



# Module 9: Giving Effective Employee Feedback

So, how can you provide employees with effective feedback? In this lesson, you'll learn about the two types of workplace feedback and their benefits. Then, you'll learn how to follow a feedback process and ensure that your message is well-received.

Click on the first lesson below—or the *“Start eLearning”* button above—when you're ready to begin.



**Overview of Giving Effective Employee Feedback**



**Two Types of Workplace Feedback**



**The Benefits of Providing Regular Feedback**



**The Feedback Process**



**Delivering a Well-Received Message**



**Summary**



**Knowledge Check**

# Overview of Giving Effective Employee Feedback

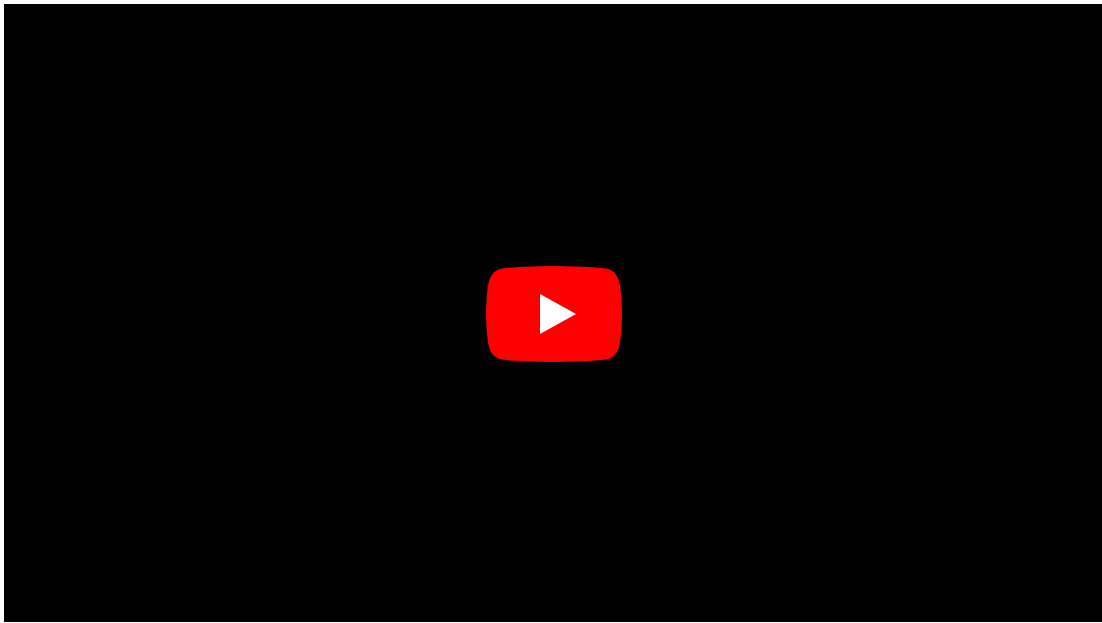


Over the past two weeks, you've noticed a steady decline in a particular staff member's performance. This employee is making careless mistakes, failing to meet their objectives, and producing lower-quality work. You need to say something, but what? How can you give feedback that's constructive, but not hurtful?

Providing employees with feedback can often feel like an uncomfortable ordeal, especially when covering a challenging topic. But whether you're delivering praise or criticism, feedback comes with the territory of managing others. And when that feedback is shared effectively, it can inspire employees to push past their limits and boost their performance.

So, how can you provide employees with effective feedback? In this lesson, you'll learn about the two types of workplace feedback and their benefits. Then, you'll learn how to follow a feedback process and ensure that your message is well-received.





Watch the video to learn about the two types of workplace feedback, the benefits of offering feedback, and how to ensure that your feedback is effective.

**[VIEW ON YOUTUBE >](#)**



Complete the content above before moving on.

# Two Types of Workplace Feedback



Feedback in the workplace has one primary purpose: to enhance employee performance. To achieve that goal, your feedback can either **reinforce positive behaviours** or **redirect negative behaviours**—thus helping employees understand where they’re excelling and where they’re falling short. Flip the cards below to learn more:

Reinforcing Behaviour

When **reinforcing** behaviour, you’ll highlight excellent performance and encourage employees to *“keep up the good work.”*

## Redirecting Behaviour

When **redirecting** behaviour, you'll discuss poor performance and offer improvement-based tips.



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# The Benefits of Providing Regular Feedback

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Feedback is essential for employee development. It helps staff understand how others see them, what impact they're making in the workplace, and what they can do to improve. Specifically, feedback in the workplace:

1

**Enhances performance.** Without feedback, staff may struggle to understand what they're doing right or wrong. They may unintentionally stop behaviours that are beneficial while also remaining oblivious to actions that need improvement. Provide your employees with ongoing feedback and tips, and you'll encourage them to move in the right direction and reach a higher performance standard.

2

**Boosts motivation.** Consistent feedback is connected to higher employee motivation, as it encourages staff to adopt a growth mindset. When feedback reinforces positive performance, employees feel appreciated and confident, which motivates them to continue on that current path. When feedback redirects poor performance, it motivates employees to follow the offered advice, make improvements, and overcome obstacles.

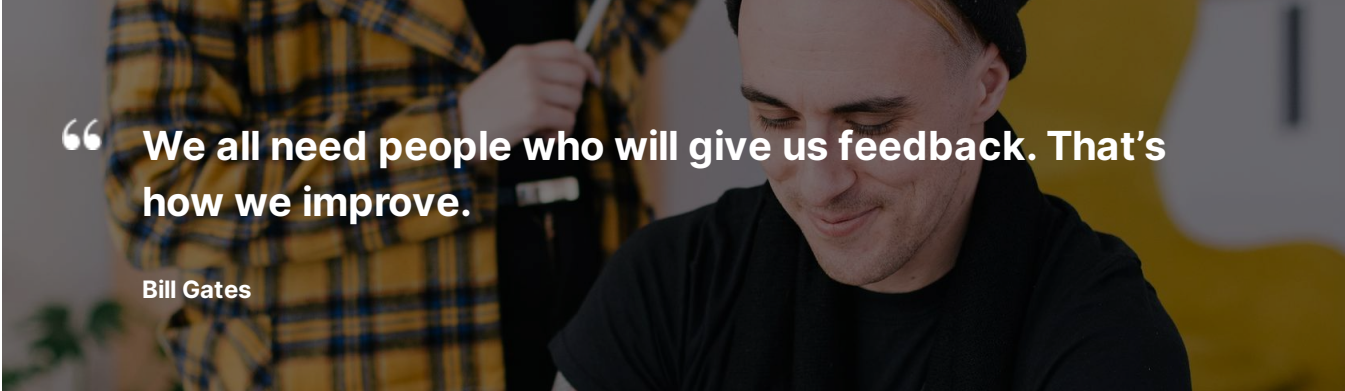
3

**Improves engagement.** Without feedback, employees can become disengaged. They may wonder: *"My manager doesn't seem to care either way, so what's the point of trying?"* Show your employees that you care about their performance and want them to excel, and they'll be more likely to strive toward success.

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4

**Promotes self-awareness.** Through feedback, employees learn about their strengths and weaknesses, uncover their positive and negative tendencies, and see how their actions affect others. And that collected information helps staff become more reflective and self-aware.



“ We all need people who will give us feedback. That’s how we improve.

Bill Gates

**CONTINUE**

# The Feedback Process



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So, how can you ensure that your feedback is effective? To start, you must prepare for that conversation—lest you deliver a disorganised and unhelpful message. The best feedback follows a fixed process. Click through this step-by-step interaction below to learn more.

## Step 1

### Prepare in Advance

First, before meeting with an employee, prepare your message. Think about what you want to say, how you want to say it, and what outcome you're hoping for.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- *What's the purpose of this meeting?*
- *What points do I need to reinforce?*
- *What outcome am I hoping for?*
- *How can I help my employee achieve that outcome?*

## Step 2

### Share Your Observation and Explain the Outcome

Next, to kick off the meeting, share a few observations with your staff member. Describe the performance you've observed as well as the outcome of that performance.

When sharing these observations, stick to specific incidents. For example, if an employee missed a report deadline, you might say: *"Your last report wasn't delivered on time, and that caused the client to doubt our abilities."* Or, if delivering praise, you might instead say: *"We put a lot on your plate, and you still met those deadlines. The client is happy, and that's thanks to your effort."*

### Step 3

## Communicate Expectations

Next, once you've shared your observations, communicate your expectations. This step will help your employee understand the purpose of this feedback session.

If you've complimented an employee on their performance, let them know that you'd like to see more of that behaviour. If you've highlighted an area that needs improvement, explain the adjustments that must be made. For example: *"Projects must be delivered on time. Going forward, let's make sure you meet the established deadlines."*

When communicating expectations, touch on the following points:

- What you expected before this incident
- Whether your employee's performance met those expectations
- What you expect going forward

## Step 4

### **Ask Your Employee for Their Perspective**

Once you've shared your message, give your employee a chance to take the floor and voice their perspective. You never want to make assumptions about why someone did or didn't do something. So, ask this staff member for their take. Are they surprised to hear your observation? Can they offer any extra insight? Are there circumstances you hadn't considered?

By giving your staff the chance to offer more information, you'll gain insight into the challenges they face as well as the type of support they need. For example, you may learn why an employee was able to complete a beneficial task (and what they need to re-create those circumstances going forward). Or, you may learn about a set of challenges you weren't aware of previously.

## Step 5

### **Define Actionable Next Steps**

Finally, end the conversation by looking toward the future. Rather than rehashing what you've already discussed, use your closing comments to define actionable next steps.

If you offered positive feedback, encourage your employee to continue on that path and ask them if they need anything. If you discussed an area that needs work, use this time to brainstorm a few possible solutions and come up with an action plan.

## Summary

Regardless of your message, workplace feedback should always follow a process. To start, take some time to **prepare what you need to say**.

Then, meet with your staff member and **share your observations, explain the outcome** of those observations, and **communicate your expectations. Ask this employee for their perspective**, and with that information, drive performance forward by **defining actionable next steps**.



Complete the content above before moving on.

# Delivering a Well-Received Message



Once you have the feedback process down, how can you ensure that your message is well-received? The trick to effective feedback lies in striking a balance between being direct and being kind. That is especially necessary when delivering constructive feedback. You don't want to water down the issue, but you also don't want to offend or dissuade your employee from pushing ahead.

Simply put, what you say matters. And, thankfully, there are some techniques you can practice to deliver a message that's constructive, but not corrosive. Expand the rows below to learn about four expert tips.

## Be Specific and Direct

Effective feedback is clear, direct, and specific. If you want your employees to improve, they need to know what behaviours they should continue and what behaviours they should stop.

So, to ensure your staff understands your messages, avoid generalisations. Rather than saying: *"Excellent job at today's meeting!"* or *"That report needs work,"* dive into the specifics. Be as precise as possible, and let your employees know what you liked or disliked about their performance.

For example, if you're delivering praise, you might say: *"Your closing arguments during today's meeting were spot-on. You solved our client's doubts and made a great impression."* Not only does that feedback lift your employee's spirits, but it also lets them know what behaviour they should repeat in the future.

## Focus on Behaviour, Not Character —

Feedback must be based on an event or an employee's behaviour, not their character or personality. When you comment on an employee's character—especially when that comment is negative—it can cause them to feel insulted, combative, and defensive. Such emotionally charged responses are rarely effective, and they can cause your employee to close themselves off to beneficial change.

To keep feedback behaviour focused, avoid statements that begin with: "You are \_\_\_." For example, "*You are disrespectful*" or "*You are careless.*" Instead, say: "*Your behaviour was disrespectful,*" or "*Those actions were careless.*" That way, you're referring to a specific incident, rather than an overall personality trait.

## Stick to the Facts —

When evaluating an employee's performance, it's often tempting to make assumptions or interject your feelings into the conversation. But feedback should only be based on direct, objective observations.

For example, if an employee missed a morning meeting, don't assume it's because they have poor time management skills or because they're uninterested in their job. Not only can these assumptions be false, but they can also put your employee on the defensive. Instead, keep that conversation productive by simply sharing what you observed and the impact of that observation.

## Ditch the "Sandwich Technique" —

You've likely heard of the "sandwich technique" before, which involves sandwiching criticism between two "slices" of praise. It's a popular strategy that's used to cushion the blow of negative feedback. However, the approach rarely works.

To start, employees often see through the technique. Delaying the inevitable only causes employees to anxiously await the impending *“however ...”* Second, the method can diffuse your message—diluting the impact of both your praise and your criticism.

A more effective method is to be honest and straightforward. For example, if your employee is missing deadlines, you might start with: *“As we both know, you haven’t been reaching your targets lately, and that’s affecting our projections. So, let’s try addressing this problem together.”*



Complete the content above before moving on.

# Summary



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Feedback gives employees valuable data about their performance and how they can improve. It can either **reinforce positive** behaviour or **redirect negative** behaviour. And when that feedback is ongoing, it leads to several benefits—including enhanced employee performance, motivation, engagement, and self-awareness.

Of course, not all feedback is created equal. So, to ensure that you deliver an effective message, follow the below process:

1. **Prepare in advance.**
2. **Share your observations (and the outcome of those observations).**
3. **Communicate your expectations.**
4. **Ask your employees for their perspective.**
5. **Define actionable next steps.**

After that, success comes down to how well you present your message. You must be specific and direct, comment on an employee's behaviour (and not their character), stick to the facts, and avoid sandwiching criticism with praise. Remember those tips, and you can provide future-focused feedback that fuels employee performance and promotes ongoing development.



**Keep feedback regular.** When feedback is continuous, the process becomes less of an ordeal, and it's more effective. It allows you to prevent issues from escalating and to cultivate a culture of continual improvement. So, keep feedback regular, grab opportunities as they present themselves, and make a commitment to schedule routine catch-ups with your staff.

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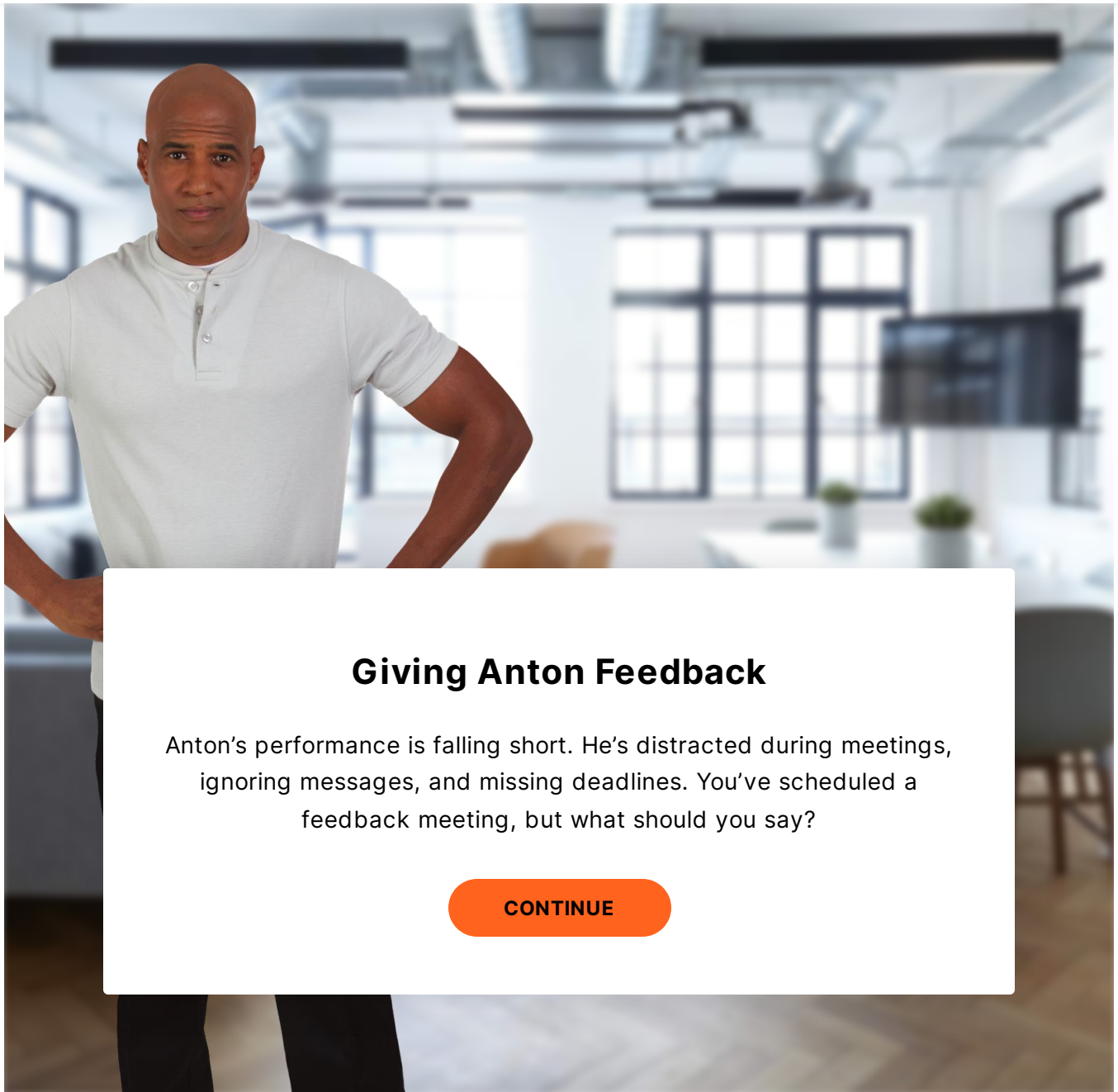
Lesson 7 of 7

# Knowledge Check



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Click through the scenario below to check your understanding of the topic:



## Giving Anton Feedback

Anton's performance is falling short. He's distracted during meetings, ignoring messages, and missing deadlines. You've scheduled a feedback meeting, but what should you say?

[CONTINUE](#)

### Scene 1 Slide 1

[Continue](#) → [Next Slide](#)



Hi, what did you want to talk to me about?

1

You're disengaged and disrespectful. You're not paying attention during meetings, answering messages, or presenting your best work.

2

You're an excellent team member, but lately, your behaviour has seemed disengaged and distracted. But other than that, keep up the good work!

3

I want you to excel, but your work seems unfinished. You're missing deadlines, and that's hurting our output. What are your views, and how can I help?

## Scene 1 Slide 2

0 → Scene 1 Slide 3

1 → Scene 1 Slide 4

2 → Scene 1 Slide 5

## What Went Wrong?

Phrases such as: *"You are "* can make people feel like you're attacking their character (rather than commenting on their performance). This type of feedback is rarely effective. Let's try that again.

[CONTINUE](#)

### Scene 1 Slide 3

[Continue](#) → [Scene 1 Slide 2](#)



## What Went Wrong?

While it's tempting to sandwich negative feedback between two positives, this approach is often more confusing than beneficial.

Remember, effective feedback is direct. Let's try again.

[CONTINUE](#)

### Scene 1 Slide 4

[Continue](#) → [Scene 1 Slide 2](#)

## Great Job!

Your feedback was clear and direct. You explained the behaviour and the impact. Now, Anton is aware of the problem, and he's prepared to work with you and fix this issue going forward.

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START OVER



### Scene 1 Slide 5

Continue → End of Scenario