TOOL #2

TIPSHEET: HOW TO GIVE EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

- State the constructive purpose of your feedback.
- Describe specifically what you have observed.
- Describe your reactions and your observations of the effects on others.
- Give the other person an opportunity to respond.
- Offer very clear and specific suggestions – avoid ambiguity.
- Express your support, summarize clearly and follow up.
- Make your feedback specific to related behavior:

Example #1: Make your feedback specific to the behavior.

Specific:
- “Henry, I am concerned about your punctuality. You have been 15 minutes late for the last three mornings. Please explain why.”

Vague/poor:
- “Henry, you have a bad attitude toward your job.”

Example #2: Consider your timing. Provide feedback either before the event in the form of advice, or immediately after it as positive feedback.

- Specific (advice before the event)
  - “Sally, I’d like to review the content of your presentation with you before your speech next week so you can really do a good job in front of the group”

- Specific (positive feedback after the event)
  - “Sally, you did an outstanding job in organizing your presentation for the meeting. The speech was well-researched and logical.”

- Vague/poor (criticism after/before next)
  - “Sally, because you’ve done such a poor job in the past, I need to preview the speech you plan on giving next week.”

Example #3: Focus on behavior the receiver can do something about.

- Specific:
  - “Sam, we would appreciate you keeping the team informed about the status of the project. How about scheduling a weekly status meeting?”

- Vague/poor:
  - “Sam, why are you so shy that you don’t like to talk to other people?”

Example #4: Solicit feedback rather than impose it.

- Specific:
- “Linda, I heard you say you would like to learn how to handle your most difficult customer more effectively. Would you like me to share some techniques I have seen work?”

- **Vague/poor:**
  - “Linda, I saw how you handled Mrs. Dawson during this crisis. It really stinks.”

**Example #5:** Avoid labels and judgments by *describing rather than evaluating* behavior.

- **Specific:**
  - “Steve, I have given you five chances to attend training programs in the last year and you haven’t enrolled yet. What’s getting in your way?”

- **Vague/poor:**
  - “Steve, you are very lazy about improving your skills and don’t seem to care about your career here”.

**Example #6:** Define the impact of the behavior on you, the unit, the team, and the organization.

- **Specific:**
  - “Sarah, when you don’t get your report to me on time, I can’t get complete the report for my boss’s deadline. This slows up decisions about resources needed for next month.”

- **Vague/poor:**
  - “Sarah, can’t you ever get your reports to me on time?”

**Example #7:** Use “I” statements as opposed to “you” statements to reduce defensiveness when asking for a change in behavior.

- **Specific:**
  - “Tim, when you play your radio in the work area, I lose my concentration. Would you mind turning it off during regular work hours?”

- **Vague/poor:**
  - “Tim, you are so inconsiderate of other people when you leave your radio on.”

**Example #8:** Check to be sure that clear communication has occurred.

- **Specific:**
  - “Mary, do you know the procedure for recording your expense report? Can you go over the procedure to be sure I covered everything?”

- **Vague/poor:**
  - “Mary, I’m sure you got it all, huh?”
Example #9: Give the feedback in a calm, unemotional language, tone and body language.

- **Specific:**
  - “Joe, I’m sure your progress will be much faster now that you are clear on how to use this new machinery.”

- **Vague/poor:**
  - “Joe, isn’t it about time you improved your skill with this machine?”