

The Big Picture: Handling Feedback

Annual performance appraisals shouldn't be a time of dread. Self-knowledge is key for your personal and professional development, and feedback is a great way to know thyself more. Look to it as an opportunity -- both in giving and receiving feedback -- with these tips. It's never too late to resolve to handle feedback better.

A new perspective

THE BIG PICTURE

Handling feedback

Annual performance appraisals shouldn't be a time of dread. Self-knowledge is key for your personal and professional development, and feedback is a great way to know thyself more. Look to it as an opportunity -- both in giving and receiving feedback -- with these tips. It's never too late to resolve to handle feedback better.

Discover your hidden strengths
By comparing your self-perceptions with the way others see you, 360° feedback – a system for assessing habitual behaviors observed by multiple sources – can allow you to discover your blind spots as well as your hidden strengths.

My behavior, as rated by others	HIGH	LOW	Hidden strengths (underestimating myself)	Strengths
	LOW	HIGH	Areas to improve	Blind spots (overestimating myself)

When receiving feedback

- Remember: how you perform does not define who you are.
- Assume your evaluator has positive intentions.
- Regard it as an opportunity for improvement.
- Recognize your biases.
- Ask for the basis of a critique.
- Take time to digest comments before responding.

When offering feedback

- Choose an appropriate setting.
- Be respectful.
- Be specific and avoid judging the person.
- Link the evaluated behavior with its impact on the organization.
- Focus only on aspects that are directly relevant to performance.
- Don't surprise: any deficiencies should have been discussed periodically.

An underutilized tool...
When asked about the prior six months, only:

- 20% of employees report having spoken with their manager about the steps they can take to reach their goals.
- 23% of employees report that their manager has provided them with any meaningful feedback.

...but less feared than most think

92% of professionals believe that negative feedback, if delivered appropriately, is effective at improving performance.

More feedback, please
How to get your colleagues to tell you what they really think:

- Make it clear that you want to receive feedback.
- Thank people who offer it.
- Establish regular avenues for feedback.
- Seek as much specific information as possible.
- Try informal get-togethers to touch base.
- Show that you are serious: ask questions, listen, take notes.
- Communicate results.
- Steer clear of issues unrelated to professional performance.


Source: The State of the American Workplace (Gallup, 2017)
Source: Zenger/Folkman, HBR.org

32 | IESE Business School Insight | no. 154

Source: Based on technical notes written by IESE professor Alberto Ribera as well as other authors

March 1, 2020

A version of this article is published in [IESE Business School Insight 154](#).

Thanks for reading  **IESE** insight
Click below to download the
infographic

Array

www.iese.edu/insight