How to Provide Effective Feedback.

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As a leader, you must have tough conversations with your team. Providing feedback is essential for growth. It gives employees the opportunity develop their skills, while achieving the results you need. But all feedback is not created equal—and everyone receives feedback differently. So, what are the most effective ways to give feedback?

Be specific. Giving vague statements such as "your overall performance needs improvement" or, "good job" is not as helpful as you might think. Feedback that provides a breakdown of what specifically needs improvement or what specific task your team did a good job on is more constructive and will encourage employees to work on improving specific skills.

The sandwich method. This method of feedback uses positive criticism to cushion the negative. For example, you can start off with all the great qualities and points someone contributed to a group project before diving into the critical feedback of what they may have done wrong, or if there were any mistakes. Then, you close out with another positive.

Be intentional. Plan how you'll give feedback and what to say ahead of time, along with what format you'll use to do so. Will you send a long paragraph through email? Hop on a video call? Face to face? Consider what the individual is most receptive to before letting them know. Some may appreciate receiving feedback in front of others, while another may prefer to receive feedback privately.

The main theme behind providing effective feedback is to truly know who you manage. Figure out how each individual likes to communicate, what they're most receptive to and their personality type. All of these factors play into how constructive your criticism will be and how you will come across as a leader.

Some colleagues also may lack in self-awareness, impacting the effectiveness of any criticism. A survey from *Harvard Business Review* revealed 99% of 467 working adults in the U.S. across several industries reported working with at least one person who lacked self-awareness, and nearly half worked with at least four. Those who lack self-awareness have a harder time accepting or receiving feedback—and can even hinder progress in a team setting. Research also shows those who provide feedback via email rather than in person are 33% less successful, per *Harvard Business Review*.

Other than being the one to *give* feedback, it is helpful to *receive* feedback from those you lead as well. You can put yourself in their shoes in terms of how you like to be communicated with and gives the opportunity to open trust in the relationship dynamic of manager to employee.