

Executive Summary

Communicate by Design:

A Feedback Process for Employees

Introduction: All employees at one time or another encounter a difficult situation with one of their co-workers – a situation where the employee needs to give feedback. Yet in such situations, most employees tend either to avoid dealing directly with the situation, or if they do, they don't handle it as well as they could. The purpose of this workshop is to equip employees with a framework for addressing feedback situations.

Payoff: Participants will be familiar with:

- Their tendencies as a communicator when faced with a difficult conversation
- How to set up their co-workers for success
- Fundamental elements of workplace interactions
- A four-step process for giving feedback

Four-Step Communication Process

1. Ask Permission to Address the Situation
2. State the Facts
3. Ask and Listen
4. Affirm and Gain Agreement

1. Ask Permission to Address the Situation

- *Mike, is it OK if I ask you about something?*
- *Mike, there's something I'd like to discuss with you. Is now a good time?*

2. State the Facts

- *I noticed that I haven't received a response to the email I sent you about our project that's due this week.*
- *I've noticed that when I ask you questions, you sometimes walk away and refuse to answer.*
- *I noticed you cut me off three times when I was talking during our project meetings.*

3. Ask and Listen

- *What are your thoughts about this?*
- *What's been going on?*
- *What happened?*

4. Affirm and Gain Agreement

- *It sounds like you have a lot going on right now that is making it difficult to respond to my emails. Based on our discussion, my understanding is...you'll respond to my project email before lunch today. Thank you for that.*
- *I appreciate that sometimes our training conversations leave you feeling overwhelmed. Thanks for sharing that. Based on our discussion, my understanding is...you'll let me know when you're feeling overwhelmed and want to table a discussion for later.*
- *I can relate to the need to get your ideas out while they're fresh. Based on our discussion, my understanding is...you'll pay more attention to letting other people finish talking during our project meetings. I really appreciate that!*

Summary: For challenging or difficult situations, employees benefit greatly by using the proactive, respectful approach outlined in the four-step process. The goal, ultimately, is to create greater candor and better communication in the workplace by empowering employees to provide feedback to their co-workers in an effective way.