



Receiving Feedback From Others

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- Get as much information as possible.
- Do not become defensive.
- Use the feedback you solicit.

Giving and receiving feedback are two important parts of effective team communication. The guidelines presented will assist team members in developing open channels of communication where team members can learn and grow from each other.

There should be reciprocity in feedback. If team members can give it, they should be able to receive it. When soliciting feedback from others, it is helpful to follow these guidelines:

1. Get as much information as possible.

The more specific the feedback, the more useful it will be. Whether the solicitation is formal or informal, make certain that questions are specific. Sometimes team members will be either vague, or global with their reactions. If this occurs, the person asking for feedback must probe for the details in order to make the information useful. If the outcome of the feedback is to make changes, it must be specific so that you know what to change.

2. Do not become defensive.

One of the tendencies that occurs when receiving feedback is to become defensive. It is important to listen to what is being communicated and to avoid the motorboat syndrome - "yes, but... but... but... but"! We often want to deny the feedback and immediately provide refutation. For feedback to be useful, team members must avoid defensive responses.

3. Use the feedback you solicit.

The feedback we receive from others is often valid. Feedback should be welcomed. It is important to study it and use it to make changes in behavior if you feel it is necessary. Not all feedback comments, however, should be accepted without close consideration to the information and person giving the feedback. Often, feedback may say more about the person giving the feedback than it does about the person receiving it.

Nevertheless, successful team members appreciate others' feedback and use it to make improvements in their behavior when appropriate.