

Giving and Receiving Feedback

ENGAGE is about people, not process. People perform better and achieve their goals when they get help. ENGAGE is about real conversations to help each other improve individually and as a team. Real conversations involve real feedback. Feedback is for everyone. The best performers need feedback to get better and stay motivated. People learning a new skill need feedback to stay on track and those who need more feedback benefit from more direct, thoughtful coaching. Whether more positive or critical, feedback is about helping you get better.

Approaching feedback

Giving effective feedback, like any skill, takes practice. And whether giving or receiving feedback it takes the right mindset.

When giving feedback you want to:

- Prepare
- Focus on only a few things
- Avoid piling on with a long list of examples
- Never speculate about someone's motives. Stick to observed behaviors and being helpful

When getting feedback you want to:

- Prepare
- Focus
- Come prepared to listen and not react

That is why taking a few minutes to review your notebook helps make a difference. It helps you prepare and gets in the right frame of mind.

4-Step Feedback Model

ENGAGE uses a simple four step approach to feedback. It helps everyone stay on track to get clear, specific feedback and it helps avoid people feeling awkward or defensive.

STEP 1: Start with specific observed behavior: "I observed that... (provide specific description/s of the situation, behavior, etc. involved)."

STEP 2: Focus on impact: "As a result, the impact on (you, the customer, work team, etc.) is that (specifically describe in pact of what was observed)."

STEP 3: Reflect and understand: Pause for reflection and understanding. The supervisor and team member should ask questions to ensure they both understand each other.

STEP 4: Recommend: "The next time, my suggestions would be to... (provide specific, actionable, concrete examples or expectations for performance or behavior in the future)."

For Additional information, go to <https://oa.mo.gov/engage>



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Here is an example of the feedback model in action. The team member had identified improving his customer service skills as a professional development goal during previous ENGAGE conversations with his supervisor.

Supervisor: Bobby, yesterday I was walking by your desk and I heard you on the phone with a consumer. Your voice was loud, it was shaky, and you were kind of abrupt. What I was worried about is that the consumer didn't feel like they were being heard and when that happens it can affect the whole department really negatively. Not only that, but your loud voice could have been distracting to your coworkers. Do you remember that situation?

Employee: Yes, I do.

Supervisor: How do you feel the call went?

Employee: I remember speaking to him yesterday. He just didn't want to listen. It was a tough call. My calls are usually just fine. This time I just didn't know what to do.

Supervisor: I understand – our work can be challenging at times so what I want you to do is take a piece of advice. It's old advice, but it's good advice. Just stop, take a breath and recollect yourself. Get back on the phone with the consumer and repeat back what they said. It makes it feel like you heard them and then that way maybe the call will go a little bit better as you go on. Do you think that would work?

Employee: Yeah, I'll try that. I think it might work.

Supervisor: Great, I think that will help.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to discuss any areas of disagreement with the team member to ensure that once the meeting is over, the team member at least understands the supervisor's perspective and what is expected.

Supervisor: So do you have any other questions about this situation?

Employee: I don't. I think next time I'll take a deep breath, listen to what the consumer has to say and repeat it back to them. I think that will work just fine.

Supervisor: Great. Well let's go ahead make a note of that in our notebooks and then we can check back in on it later.

In this example, the supervisor applied the 4-step feedback model to offer feedback that helped the team member progress on a professional development goal. Whether positive or critical, ENGAGE feedback aims to help each team member grow.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Receiving feedback takes practice, too. It can be just as hard as giving feedback.

When receiving feedback:

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- View feedback as a good thing. Remember someone is taking time to help you to achieve your professional goals.
- Don't be defensive. Feedback is meant to help you – whether you view the feedback as positive about your strengths and accomplishments – or more critical about what you can do better.
- Listen to the perspectives being shared.
- Ask follow-up questions to clarify feedback. And ask for specific examples if feedback is only offered in general terms.
- Play back the feedback in your own words to confirm you get it. Something like, “Just so we are on the same page, I heard you recommend that next time I should try to do X instead of Y. Is that right?”

Act on Feedback Received

ENGAGE is about conversations to make us better so we all need to act upon feedback. Supervisors and team members should take notes on feedback and recommendations. You should look for opportunities to act upon the feedback. And you should ask not only your supervisors, but your colleagues to help you by letting you know how you are doing.

Giving Feedback Every Day

ENGAGE depends upon regular, structured conversations, but you don't have to wait for a formal scheduled ENGAGE meeting to give and receive feedback. The basic approach can be used any time.

You can provide real-time feedback, especially when you see the person trying to implement the feedback. Just 60 seconds after a meeting or another conversation can be enough time to provide a quick “course check.” Rapid, real time feedback is powerful! Remember the more you give and receive feedback, the better you will get at it.