

Keeping Your Team on Course Using Effective Feedback



Amy Snyder, DVM

Research has shown that providing team members with effective feedback and opportunities to use feedback is key to enhancing performance. The term feedback is used to describe all sorts of comments made after an event occurs, including advice, praise, evaluation and even reprimand. However, none of this is really feedback. By definition, feedback is specific information about the comparison between an observed performance and a standard, given with the intent of improving performance.

The ability to give effective feedback is essential to building successful teams by improving trust amongst team members. In his book *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick Lencioni observed that most organizations fail to achieve teamwork because of five common pitfalls. These pitfalls are absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability and inattention to results. On the surface, each appears to be a distinct and separate issue able to be addressed in isolation. However, the reality is these pitfalls are interrelated. Absence of trust stems from the unwillingness of team members to be vulnerable with each other. Teams that lack trust are unable to engage in constructive, informational conflict that fuels new ideas. When team members are not able to express their opinions in an open debate they feel unheard which leads to a lack of commitment. Lack of commitment leads to lack of “buy-in” and an inability to commit to a plan of action. Without a clear plan of action, team members avoid holding each other accountable. Failure to hold one another accountable leads to inattention to results - and inattention to results in veterinary medicine can have major effects on patient care!

The basis for building strong, effective teams is trust. The ability of team members to give and receive feedback regularly is essential to building trust. Effective feedback has been shown to increase team member confidence, motivation, interpersonal skills, satisfaction and performance. By contrast, a lack of feedback can result in team members overestimating or underestimating their abilities and decreased confidence. The absence of feedback also presents managers with a missed opportunity to reinforce effective performance and correct poor performance. The quality of feedback received is also important as overly critical appraisals can have a negative impact on learning.

The ability of managers to accurately observe team members performing a task and provide effective feedback is one of the most important aspects of coaching in the workplace. For feedback to be effective it must be:

1. Goal-Referenced

Effective feedback requires that the individual understands the goal, takes action to achieve the goal, and receives feedback on their performance as it relates to the goal.

2. Tangible and Transparent

Results of reaching the goal should be tangible and clear to the individual performing the task.

3. Actionable

Effective feedback provides the individual with concrete and specific recommendations that are actionable.

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4. User-Friendly

Feedback must be tailored to the individual's skill level.

5. Timely

Feedback on performance should be given as close as possible to the event.

6. Ongoing

Feedback should be ongoing in order to give individuals the opportunity to adjust their performance and receive updated information.

7. Consistent

Feedback must be consistent between members of the team to be useful.

Finally, for feedback to be effective, it must become part of the culture of the organization. All team members should be aware that ongoing feedback is valued as part of the learning process and as a tool for helping the team excel. Team members should also be coached on how to accept feedback. Accepting feedback requires that individuals listen openly, assume good intent, ask for details and recognize and control one's own emotions.

Teams who strive to grow and learn together need to engage in ongoing, effective feedback. However, giving and receiving feedback is not always easy! The framework discussed enables team members to give and receive meaningful feedback aimed at enhancing performance.

Keeping Your Team on Course Using Effective Feedback Worksheet



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Providing team members with effective feedback and opportunities to use feedback is key to enhancing performance. However, the reality is feedback is uncomfortable! It is uncomfortable to give and even more uncomfortable to get! So, what is effective feedback? Moreover, how can we give actionable feedback without creating more drama? In this workshop, we will explore why feedback is essential to building successful teams and outline seven keys to effective feedback. Participants will have the opportunity to practice both giving and receiving feedback using an easy framework. Finally, we will discuss how we can create a feedback culture within your organization.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this workshop participants will be able to:

- Outline the 5 dysfunctions of a team
- Describe the role of effective feedback for building trust amongst team members
- Identify 7 key elements of delivering effective feedback
- Model effective feedback using the W.W.W.E.B.Y framework
- Describe best practices for accepting feedback
- Describe how to enhance the feedback culture within your organization

5 DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

Author Credit: Patrick Lencioni

- Absence of trust
- Fear of conflict
- Lack of commitment
- Avoidance of accountability
- Inattention to results

7 KEYS TO EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Author Credit: Grant Wiggins

- Goal Oriented
- Tangible and Transparent
- Actionable
- User-Friendly
- Timely
- Ongoing
- Consistent

FEEDBACK FRAMEWORK

- What Went Well...
- Even Better Yet...

KEY POINTS

- Feedback is specific information about the comparison between an observed performance and a standard, given with the intent of improving performance.
- Teams who strive to grow and learn together need to engage in ongoing, effective feedback.
- Creating a feedback culture enables team members to embrace the process!

NOTES
