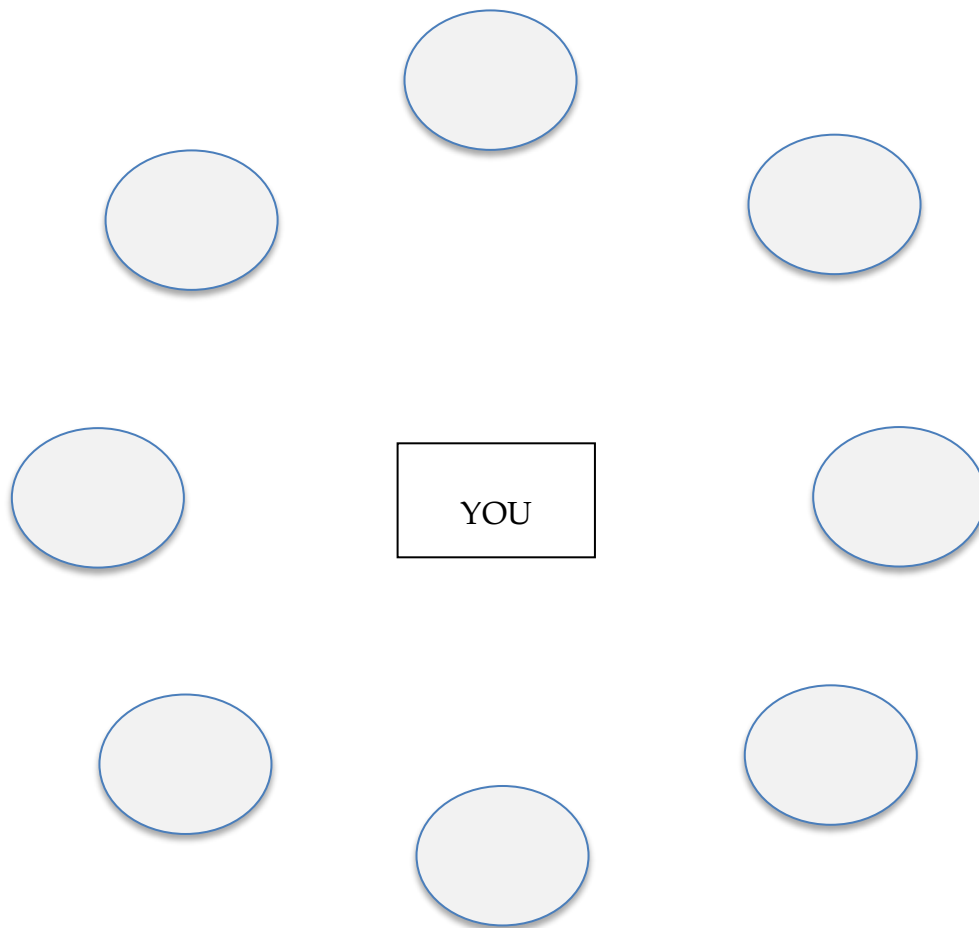
Feedback Reflection:

Write the initials of the people that you work with in the shapes provided, including direct reports, peers, your manager, customers/clients, etc.   Then for each person, answer the questions:

"**Are you comfortable providing them with direct, constructive feedback?"** If so, draw a solid arrow from you to their shape. If not, draw a dashed arrow.

"**Are you comfortable receiving direct, constructive feedback from them?"** If so, draw a solid arrow from their shape to you. If not, draw a dashed arrow.

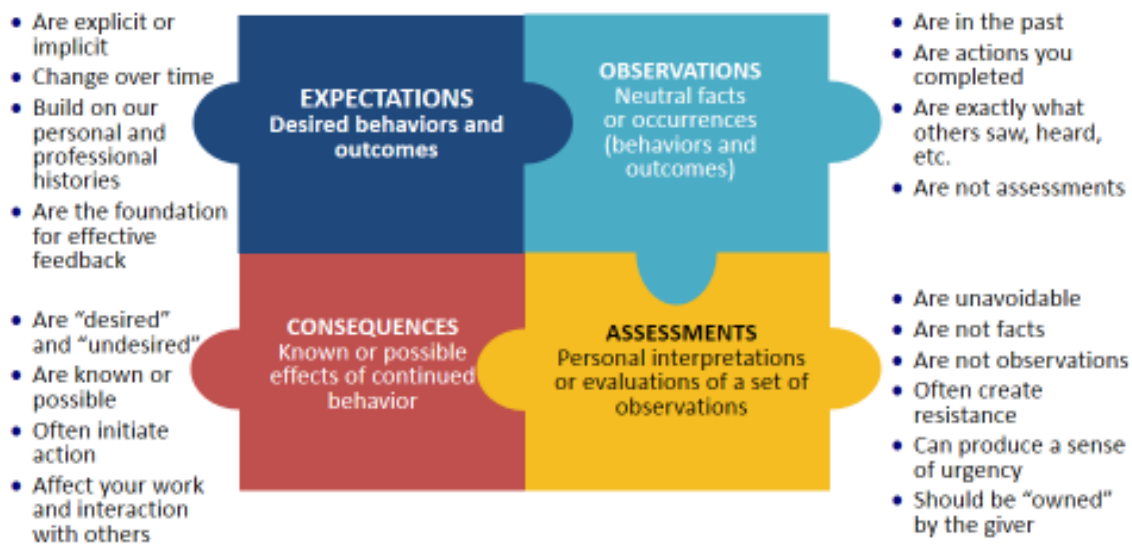**What does your reflection tell you?**

Feedback Framework:

Feedback is an essential component of a learning and performance culture. The framework assists in preparing to deliver feedback effectively.

Feedback is…
- Most beneficial if on-going (which ensures no surprises)
- Intended to support employee performance and development
- Helpful and applies to both positive and constructive situations

How to Improve the Quality of Feedback Conversations

EXPECTATIONS — Desired behaviors and outcomes
- Are explicit or implicit
- Change over time
- Build on our personal and professional histories
- Are the foundation for effective feedback

OBSERVATIONS — Neutral facts or occurrences (behaviors and outcomes)
- Are in the past
- Are actions you completed
- Are exactly what others saw, heard, etc.
- Are not assessments

CONSEQUENCES — Known or possible effects of continued behavior
- Are "desired" and "undesired"
- Are known or possible
- Often initiate action
- Affect your work and interaction with others

ASSESSMENTS — Personal interpretations or evaluations of a set of observations
- Are unavoidable
- Are not facts
- Are not observations
- Often create resistance
- Can produce a sense of urgency
- Should be "owned" by the giver

Positive Performance Feedback Example

DIMENSION	EXAMPLE OF COMMENTARY
Expectation	"Jason, you are expected to make a 15-minute presentation to students every Friday about the services our office provides."
Observation	"I've noticed that you are always well prepared, and consistently arrive several minutes early to greet students and make them feel welcome."
Assessment	"This is excellent and demonstrates a commitment to your job, representing our office positively, and serving our customers."
Consequence	"I'd like to use this as a model for how we conduct all of our presentations."

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Constructive Performance Feedback Example

DIMENSION	EXAMPLE OF COMMENTARY
Expectation	"As a member of the Project Team, one of your expectations is to participate actively in team meetings."
Observation	"During the last half dozen meetings, you barely said anything, although you are clearly listening and taking notes during the discussions."
Assessment	"This doesn't meet the expectations for your role. You should be contributing your thoughts and providing insights into how our recommendations will affect your department."
Consequence	"It is important that you be more participative. If this doesn't improve fairly quickly, we will have to reconsider your role on the project team."

Potential Development Plan:
It is important that you take an active, meaningful role in these meetings. Let's start with some deliberate steps you can take to become more comfortable participating in the meetings.
Before each meeting, review the agenda and prepare at least three talking points that you would like to discuss. These can be questions, comments, or additional information that will be helpful to the Project Team. During the meeting, present each of these talking points and use them to generate discussion.

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Using the Feedback Framework:
It's your turn to try!

To deliver constructive/developmental feedback to Susan:

Susan is a co-worker who shares in the responsibility of answering the phones with you. Your department prides itself on customer service and you are both expected to answer the phones as a primary part of your role. Over the last few weeks, the phones have been ringing off the hook and it seems as if Susan rarely answers the phone. Her inattentiveness is frustrating you. What do you do?

1. **State your Expectations**	Describe the standards or expectations you have for the situation.
2. **Describe Your Observations**	Tell the employee what s/he did that you want to give feedback on. Be Specific. Focus on Behavior. Give examples.
3. **Share your Assessment**	Describe how the behavior impacted the department and/or Penn State. Be objective.
4. **Explain Consequence**	If the behavior should be changed, offer suggestions on what to do differently or how to improve.

Remember: Every discussion will look a little different, depending on the situation. The receiver of your message will undoubtedly interject at many points in between steps. Whenever s/he starts talking, let him/her finish and then REPHRASE what they've said so s/he knows you got it.

Tips for Giving Feedback

- Act sooner rather than later

- Check your intentions

- Dialogue! Treat feedback as a shared responsibility

- Confirm mutual understanding and invite new information; probe for facts

- Keep your emotions in check

- Respect differences

What gets in your way of giving feedback?

What actions can you take in order to overcome those challenges in the future?

Remember, giving feedback well begins with following good practices. Practice and experience will help you become more skilled and comfortable in giving feedback.

By providing timely, constructive, and candid feedback to others, you will be an important part of their development and success.

Six Tips to Receiving Feedback

1. **Ask for Feedback – on an ongoing basis.**

   Feedback is so important that we have to ask for it if it does not occur naturally. Sometimes we do get feedback, but it is restricted to one aspect of our behavior, and we may have to ask for additional feedback.

   To ensure that we get feedback the way we'd most easily hear it, we can direct the giver on what we'd like to know: two or three things that we're doing well, and one or two things to work on. Also, we can ask the feedback giver to observe some aspect of our delivery, paying particular attention to whatever it is we want to improve.

2. **Do Not Reject the Feedback. Assume Good Intentions.**

   Be open. Feedback can be difficult and uncomfortable to hear. Rather than react by rejecting what is being said, work to reflect on how it could be valid.

3. **Listen for Understanding. Clarify What the Feedback Means.**

   When our defenses are up, we are more likely to misunderstand what is being said. Ask for clarification about the feedback before you respond to it. Try to paraphrase or repeat what you heard to check that you understand. This also allows the feedback giver to know that you've understood.

4. **Get Feedback from a Number of People.**

   If you rely on feedback from only one person, you are hearing only one opinion. Ask for feedback from other people to get more information. Keep in mind though, that differing feedback may indicate that you act differently depending on the person.

5. **Respond to Feedback. Jointly agree on ways to improve (when applicable).**

   Depending on your ability to take in the feedback given, you may want to delay a response. (As you respond think about what you want, what you are willing to do, and where you will compromise, if necessary. Build your own action plan.)

6. **Thank the Person for Giving the Feedback.**

   Remember, delivering feedback can be difficult. It was intended to help you. Thank the person that is delivering it.

Receiving Feedback Checklist

- How often do you ask for feedback?

- Do you ever get defensive?

- Do you ask for more detail?

- Are conversations thorough?

- Do you ensure that expectations are clear?

- Do you set goals for improvement?

- Do you follow up to get additional feedback on progress

Receiving Feedback: Discussion Primer
What would I like feedback about?
Who can give me reliable feedback about this?
How and when I'll ask for the feedback.
Questions I'll have for the person(s) giving the feedback:
How I will close the discussion:

Receiving Feedback: SARA Model*

Feedback can be overwhelming. Understanding the natural progression of reactions to feedback can help you work through feedback you receive yourself, and it can help you to understand others' reactions when you give them feedback.   It may also help you react to feedback more calmly, and possibly keep you from taking an action you may later regret.

When receiving feedback, think of the SARA MODEL:

> **S**urprise –in the extreme, **S**hock
>
> **A**nnoyance – in the extreme, **A**nger
>
> **R**ationalization – in the extreme, **R**ejection
>
> **A**cceptance – acceptance does not equal agreement

Surprise:

A first and natural reaction to feedback is often surprise. This is a natural defense mechanism – accept this response. The best action in this stage is no action.

Annoyance:

Surprise is replaced by anger. You may feel "how could he/she do this to me?" This is also a natural reaction, and the feeling will pass. Again, it is wise not to take action during this stage.

Rationalization:

During this stage, you are likely to make reasonable excuses. This is a way to try to make sense of the feedback – and is a way to help you feel that you are in control. Even though you sound "together" you most likely are not.

Acceptance:

Here, you can finally look at the feedback with some objectivity, take what is useful… and figure out how to best use it.

Keep in mind that the amount of time it takes to move through the SARA stages may vary depending on the nature of the feedback.   Allow yourself to pass through the stages at a natural pace.

Adapted from Feedback Toolkit, Rick Maurer (1994)

Performance Management Next Step: Mid-Year Check-In

November 2017 - January 2018:

- The employee schedules an appointment with the supervisor

- The employee and supervisor discuss overall performance and review goals; if necessary, adjustments can be made to goals at this point. No formal evaluation or ratings are needed for this conversation

- Both the employee and supervisor document that the conversation happened and what was discussed.