'Feedback is the breakfast for champions!' Unfortunately, the word 'feedback' sounds negative to a lot of employees. Most of the managers appreciate the need to take action where performance is not up to the standard, but what about the situation where someone is doing well? Typically, they breathe a sigh of relief and move on to a pressing matter. This leaves an impression that we would get caught by the manager only when we do something wrong.
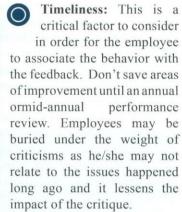
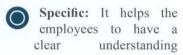It is imperative to provide good feedback to someone doing a good job, because,

• Employees need to know that they are performing to standards; surprisingly large numbers of employees get worried if nothing is said

• It is motivating to be praised or caught doing something right

Positive or constructive feedback provides information about performance or behaviors against goals to be achieved in such a way that employees maintain positive attitude towards themselves and their

Spandana Malle

work. Continuously providing positive reinforcement and encouragement can help employees improve their performance.

How to make feedback constructive and effective? Leaders giving feedback should make the employee receiving the feedback feel as though he/she received a gift; something that will enhance their career and enable them to be genuinely more successful in the long run. Consider the following elements while you provide feedback:

◉ **Timeliness:** This is a critical factor to consider in order for the employee to associate the behavior with the feedback. Don't save areas of improvement until an annual ormid-annual performance review. Employees may be buried under the weight of criticisms as he/she may not relate to the issues happened long ago and it lessens the impact of the critique.

◉ **Specific:** It helps the employees to have a clear understanding

Enriching Leadership Potential through Constructive Feedback

By Spandana Malle, Associate Consultant, Talent Transformation, Wipro Ltd.

Headquartered in Bangalore, Wipro (NSE: WIPRO.NS) is an Indian multinational IT services company. The company has a current market cap of Rs.1,340.12 billion.

Positive or constructive feedback provides information about performance or behaviors against goals to be achieved in such a way that employees maintain positive attitude towards themselves and their work

of the behavior or approach that they need to improve upon. Don't just say 'you're doing a good job'. Tell what about their performance is good. E.g., "John, you did an excellent job, applying listening skills by confirming your understanding. You paraphrased the client requirement really well." Also, leaders have to anticipate relevant questions and be prepared to give very specific and clear answers to help the employees receive the feedback in the best way possible.

Relevance: Leaders need to establish relevance by explaining "why" and "how" their behavior is affecting the team or company in a negative way. To gain buy-in, leaders need to be ready with some real time examples and observations. Clearly describe the behavior he/she needs to change.

Perspective: Put the feedback in perspective, be it about a substantial change to trivial behavioral adjustment required in an employee. Sometimes, our words and actions may lessen the effect of feedback in some way. To send the appropriate message to the employee, give feedback as a strong opinion.

Partnership: Make feedback a two-way conversation. Don't make sweeping statements like "you are doing wrong", "You need to change" and others. Say "Let's see how to do this differently Mark..." Take time to engage the employee and check for understanding. Remember to focus on the behavior, not the person. Ask for concerns and encourage them to speak about their potential challenges.

Tone: It should be carefully considered in order to send the appropriate message and to ensure that it will be received in the way you wish it to be. E.g., a tone of concern communicates a sense of importance and provides the apt level of sincerity to the message.

Action Plan: Provide clear insights and explain behaviors desired. Create an action plan for the employee and have regular follow up sessions to measure the progress. This activity is of paramount importance such that the employees are empowered to succeed the next time around.

Offer Help: To set your team up for success, help them in any way possible that solidifies your responsibility as a leader. Leaders need to sport approachable attitude and be friendly to discover unspoken issues of your team.

Map to Organization Goals: Tie the feedback and the employees' performance with organization goals and create a big picture. Motivate them to succeed to their greatest ability. E.g., "Ted, if we neutralize our English accent we can serve our clients better, they can understand us clearly and that gives us the confidence to advocate them...."

Feedback can be best received when we have the credibility and trust already established with the employee. A quote from Ken Blanchard states, "You have to provide four positive comments for each negative comment in order to be perceived as a positive manager". Constructive feedback will get results – faster! And believe that 'Feedback works' and constructive feedback is 'powerful'. Try it and succeed! **si**