# -Positive Feedback-

*What is Positive Feedback?*

Positive feedback is providing information on the specific desired behaviours and performance of a person. Positive feedback is different from being nice. Being polite, helping some out etc is being nice while positive feedback is only given out after specific behaviours have been performed. Being nice is given away while positive feedback is earned.

*Why Use Positive Feedback?*

Positive feedback decreases stress. People are happier at work. If for no other reason this would justify its use. However, more importantly, positive feedback is an extremely powerful tool to change people's behaviour. People perform because they want to (Want-to-Performance) rather than they have to (Have-to Performance). Under positive feedback conditions people strive for excellence instead of doing just enough to avoid nagging.

*Everyone Thinks They're Doing It*

Everybody thinks that they are giving out a lot of positive feedback and they think that the feedback has been received positively. The fact is that in reality there is often little positive feedback given out. Just because you think what you are doing is positive doesn't mean that it will be received that way.

*If Positive Feedback is so Good Why is there so Little of it Occurring in the Workplace?*

- Chewing people out works in the short term. It gets immediate results which is a positive consequence for the person who is doing the chewing out.
- The person giving the positive feedback often gets punished. People do not receive compliments well.
- Often what is perceived to be positive feedback by the person giving it isn't received as that because of the delivery.

To ensure the effectiveness of providing positive feedback there are certain guidelines that should be used.

*Providing Positive Feedback*

- *Plan it:* Providing positive feedback is not natural. People are too busy putting out fires to pay attention to the positive behaviours occurring in the workplace. Plan to start the day giving out positive feedback. *Positive Scanning* is a technique where a person "looks out" for positive behaviours. Focussing attention on the positive behaviours helps a person learn to ignore minor negative behaviours.

- *Be specific:* It is critical to pinpoint the behaviour you want to increase or maintain. It is not enough to say, "Good job." The person must specify the desired behaviour. For example, "Thanks for completing the invoices by four o'clock. That really helped out."

- *Personalise the positive feedback:* There is no single way to this. Just because the giver thinks the feedback is positive does not mean that it will be received that way. For example, some people like public feedback and others don't. It is also necessary for the giver to provide positive feedback in a manner which they are also comfortable with. Expect to feel a little discomfort at first because there is some emotional content when providing positive feedback so it is often a little embarrassing.

- *No "But"s:* "But" is a verbal eraser. It erases everything said prior to it. When a "but" is added to positive feedback the impression is left that the person wasn't really happy. This is the opposite effect to the one intended.

- *Provide feedback for improvements*: Don't wait for perfection. Remember that perfection does not exist in human behaviour. If you are waiting for perfection before giving positive feedback you will be waiting a while.

- *Be sincere:* It is important to be genuine. Here are a few tips to ensure your feedback is sincere.
    - o Be sure your intent is to share your appreciation (rather than just doing the right thing).
    - o Deliver the feedback as soon as possible after performance.
    - o Speak directly to the person with eye contact.
    - o Be specific about the behaviour/s you thought were particularly important.

*Receiving Positive Feedback*

A simple "thank you" is enough. This increases the likelihood that the person giving the positive feedback will give it in the future.