



FEEDBACK FOR PERFORMANCE

course guide

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Was first published in June 1997

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PACK

Contents of the pack

The **Feedback for performance** training pack consists of:

▶ **Feedback for performance - main programme**

A lively 18 minute drama set in a busy marketing department illustrating the main principles of both giving and receiving effective feedback. The learning points are summarised in two short video sequences that follow the main drama.

▶ **Feedback for performance - skills file programme**

A versatile resource for use in helping learners explore in more detail the skills required to give and receive feedback successfully. The skills file consists of 30 short video sequences, featuring the characters from the main drama, grouped around eight key feedback skills. Suggestions for using the skills file sequences as the basis for group activities are given in this guide.

▶ **Workbook**

A personal workbook containing activities to allow individual users to reflect on their own experience of giving and receiving feedback and to consolidate what they learn from the programme. The workbook also includes a section on working with the skills file aimed at those using the package for self-study.

▶ **Course guide**

This guide is aimed at helping trainers or anyone intending to run a training programme to make the most of the package. The guide includes commentaries on both the main drama and the skills file video sequences as well as providing a detailed breakdown of two training



programmes. These can be run as suggested in the guide or adapted to suit specific needs.

► **Quick guide**

A short guide for use when time is limited. It provides an introduction to the package and guidelines for running a 90 minute training session.

Aims of the package

The **Feedback for performance** package has two main aims:

- To demonstrate how the effective use of feedback can improve both individual and team performance
- To provide users with practical guidance in developing skills in both giving feedback and receiving feedback from others

Ways of using the package

The package has been designed for maximum versatility. You can use it:

- To train specifically in the area of feedback skills
- As part of a broader course on performance management which might also cover coaching, mentoring and appraisal skills

Feedback for performance is suitable for training:

- With groups, either as a short session in the workplace (see quick guide) or a more format training course (Training programmes 1 and 2)
- By individuals working alone, perhaps as part of a personal development programme

Depending on the time available and the design of your training, you can use:

- All the video material - the main drama, summaries and skills file sequences (see training programme 2 on page 44 for suggestions of how to do this)



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- ▶ • Selections from the video materials (see quick guide and also training programme 1 on page 32 for suggestions)

Using the package with groups

If you intend to run a training programme based on **Feedback for performance**, you should read the whole of this guide as part of your preparation. You might also find it useful to work through some of the activities in the workbook as a means of exploring your own experience of giving and receiving feedback.

Using the package alone

If you will be using **Feedback for performance** on your own, you should start with the main programme. You will find it worthwhile to read this first section of the guide (About the pack) before watching the programme to get an overview of the approach and aims. You can then use the workbook to help you develop your ideas from the programme. The workbook also provides guidance on ways of working through the skills file.



INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME

What it's about

The central theme of the **Feedback for performance** is that managers and supervisors need good feedback skills if they are to do their jobs effectively. Their ability both to give and also to receive feedback affects both their own performance and that of their teams. Yet good feedback skills do not come naturally to most people. The majority have to learn them.

This theme is illustrated through the story of Lisa, a young manager who has recently been promoted. Lisa is talented, dynamic and full of ideas that have already been noted in high places. Her direct, 'head-on' style of giving feedback, however, does not bring out the best in members of her team.

Things come to a head when Lisa is due to present the results of a major customer survey to top managers including the MD. The report is not ready because the statistician in her team, Tom, is still working on the figures. Highly conscientious and a stickler for detail, he regularly has problems with scheduling.

Initially avoiding the issue, Lisa's way of giving feedback to Tom on his performance is to tell him exactly what she thinks of his failure to deliver the survey results on schedule. When he reacts badly, she blames him for being difficult, unaware of her own role in his resentment. Tom, it turns out, is late in part because he has been developing some original ideas which could greatly improve the report. He feels that Lisa is unsupportive of his efforts to do a good job but is unable to get this across. She has yet to recognise that feedback is two-way. She needs to know not just how to give feedback but also how to receive it.

To break the deadlock with Tom and get her team back on track, Lisa has to learn how to give feedback more



constructively and how to receive the feedback Tom has been trying to give to her. Lisa's problems and their eventual solution are pointed up by voiceover commentary from Delia, the administrator of the team, whose own feedback skills are naturally good. As Delia points out, it is only when Lisa understands that feedback works two ways that her performance and the performance of the team can improve.

The audience

The audience for this course could include anyone who works with other people. In practice, feedback skills are most important for managers, team leaders, supervisors and others with responsibility for managing staff performance and helping their people develop.

The programme is also highly relevant to people working in teams. Feedback skills are crucial to team working - team members need to learn how to give one another feedback in a way that improves the performance of the team and does not cause friction. Managers/team leaders have a key role to play in creating the kind of supportive environment necessary for team members to be able to give feedback freely to one another.

Aims of the programme

The programme is intended to raise awareness of the importance of feedback and the way it permeates all areas of working life. It aims to help people recognise that everyone, at every level, needs feedback in the form of recognition when they are doing well and guidance when they could be doing better. This is one of the chief ways we learn.

The point of the programme is also to make clear that giving and receiving feedback is not always easy. Though some people, such as Delia in the video, are naturals, most



people have things to learn. To help in this process, the programme illustrates some of the main principles of giving feedback constructively and of receiving feedback with an open mind.

Ways of using the programme

Feedback for performance can be used both with groups as part of a training session and by individuals as part of their self-development programme. The learning points from the programme are further illustrated by two short summaries which can also be shown to reinforce the key ideas.



INTRODUCTION TO THE SKILLS FILE

What it's about

The skills file is a resource designed to help learners further develop their feedback skills. It consists of short video sequences grouped around key feedback topics. Most can be used as the basis for group learning activities.

Two versions of the skills file are provided. In one, the sequences are linked by a voiceover commentary. This version is particularly useful for those using the skills file for self-study. In the second version the sequences appear without any commentary.

Outline content

The skills file is divided into two main sections:

- ▶ **Giving feedback**
- ▶ **Receiving feedback**

Giving feedback

- ▶ **Dealing with different reactions**

An opportunity for learners to consider how they would cope with a variety of different reactions to feedback from defensiveness to anger or indifference.

- ▶ **Doing the groundwork**

Positive suggestions for making it easier to give and receive feedback by preparing the way in advance with an informal agreement or 'contract'. The video sequences show Lisa making such an agreement with a new member of her team then making use of it later as a prelude to giving feedback.

- ▶ **Getting started**

When giving feedback the way you open the conversation can often determine the other person's response. These



sequences illustrate ‘good’ and ‘bad’ versions of a number of opening gambits. They invite learners to consider how they might react to them if they were on the receiving end

► **Making sure feedback is specific**

The problem with much feedback is that it is too vague. People say they like or don’t like some form of behaviour without making it clear what specific aspect of the behaviour they have in mind. These sequences show a number of efforts at giving feedback. They ask learners to consider what specifically is being said in each case.

► **Focusing on the future**

Though feedback is about performance in the past, the point of giving feedback is to make a difference to the future. These sequences illustrate ways you can make feedback constructive by looking at different options and agreeing a course of action for the future.

Receiving feedback

► **Listen, don’t interrupt**

One reason feedback is often ineffective is that the person on the receiving end doesn’t listen properly. Many people find it difficult to receive feedback. They see it as criticism and react defensively, interrupting with excuses. These sequences show how, by not listening, you can easily get the wrong end of the stick.

► **Getting it clear**

People who give feedback are not always experts. Sometimes they are so vague you are not sure what is being said. These sequences give learners the opportunity to see some examples of unclear feedback. They are asked to consider what they might ask in order to clarify the content.



► **Asking for feedback**

People who are good at their jobs often do not receive feedback - it is assumed they know they are competent. This final sequence shows how you must ask for feedback if you are not getting the guidance you need.

Ways of using the skills file

The skills file may be used:

- As a follow-up to the main programme
- Independently of the main programme either in group sessions where trainers wish to focus on helping learners develop specific feedback skills, or by individuals working alone using the workbook



INTRODUCTION TO THE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

► Programme outlines

Outlined below are two sample training programmes based on the **Feedback for performance** package - a half day course and a full day course. Each programme includes a showing of the main programme and some activities based on the sequences in the skills file. The tables give an indication of approximate timings for the various activities. A shorter session of ninety minutes is outlined in the quick guide.

These programmes are suggestions only and should be adapted to fit your particular circumstances. The more closely they are tailored to the needs of the participants, the more effective they are likely to be.

Programme 1 - half-day course

Introduction	20 mins
Feedback on feedback (warm-up exercise)	20 mins
Feedback for performance - main programme	20 mins
Discussion	20 mins
Dealing with different reactions - exercise	25 mins
Barriers to giving feedback - discussion	10 mins
Getting started - discussion/exercise	25 mins
Being specific and constructive - exercise	20 mins
Giving and receiving feedback - discussion	10 mins
Don't interrupt - exercise	15 mins
Getting it clear - exercise	15 mins
Summary and action planning	10 mins
TOTAL	3 hrs 30 mins