



Using Feedback

Using Feedback to Enhance
Your Personal Development

CAPITALIZING ON CRITIQUE

To inform your development you may receive feedback from a number of sources.

- 360 degree feedback,
- engagement surveys,
- psychometrics,
- assessment centres,
- observations of others,
- performance appraisals,
- ad hoc feedback, elicited or not.

The data may be presented in many different ways, but ultimately it provides you with valuable information on how you demonstrate a range of behaviors and competencies.

Feedback from others reflects their perceptions. Perceptions are subjective and should not be regarded as objective facts. However, perceptions do reflect the reality experienced by those who shared them. Their perceptions of you determine:

- how they interact with you,
- the decisions they make about you, and
- what they may say about you to others.

In short, perceptions matter!

Your feedback provides you with valuable insights. With the information, you will be enabled to direct and manage your personal development, and so enhance your capability. It will also help you to be more cognizant of the impact you have on those around you and it can help you to improve working relationships.

This workbook is available to assist you in making the best possible use of feedback you have received and equip you to craft or refine your Self Development Journal.

UNDERSTANDING FEEDBACK RATING SCALES

Different feedback instruments use different rating scales. Make sure that you understand any scales used in your report.

Things to look for:

- Is there just one scale or were multiple scales used? For example, some instruments seek ratings on both performance and importance. Being given an insight into what others think is relatively more or less important can often explain how they interact with you as well as help you to prioritise your development.
- To what does each scale refer? Skill? Performance? Agreement? Frequency?
- If numbers are used, does a low number represent positive or negative feedback?
- Should you be exploring how you are perceived in terms of:
 - (i) internal relativities, (i.e. what you scored relatively high on and what you scored relatively low on), and/or
 - (ii) how you are perceived relative to some other benchmark (e.g. a group norm or target score?) Note: the former is the most useful when planning your development as you can typically only enhance and capitalize on your relative strengths and correct, damage limit, or get others to compensate for your relative limitations.

1

REFLECT

Bringing together thoughts and evidence about the challenges you face, the aspirations you have, how your performance compares to what is expected of you, and how others perceive you to behave.

Determining your true strengths, any limitations that may be inhibiting your success, and their benefits and consequences.

Defining your development priorities.

2

PLAN

Defining your development goals

Determining the development opportunities you have and

assessing the commitment you can make to development.

Planning a practical course of development action.

3

IMPLEMENT

Engaging with others to strengthen the plan.

Taking action and measuring progress.

Celebrating successes on the journey.

The primary value of feedback is to help you to craft or refine a personal development action plan. This should assist you to achieve your goals and aspirations, and to meet more effectively or more efficiently the many demands on your time. Before looking at the feedback, it is worth reflecting on a few issues.

What are the three biggest challenges I face in the upcoming period?
(It is these that will demand you to be strong in terms of certain behaviors)

What do I find easy / difficult?
(You are likely to do the former most often and quickest and thus be better at it .)

What do I find like / dislike doing?
(You are likely to do more of the former even when time is limited and so be better at it.)

With whom do I work well / poorly?

(You are likely to engage with the former most often and avoid the latter.)

What are my three personal aspirations for the upcoming period?

(What benefit is there for you in personal development; what will it help you to achieve?)

THEREFORE, which competencies or individual behaviors are going to prove crucial to my success in the upcoming period and why?

Your feedback may include a rich array of data presentations. However, bear two things in mind:

- You also receive feedback throughout the day from those with whom you interact – through how they respond to you; how they engage you; what they share with you and keep from you; and the decisions they make about you. Reflect on this and integrate it with any formal feedback data.
- You can only develop one or two behaviors at any one time. So, focus on the key messages in the feedback.

Assemble your feedback and revisit this page often to update your responses.

What surprises me in my feedback?

(What did you see that you did not expect? What are the benefits / consequences of what you now know?)

What might I need to investigate further?

(You may have some feedback that you do not initially understand. Sometimes, a period of quiet reflection about various interactions can help and you will think, “Ah, now I understand.” For others you may need to go and ask people. Take care – remember that their input may have been anonymous, so ask tactfully e.g., “My feedback suggests that I Have you any ideas why others might view me that way?”)

What patterns or themes are there?

(e.g., Do most of your perceived strengths have something in common? Does one source type view you quite differently to others? Is there greater consensus on your limitations than your strengths?)

What appear to be my perceived relative strengths?

(You need to think about how you can capitalize on these strengths, without overplaying them)

What appear to be my perceived relative limitations?

(You need to think about how you can correct these, damage limit their impact, surround yourself with those who can compensate for you, or ...)

What are the benefits/consequences of these behaviours and/or being perceived this way?

(Strengths are beneficial if deployed appropriately; they can also become weaknesses if over done; limitations don't always have consequences if we have others around us who compensate or we avoid situations that need those behaviors.)

You are nearly ready to commence refining your development plan.

After you have identified how you are perceived, come to your conclusions about your relative strengths and limitations, and identified their benefits and consequences, you need to focus.

Remember, you can only change one or two behaviors at any one time.

What are my development priorities?

(On what am I going to focus?)

Achieve my business goals

Transfer my skills to others

Capitalize on my strengths

Correct a weakness or derailer

Develop strategies to limit the impact of a limitation

Ready myself for another role

Solve an interpersonal issue

Create/develop new relationships

Address my work-life balance

Reduce my stress level

Increase my productivity

Other:

What are my development goals?

(Write a description of what ‘successful development’ will produce i.e., What will your new behaviour look like? Do not write what you will do to achieve the change, merely what the result will look like – how others will know you have developed and how you might assess your progress.)

Do I already have the knowledge and skill needed?

(If the answer is “Yes”, then you need to explore ways of triggering and reinforcing you to display the appropriate behaviours. If the answer is “No”, then you need to find ways of acquiring the knowledge and/or skill that you lack.)

If I need to acquire knowledge of skill, how do I typically learn or most like to learn?

(e.g., have you learned most from (a) theory, reading etc., (b) practical activity, doing, (c) observing others, (d) being taught or coached, ...)

What level of commitment can I make to this development?

(e.g., are you able to commit to personal time and, if so, how much? e.g., what depth of development can you commit to – major personal change? e.g., what resources do you have available – time, money, peer support, ...?)

Not all development needs training input. Much of what you know and can do has been learned by doing real work; performing challenging tasks; being given the chance to do things that had never done before. You should look for more such opportunities. You will have learned a significant amount too from working for, with and alongside other people. Think about who you could learn from next. Only after that, consider what, if any, formal input you may need.

What appropriate development options do I see available?

(Do not look for 'big solutions' unless absolutely necessary. Look for on the job and even personal-time options for acquiring new knowledge and/or skill. Look for challenging and low risk opportunities to practice any new behavior. Development should not be additional to the work - it IS the work. Development should also not be isolated and individual – look for opportunities to develop from and with others.)

1. On-the-job opportunities

2. Opportunities to learn from or develop with others

3. Opportunities for formal training or learning

What am I going to DO, how and when?

(Record a simple summary here. [There is an action planning template “Self Development Route” in the GreatAbles section of the WantToBeGreatManager website.](#))

How am I going to ensure that I will be triggered to display the new behavior when needed?

Whom am I going to involve?

(e.g., to teach me what to do or how to do it; to trigger me to act when I need to do so; to give me feedback on how I am doing; ...)

How am I going to track my progress?

Those who provided you with feedback gave up valuable time for you. Following up with them lets them know you appreciate their input - it closes the loop. It also provides an opportunity to get support for your planned development activity from them.

With whom am I going to share my plan and when?

(Say “Thank you” as soon as you can to all those from whom you sought feedback.)

What am I going to share with them?

(Share highlights of what you learned; share what you can about your development goals; tell them about any specific development activities that you are willing to share.)

What is in it for them?

(e.g., have you learnt most from (a) theory, reading etc., (b) practical activity, doing, (c) observing others, (d) being taught or coached, ...)(Explain how they may benefit from your development, directly or indirectly.)

How can they help me to develop?

(Explain how they can provide support; explain how they may give you feedback.)

Now it is time to ACT.

**Development only takes place
if you do something.**

**Engage with those
who can support you.**

**Ensure that you have
appropriate triggers
to act differently
and respond to them.**

**Take the planned
development actions.**

**Monitor and measure your progress,
and adjust your plan as needed.**

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