

The 3 Ways Leaders Can Create Feedback Culture At Work



Introduction

As a leader, you have the opportunity to act as a catalyst in your company. Whether by generating new ideas or motivating your team, it's up to you to create conditions where your team can do their best.

But great leadership isn't just about having a vision — it requires solid life skills, too. In fact, strengthening your communication skills can significantly impact your career, company, and employee outcomes.

At LifeLabs Learning, we've helped thousands of companies train their leaders on communication skills in the workplace. We've found that, while most leaders want to build a healthy feedback culture, they aren't sure where to start, and many of them still struggle to give honest feedback to their teams without sounding harsh.

In this guide, we'll dive into why giving feedback is so important for leaders, as well as the **3 approaches** that will help you build an effective feedback culture.

Why feedback culture is so important

Sure, good managers get results, but leadership is about much more than your bottom line. Giving feedback is important because it also:

- **Motivates your team:** **69%** of employees would work harder if they were recognized for their effort. Give your employees regular feedback so they can do their jobs competently and confidently.
- **Improves performance:** Instead of hoping they'll get it right without your input, give employees feedback so they continue to meet your expectations. Your team won't know what they need to improve if you don't tell them! If you deliver it in a fair way, constructive feedback will improve your team's work quality.
- **Increases employee engagement:** **43%** of highly engaged employees receive feedback at least once a week. Employee disengagement is a big problem, but it boils down to your culture. If you have a feedback culture, you can dramatically improve employee engagement because they know what's expected of them.

- **Sets expectations:** Your employees want to do good work. And yes, they want your feedback! **75%** of employees say feedback is valuable and **60%** of them want feedback on a daily or weekly basis. If your team says they aren't sure what you want from them, giving regular feedback will solve this issue.
- **Reduces turnover:** Turnover is bad for morale and it's also a drag on your bottom line. Companies that give regular feedback have a **14.9%** lower turnover rate, so feedback can clearly help you keep your team together.



3 tips to give better feedback as a manager

As a leader, it's your duty to make positive changes in your organization. You just can't do that without candid conversations with your team. Used well, feedback is a tool you can use to strengthen your team.

After training 200,000 leaders on how to give and receive feedback, we've found that 3 approaches will help you build a feedback culture at your own business.

1 - Give feedback in person

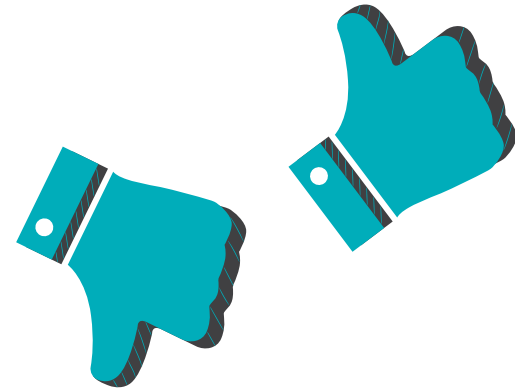
Remote work has blurred how we communicate, but it's rarely appropriate to give feedback via email or in a Slack message. If you have a good rapport with the employee or you have a low-stakes piece of feedback, text-based communication is fine, but otherwise, stick to in-person, video, or phone. An employee can hear your vocal tone or check your facial expressions through these media, which is important for putting them at ease.

2 - Decide when to give feedback

Feedback will look different in every organization. However you decide to do it, ritualize how you give feedback so your team sees it as a normal part of your workflow. That might mean giving feedback:

- In weekly one-on-ones.
- At predetermined project milestones.
- In daily standup meetings with the team.

When in doubt, any time you collaborate with an employee, ask them when you should give each other feedback. This gives them more of a say in the process and also sets the expectation that you, the leader, are welcome to feedback, too.



3 - Structure your feedback appropriately

Feedback can feel a little icky, especially if you're doling out negative feedback to an employee. What's important is that you structure your feedback session in a way that's fair and solution-focused. Follow this formula to give effective feedback to your team:

- **Start with the why:** Every piece of feedback has a purpose. Front-load your explanation of why you're giving feedback so they understand the importance of what you're saying. "I wanted to share X because I think it will help us..."
- **Ask for a small yes:** Before diving into the feedback itself, ask the employee for their permission to share feedback. This creates buy-in and gives the employee time to process what's happening. "Is it okay if I share some thoughts with you on this?"
- **Note the behavior:** Let the employee know about the problematic behavior. "I noticed that..."
- **Explain why this matters:** Address why, specifically, this behavior isn't working out. Instead of blindly telling an employee to do something differently, you're providing them with an explanation, which makes them more likely to change their behavior. "I mention this because..."
- **End with a question:** The final step is to ask the employee to either clarify why they did what they did or to change their behavior. "Next time, could you...?"

The bottom line

Feedback isn't a fluffy management practice: it's an essential tool for improving culture, engaging your team, and improving your bottom line. The workplace is the best arena for practicing your life skills, and that includes the art of giving feedback. Every day is a new chance to become a better communicator. Try implementing these 3 approaches in your business to build a feedback-friendly culture over time.

Ready to learn more?

We've trained over 300,000 managers, execs, and individuals at 1,000+ innovative companies — is yours next? Learn how to build an open, effective feedback with our lab-based, research-driven workshops. **Contact us** today to learn more.

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