How to Give Constructive Workplace Feedback With the SBI Me

Work World · about 29 minutes · 2026-11-08

Prepare and deliver specific, respectful feedback without guessing motives or hiding the message behind praise. These 27 steps cover evidence, privacy, remote conversations, Situation–Behavior–Impact statements, the SBII intent question, neutral delivery, active listening, emotional pauses, joint action plans, documentation, recognition, follow-up, and long-term feedback habits.

Things you will need

- One clear work-related purpose and a specific firsthand example
- Short factual notes separating observation, impact, and unresolved context
- A private accessible setting or approved remote meeting channel
- Enough time for the recipient to respond and for a pause if needed
- Relevant role expectations, policies, resources, and support options
- A factual action record and calendar entry for proportionate follow-up

Preparing a Fair and Private Conversation

1. **Set one purpose for the conversation**
   Choose one useful purpose for the conversation.
2. **Gather dated, firsthand examples**
   Gather specific, firsthand examples before forming your message.
3. **Test your assumptions about context**
   Challenge your assumptions about motives, ability, and context.
4. **Confirm informal feedback is the right channel**
   Decide whether informal SBI feedback is the right channel and choose an appropriate time.
5. **Book a private, uninterrupted setting**
   Arrange a private setting with enough time for a two-way exchange.
6. **Prepare privacy and access for remote feedback**
   Prepare privacy and accessibility for a remote feedback conversation.

Building a Clear SBI Statement

7. **Name the situation precisely**
   Name the Situation with enough detail to locate the example.
8. **Describe the behavior as observable action**
   Describe the Behavior as an observable action rather than a character judgment.
9. **State the concrete impact on the work**
   Explain the Impact on the work, team, customer, or your own experience.
10. **Strip absolutes and motive claims from the draft**
    Remove absolute language, motive claims, and unnecessary criticism from the draft.

11. **Draft one plain-language SBI statement**

    Draft one concise Situation–Behavior–Impact statement in natural language.

12. **Rehearse a neutral opening without padding**

    Rehearse a direct, neutral opening without disguising the main point.

Delivering Feedback and Listening

13. **Open supportively and check availability**

    Open with a supportive purpose and ask whether the person can engage now.

14. **Deliver once, then ask about intent**

    Deliver the SBI statement once, then ask for the person's perspective or intent.

15. **Listen without composing your rebuttal**

    Listen to the answer without preparing a rebuttal while the other person speaks.

16. **Paraphrase their answer and confirm it**

    Paraphrase what you heard and ask whether your understanding is accurate.

17. **Pause or reschedule when tension rises**

    Pause or reschedule when either person cannot continue constructively.

Agreeing on Action and Follow-Up

18. **Ask for their next steps first**

    Invite the recipient to propose next steps before offering your own solution.

19. **Agree on one observable behavior change**

    Agree on a specific, observable action rather than a vague promise to improve.

20. **Clarify support and responsibilities on both sides**

    Identify support, resources, and responsibilities on both sides.

21. **Set a proportionate follow-up date**

    Set a proportionate follow-up date and agree on how progress will be reviewed.

22. **Record the agreed facts within policy**

    Document the agreed facts and actions with appropriate confidentiality.

Learning From the Outcome

23. **Name the progress as soon as it appears**

    Recognize specific progress when the agreed behavior occurs.

24. **Judge the outcome against the original purpose**

    Evaluate the outcome against the original work-related purpose.

25. **Ask how the conversation landed for them**

    Invite feedback on how you conducted the conversation.

26. **Build a steady feedback rhythm**

    Create a regular feedback rhythm instead of waiting for annual reviews or crises.

27. **Escalate recurring problems into team fixes**

    Connect individual feedback to learning and healthier team systems.

Sources

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