

5 steps to giving effective feedback

You give instructions, but people don't follow your lead. The solution is to prepare so that you provide supportive, timely coaching.

Rushing to give feedback rarely pays off. Follow these five steps to pave the way for effective coaching:

1. **Know what matters most.** Isolate the most important issue and focus on it as you begin the conversation. Don't let extraneous concerns interfere. In addition to defining what matters most, think through why it matters and what outcome you want to produce as a result of your coaching.
2. **Check your motivation.** Ideally, you want to coach from a position of support with a genuine eagerness to enhance a staffer's performance. If you feel angry or resentful—or you lack confidence and that makes you defensive—then you may alienate the person you're trying to instruct.
3. **Support your main point.** Before you make an assertion about an employee's performance, be ready to cite an example or two. That allows you to begin the coaching session by identifying the core issue and adding, "Here's an example."
4. **Pick the best time.** Attempting to coach when either you or the employee is tired, distracted or aggrieved can sabotage your success. Confirm that the listener is receptive to your message—and that you can concentrate on delivering it without interruption.
5. **Establish a back-and-forth rhythm.** To avoid talking too much, stop after every few sentences and let the employee chime in. This helps you monitor whether your comments hit the mark.

— Adapted from "[Having Those Difficult Conversations with Ease](#)," Monika Jensen.