

WORK

21% of employees never know how well they're performing—here are 3 ways to deliver better feedback

Published Thu, Mar 21 2019 • 11:43 AM EDT

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Feedback can be challenging to deliver, and receive — but it's essential to a thriving team.

A study from [Leadership IQ](#) found that only 29 percent of employees always know if their performance is meeting expectations — 21 percent said they “never” know how well they're performing. An honest, fair assessment of performance can help employees grow and give them tools for the future.

Experts suggest taking the following steps to ensure that feedback is delivered in the most constructive ways:

1. Ask how individuals prefer to receive feedback

Joel Garfinkle, executive coach and author of “Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level,” says asking how someone would like to receive feedback creates a sense of trust and safety between a manager and an employee.

That sense of trust is key. Considering how someone might prefer to hear feedback shows that you want what works best for someone and that you truly care for and respect that person's point of view, says Garfinkle.

“We've all had the experience of delivering feedback only to realize that the recipient didn't hear a word we said,” says leadership expert Mark Murphy. “Typically this happens because we didn't recognize that the feedback recipient's communication style was radically different from our own.”

2. Pay attention to how they respond

Murphy has conducted an online test for nearly two years, gathering more than 180,000 respondents to discover how different people want to hear feedback. Informed by his ["What's Your Communication Style?"](#) test, he's found that by listening to the types of questions people ask while receiving feedback can help managers shape their approach.

Analytical communicators, for instance, will ask for hard facts and data, while personal communicators will want small talk first and will likely ask about other teammates involved in the project.

Functional communicators will ask questions like, "What next?" and want step-by-step details, almost the exact opposite of intuitive communicators, who may seem rushed and will be focused on the bottom line.

3. Deliver feedback from a neutral standpoint

Feedback is most beneficial when delivered free from judgment.

"Feedback is really a piece of information or observation you are sharing," said Murphy. "Once a person receives the feedback from a neutral place, the person can decide to change or not."