

What it is

A method and tool for preparing and delivering high-quality and effective feedback to a group

What it can do

This tool can assist you to:

- Give thorough and effective feedback to a group
- Anticipate and plan for challenges that may arise in groups receiving feedback
- Be prepared to answer questions and handle issues with grace

When to use it

Anytime you need to give substantive feedback to a group.

How it works

- Step 1** Review **Considerations in Giving Groups Feedback** (beginning on the following page).
- Step 2** Plan for the feedback session by answering the questions on the **Feedback Preparation Worksheet** that follows the considerations.

Considerations in Giving Groups Feedback

Giving feedback to teams and organizations is one of the most powerful tools of the consultant. The feedback may range from sharing the results of a formal assessment to informally giving feedback on what you have observed about their process in a meeting.

In order to successfully give feedback to a group, you have to establish trust in yourself and the feedback process, and also create good conditions for the group to receive feedback.

There are three kinds of trust you need to establish:

1. Trust in your motives, your integrity, and your commitment to their well-being and mission.
2. Trust in your competence and expertise.
3. Trust in the process: that you have collected good data; that you talked to the right people and asked the right questions; that your conclusions are well founded.

Establishing trust is not just about image – it's about being worthy of trust. Review your relationship to the project. See where you may have personal biases, loyalties, or conflicting agendas. Be mindful and detach from these where appropriate. Be transparent about your accountabilities and biases (e.g., you are actually being hired by the ED, you are accountable to the Board, you “personally do believe____,” etc.)

- Be especially careful to separate out your observations from your interpretations
- Be willing not to know. Be mindful not to let the need to look like an “expert” to cause you to assert more than you actually know.
- Be rigorous and impeccable in your data collection. Work to create the best possible picture to reflect back to the group.
- Where there are significant differences of opinion within the group, try to represent each of them fairly (even when you do have a personal bias).
- Try to include the people who are to receive feedback in the process of designing the data collection.

Create good conditions for the group to receive feedback:

- Remind the group of their existing commitment to their shared purpose, vision, values, mission, goals etc.
- Invite a context of learning.
- Model compassion, truthfulness, presence, and commitment to excellence.
- Be very mindful about giving feedback to individuals in a group context, following these guidelines:
 - It's usually better to give feedback to individuals not in a group setting
 - An exception might be giving the leader(s) feedback (with their permission, and usually after they have previously received the feedback one-on-one)
 - Singling out individuals for praise and recognition can create as many unpredictable reactions as corrective feedback (jealousy, competition, etc.)
- Make sure there is adequate time to thoroughly digest and process the feedback.
- Your feedback will sometimes open up a Pandora's box in the team or organization. Make sure there is commitment and next steps in place.
- If there is news that may be especially surprising and potentially upsetting to individuals, you may want to prep them beforehand so they are better able to respond in a thoughtful and constructive way during the feedback session.

Feedback Preparation Worksheet

Before offering feedback to a group, consider the following questions:

- What is the purpose of giving the feedback?

- What are the specific outcomes you hope to achieve?

- How will you know if you are successful?

- Data Collection:
 - What data do you need (if any)?

 - How will you collect this?

 - What challenges exist to collecting good data?

 - How will you meet these?

- What format/process will you use for delivering the feedback?

- What challenges might there be for people to receive the feedback?

- How will you meet these challenges?