

The RIGHT Way to Give Feedback to Your Boss

By Stacy Pursell-The VET Recruiter ®

Providing feedback for your boss or immediate supervisor can be tricky business. It requires the correct approach, good intuition, and a penchant for handling developing situations in real time.

Most of all, though, it requires **planning**.

Without proper planning, you could commit a careless mistake. And committing a mistake when you're attempting to give feedback to your boss could be disastrous.

There is one factor in providing feedback that is more important than any other. That factor is **trust**. Your boss or immediate supervisor *must* trust you. For feedback to work, the person receiving it must value the person (and the **opinion** of the person) providing that feedback.

If you don't believe you have that type of relationship with your boss, then you should think long and hard about whether or not you should take the step of attempting to provide feedback. Before you can start planning about **HOW** you present the feedback, you must ascertain if it will be well received at all, no matter how you present it. Trust is the **#1 factor** in that determination.

With that being the first step in the process, below are the rest of the steps involved in giving feedback to your boss the **RIGHT** way:

#1—Look for a good opportunity.

A good opportunity, of course, would be when your boss *asks you directly* for feedback. As you well know, that does not always happen. In fact, it may not happen at all. However, that does not mean your boss would not appreciate your feedback, especially if you've cleared the first hurdle mentioned above (trust.).

So if they don't flat-out ask for it, what should you do? Look for opportunities during projects to ask if they mind if you provide your opinion regarding certain aspects of your assignment or the project overall. Once again, if they trust you, they'll probably answer in the affirmative.

#2—Emphasize your and/or the team's point of view.

There is often a disparity between what a person intends to say and what others hear. It's all part of the glorious process of **miscommunication**.

When you provide feedback to your boss, emphasize how you and/or the team view the situation. Be careful not to assess blame or fault for anything. Simply relay how the situation appears to you. More than likely, your boss wants to communicate effectively, and if they're not doing that, then they'll want to know if that's the case.

#3—Take into consideration your boss's point of view.

When providing feedback, it's crucial to put yourself in your boss's shoes for a moment. What pressures are they dealing with? To whom do they answer? How are they looking at the situation? How does their outlook differ from your outlook or the outlook of the other team members?

Now contrast that point of view with your own. What are the major differences and how do those differences affect the manner in which you will present the feedback? The more you can think like your boss and view the situation as they do, the better you'll be received.

#4—Tie your feedback to what your boss ultimately wants.

Feedback for feedback's sake is not going to take you very far. Neither is feedback that's tied to what YOU want. No, for your feedback to have the most impact, you must tie it to whatever it is that your boss *wants the most*. That is how you keep them engaged and make them invested in what you have to say. If they believe your feedback will help them accomplish what they want to accomplish, they will listen to (and value) it.

Many times, people are **afraid** to provide feedback to their bosses. Their reluctance can do a great disservice to their boss, themselves, and the company. Honest feedback and effective communication are two of the greatest tools available for problem solving, and not utilizing those tools because of fear is a travesty.