

Avoid These Mistakes When Giving Tough Feedback

When it comes to giving tough feedback, no one does it perfectly. It's a skill we learn and hone with practice, time, and, yes, by making mistakes. Here are some of the common pitfalls that get in the way and how you can avoid them.

- **Not winning trust first.** If you give input without first establishing trust, people will have a harder time hearing, accepting, and acting on your feedback. Get to know each of your team members, including their career aspirations and goals. Once you're clear about how you can support their development, you can begin to link your feedback to their goals.
- **Avoiding or delaying.** Given the discomfort of sharing feedback with others, it's not surprising that our first instinct is often to avoid it. Be consistent with feedback sessions and build them into your regular way of working, rather than waiting until there's an issue to address.
- **Overdelivering...at the wrong time.** You have to decide if a piece of feedback is worth giving, or if doing so would hurt the situation more than help it. When you receive feedback for your team, remind yourself of their goals and then filter out any recommendations that won't be useful in helping them improve or reach them.
- **Failing to follow up.** Feedback is useless if you don't follow up. After your conversation, check in on your direct reports to see how they're progressing.

This tip is adapted from "[Mistakes First-Time Managers Make When Giving Feedback](#)," by Brooke Vuckovic