

Providing feedback - as easy as AEIOU!

How to provide feedback
using a simple step-wise
approach

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Providing feedback

Feedback can be used with groups, between two people, at any level of your team, group or organisation. ie manager to team member; team member to team member, manager to manager. Focusing on collaboration or Win/Win outcome, the key to this approach is a concept known as Positive Intentionality (sounds complex but it's really simple). Positive Intentionality assumes the other person means well and is not trying to cause a conflict.

For example: Your manager has delegated the coordination of an OH&S training workshop (to help train staff from all piggeries in the region) to you because of your background and experience. She then constantly checks with you 'just to see how it's going'. You find this aggravating and you're beginning to feel that you're not trusted.

If you approach your manager to discuss this and begin with a question such as "Why are you constantly looking over my shoulder when you assign me to a task?" you come across as accusatory, automatically putting you're her on the defence.

With Positive Intentionality, you attempt to identify a positive reason in your manager's mind for her action. Perhaps she simply wants to make sure everything is going right, or that you aren't overloaded.

After you've identified a positive intention, you can then use it to open the issue without putting your manager on the defensive. Start with "I know you're concerned about getting this workshop organised " you are identifying with your manager's concern rather than accusing her actions.

Steps in AEIOU model

A: Assume the other person means well.

If you assume the other person is trying to cause conflict, the chances for effectively managing the situation are greatly reduced. However, if you attempt to identify a positive intention and state it to the other person, you substantially increase the possibility of resolving the differences.



The AEIOU model

E: Express your feelings.

After you've indicated to the person what you perceive to be a positive intention, you then respond by affirming that position and expressing your own specific concern.

I: Identify what you would like to happen.

In this step you non-defensively propose the changes you would like to see occur. Although you need to be firm in your approach, the language you choose is very important. Saying "I want" is extremely different from saying "I would like"

O: Outcome expected.

Indicate the positive and the negative potential outcomes, but emphasise the positive expectations for both of you (WIIFT?)

U: Understanding on a mutual basis.

In this final stage, the aim is to get the other person to agree to your proposal. A good way to do this is to ask "Could we agree to this for a while and see if it works out for both of us?" Of course there are always two sides to the story so you need to be ready to consider Compromise or alternative options in this step.

Example

A: I know you are worried about me getting the workshop organised in time, but

E: I feel you doubt my ability to cope/ don't trust that I will get it sorted out

I: I would like it if I could let you know if I need to delegate/ or if I could call you and give you an update every fortnight,

O: This would ensure that the workshop goes ahead on time and that you are kept up to date with its progress or if there are any problems.

U: Could we agree to this for the next few weeks?

Tips

- Prepare your script well before the feedback session
- Get through your script before inviting a response
- Clarify issues that are unclear

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