

3.5.5: Criticism of Employees

Learning Objectives

- Write an internal critical message to a person you manage.

The best way to write a critical message to a subordinate is to keep it as constructive as possible. Employees are the ultimate competitive advantage and must be valued. Your performance as a manager largely depends on the performance of your subordinates.

The goal of constructive criticism is to improve the behavior or the behavioral results of a person while consciously avoiding personal attacks and blaming. This kind of criticism is carefully framed in language acceptable to the target person, sometimes acknowledging that the critics themselves could be wrong.

Insulting and hostile language is avoided, and phrases used are like “I feel...” and “It’s my understanding that...” and so on. Constructive critics try to stand in the shoes of the person being criticized, and consider what things would look like from their perspective.

Effective criticism should be:

- Positively intended, and appropriately motivated: you are not only sending back messages about how you are receiving the other’s work but about how you feel about the other person and your relationship with him/her. Keeping this in mind will help you to construct effective critiques.
- Specific, allowing the individual to know exactly what behavior is to be considered.
- Objective, so that the recipient not only gets the message but is willing to do something about it. If your criticism is objective, it is much harder to resist.
- Constructive: consciously avoiding personal attacks, blaming, insulting language or hostile language. Avoiding evaluative language such as “you are wrong” or “that idea was stupid” reduces the likelihood that the receiver will respond defensively.

As the name suggests, the consistent and central notion is that the criticism must have the aim of constructing, scaffolding, or improving a situation, a goal that is usually subverted by the use of hostile language or personal attacks.

Effective criticism can change what people think and do; thus, criticism is the birthplace of change. Effective criticism can also be liberating. It can fight ideas that keep people down with ideas that unlock new opportunities while consciously avoiding personal attacks and blaming.

Here is a video that provides more details on how to deliver negative feedback effectively:

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

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- How to Deliver Negative Feedback Fairly and Effectively . **Authored by:** HR360Inc. **Located at:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s76bX5ujl_4. **License:** All Rights Reserved

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