Giving and Receiving Feedback: PMAPS and Beyond

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What now?

The Lab supervisor sent an email to the technician to set up a quick meeting to discuss the tech’s PMAP rating. The technician receives a 4. Last year the technician received a rating of Fully Successful.
Retaining your great employees

• Employees find value in personal recognition and appreciation from their supervisor.
  – 2012 NIH Employee Recognition Survey

• Conduct a “Stay Interview”
  – Find out who they are
  – Find out what they want

• Recognition + Career Development = Employee Engagement
Feedback Fundamentals

- **Setting**: Think about where and when to give the feedback

- **Keep it objective**: Explain what you observed, as if you were describing a snapshot

- **Explain the Impact**: On you, others, or the mission

- **Next steps**: Explain how you would like things to be different in the future
Feedback: Best Practices

• Start with the positive.

• Choose your priority areas.

• Direct your feedback at modifiable behaviors, not at something over which the receiver has little or no control.

• Avoid words and concepts whose definitions may vary from person to person. If your emotions are high, wait to give the feedback until you feel calmer.

• Listen carefully to what the giver has to say and don’t interrupt. Avoid spending that time just thinking of how you will respond.

• Ask the person to offer his or her interpretation of what you have shared.

• Allow people to explore the implications of their behavior and, if possible, come to the same conclusions that you have.

• Own your own feedback but be aware it is only one perception. Listen for any alternative view and do not prejudge if you can avoid it.
Feedback No-No’s

• You...always, never, obviously

• You’re...insensitive, rude, overbearing

• You...missed the point, don’t get it.
Having the conversation

• Ask open-ended questions
• Acknowledge the other person’s concerns and feelings
• Explain the thinking behind your questions
• Check for accuracy – make sure you really understand what the other person means
• Ask the other person to expand and/or clarify
• Summarize the other person’s comments to illustrate understanding
• Balance listening and speaking – silence can encourage others to speak up
When you have to deliver bad news

- Try to identify strengths, or at least areas in which the person appears to have made some effort
- Discuss areas of concern without adding meaning, labels, or attribution of intent
- Invite the person to offer their perspective – you have nothing to lose by listening
- Offer a private environment
- Consider brainstorming options for addressing problems
- Ask the person what they would do in your shoes
When things go poorly

• Inform your leadership of what has occurred, if necessary

• Seek assistance from an outside neutral (i.e. Office of the Ombudsman)

• Reflect on what happened with an uninvolved peer or other trusted colleague who can offer you honest feedback

• If possible, consider how to reopen the conversation with the intent of identifying what went wrong and making changes to improve the situation. A neutral might be helpful in this instance, too.
What Now?

The Branch Chief has a PMAP meeting with a Senior Analyst. The Analyst has been with the Branch for 6 years, and was historically a good performer, receiving 5 each year. Over the past year, however, the analyst’s performance has lagged. It’s not the analyst is doing a terrible job, but he just isn’t shining anymore, even in his areas of strength. The Branch Chief has hinted at her disappointment in their 1:1s, but not been direct about what’s going wrong. The Branch Chief decided to give the employee a 4; last year, the employee received a 5.