

Building Engaged Teams with Feedback



**A Guide to Understand
Your People Yearlong**

Fostering a Culture of Communication and Feedback:

Strategies for Building a Year-Round Practice

Effective feedback is crucial for the success of both employers and employees, and it plays a critical role in shaping organisational culture. The culture of an organisation can have a significant impact on many factors, such as



In today's world, where hybrid working has become the norm, it is essential for employers to find ways to consistently provide and receive feedback and communicate effectively to ensure continued success.

This eBook will focus on:

- What is a feedback culture and how to implement it in your company?
- Various types of feedback and communication methods that you can integrate into your culture.
- How can you encourage others to give and receive feedback?
- How feedback and communication can become the norm in your workplace culture?



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Introduction to Feedback Culture



What is feedback culture?

Feedback culture refers to a workplace or environment where open and honest feedback is encouraged and individuals feel comfortable and safe to give and receive it. In such a culture, feedback at all levels is the norm and individuals are given support and guidance on how to give and receive feedback as part of their daily working life.

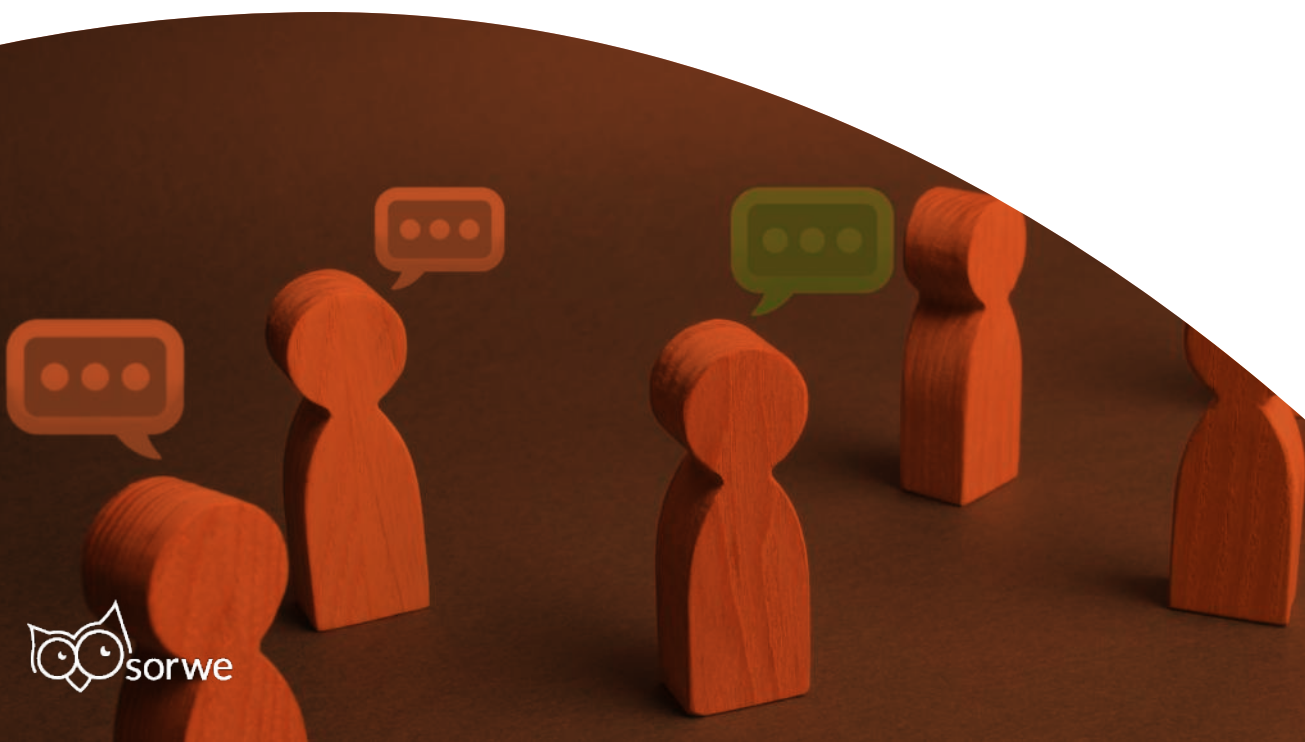
For the culture to really embrace feedback, businesses must commit to feedback being part of their organisational strategy and develop, review and nurture it over time.



Why does feedback matter?

Providing feedback is critical to helping employees achieve optimal performance. Feedback regarding an employee's performance, skill set, interpersonal skills, teamwork, and other areas can assist individuals in maintaining a sense of purpose and understanding their impact on their peers, team, and the organisation.

This understanding can help individuals contribute effectively to their organisation and help create a more productive and engaged workplace.





What happens if there is no feedback culture?

Consider a situation where an employee is performing a job they believe they are doing well, but they haven't received any feedback. In such a scenario, the employee may continue working in the same manner, unaware of areas they can improve.

However, if a manager or colleague provides constructive feedback highlighting areas where the employee can improve, it can positively impact not only the employee but also the broader organisation.

Such feedback can help the employee enhance their skills and contribute more effectively to the organisation's goals, leading to improved overall performance.

Now let's explore the different types of feedback.

Types of feedback



A. Organisational feedback

While feedback is often between the manager and direct report or between peers, there is also a need for input from employees to the organisation about what it's like to work there. This can be done through surveys, online feedback requests and focus groups. Such feedback and communication are crucial to measuring Happiness Score and can help improve employee retention and satisfaction.



B. Employee feedback

Managers must give their people performance feedback to help them develop and improve. Without feedback, employees may not develop their skills and may feel demotivated if they're working hard and not hearing anything back.

Feedback to employees can come in two forms:

- Positive: such as praise or recognition
- Constructive: highlighting areas for improvement or skill development

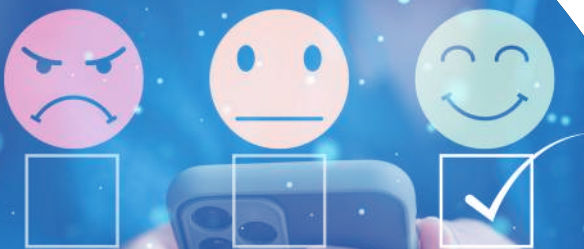
Both types of feedback are valuable and have a significant role to play in organisational growth. When delivering feedback, it is crucial to provide specific examples to ensure clarity for the recipient, regardless of the type of feedback being given.



C. Peer feedback

Such feedback can create a collaborative culture that values continuous learning, growth, and development. As a result, employees are more likely to feel empowered and motivated to contribute effectively to the organisation's goals. Peer feedback doesn't have to be given in a meeting scenario. It can be quick, informal, spontaneous, or part of the more formal 360-degree feedback.

For example, a colleague could say to someone in their team, 'I've learned so much by working alongside you. You've really helped me with X.' They could then go on to give examples but even this comment alone shows the other person the impact of their contributions to the team and organisation, leading to higher motivation and increased performance for both parties involved.



For peer feedback to be effective and encourage motivation and integrity, individuals need to:

- Only give their first-hand feedback to someone, not pass on feedback from someone else.
- Focus on skills and knowledge rather than personality traits.
- Be objective and specific; when feedback is formal, try to include examples to illustrate skills.
- Focus on positive feedback and deliver feedback that focuses on development without criticism, judgement or negativity.
- Deliver feedback to encourage others, not to upset them.

Examples of delivering developmental feedback might be:

‘I know you’re finding X challenging, so can I suggest a way to help?’

‘Would you mind if I offered you some feedback? You might get better/quicker/-more effective results if you tried X.’



D. 360-degree feedback

360-degree feedback is a comprehensive type of feedback that collects input from various sources about an individual. By soliciting feedback from direct reports, stakeholders, peers, and other managers, this approach provides a well-rounded perspective on an individual’s performance, making it more objective and comprehensive.

This type of feedback is valuable because it provides a broader perspective of an individual’s performance, which can lead to more targeted and effective personal development and organisational growth.

One can gather 360-degree feedback using online surveys or feedback applications, such as Sorwe. Anonymous feedback can be more honest, but sometimes knowing who provided the input can be beneficial, as it provides a better understanding of how an individual has worked with others.

Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, and organisations must carefully consider which approach to take based on their specific needs and goals. Regardless of the method chosen, 360-degree feedback can provide valuable insights into an individual’s performance, leading to targeted personal and organisational development.



E. Employee self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a valuable practice that allows individuals to assess their performance and identify their strengths and areas for development in their role. Acknowledging their feedback can enhance their self-awareness and highlight areas for improvement.

While not all organisations use this practice, it can be a useful tool for individuals to evaluate their performance and determine their progress towards their personal and professional goals.

It is important to note that self-evaluation should not be used too frequently, as it may lead to biased evaluations. However, when used correctly, self-evaluation can provide individuals with a better understanding of how they perceive themselves in the workplace and help them achieve their potential.

Relationship between Feedback Culture and Leadership Strategy



What's the role of the leadership team in building feedback culture?

To create a culture of continuous feedback, it is important that your leadership team serves as exemplary role models. They should encourage and actively demonstrate the importance of ongoing feedback to others. By doing so, they can set an example for managers and employees to follow, making feedback a daily part of your company's culture and practice.

Additionally, your leadership team should not only emphasise the importance of feedback but also demonstrate how to give and receive feedback in a positive and constructive manner. This will help to create a safe and supportive environment where feedback is viewed as a valuable tool for growth and improvement.

From a strategic point of view incorporating feedback as a core part of your business strategy will enable your organisation to stay agile and responsive to changes, make more informed decisions, and foster an environment of learning and growth.

By including feedback as part of employee objectives, you can ensure that individuals are held accountable for providing and receiving feedback regularly, creating a culture where feedback is a natural part of the daily routine.



How to build trust and safety among the workforce for honest feedback?

Building trust within an organisation is crucial for creating an environment where honest feedback can thrive. Here are some tips to help build trust in your organisation and foster a culture of honest feedback:

- 1. Lead by example:** Leaders within the organisation should model honesty and transparency, and demonstrate that they are open to receiving feedback themselves.
- 2. Encourage open communication:** Create an environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions. This can be achieved by providing regular opportunities for feedback, such as through employee surveys, town hall meetings, or one-on-one check-ins.
- 3. Be responsive to feedback:** When employees do provide feedback, respond promptly and take their suggestions seriously. Even if you can't implement every idea, acknowledging and considering employee input shows that their feedback is valued.
- 4. Provide training:** Provide training on how to give and receive feedback effectively. This can help employees feel more confident in their ability to give and receive feedback, which can lead to more honest and constructive feedback.
- 5. Celebrate transparency:** When employees are transparent and honest in their communication, acknowledge and celebrate it. This can help reinforce the importance of honesty and transparency in the workplace.
- 6. Hold people accountable:** Establish clear expectations for behaviour and hold people accountable when they violate those expectations. This includes holding leaders accountable for their behaviour as well as employees at all levels of the organisation.

By taking these steps, you can create a culture of trust within your organisation that values honesty and transparency, which in turn can lead to more honest and constructive feedback.



How to educate your workforce on receiving and giving feedback?

All of the above comments about leadership, strategy and building a culture of trust and safety are vital for creating and maintaining a feedback and communication culture, but there's an important step that you cannot miss out:

“Being clear with your people about why and how you are developing a feedback and communication culture.”

You need to be transparent with them about what you are trying to achieve, the benefits of a feedback culture and their role in giving and receiving feedback as a daily part of their work life. It won't work to suddenly tell people that they are going to receive feedback formally and informally from managers and colleagues without telling them why and how it will help to develop them.

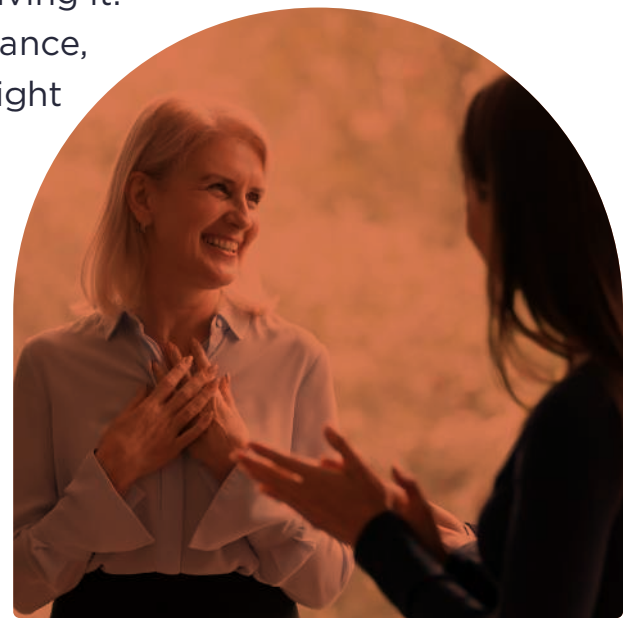
Once you have discussed with people why you are looking to create a culture of feedback, you can move on to the next steps of ways in which they will be expected to give and receive feedback, how feedback will be measured, the types of feedback that will be used by the company and how they can approach feedback.

If possible, it's worth running a training programme for everyone in the company regardless of seniority. This is important for several reasons:

All members of the company will receive the same training.

- Whether somebody works remotely or in the office or whatever their work patterns the training should focus on everyone so that it can be in person and virtual.
- If you mix up the levels of seniority in each session, for example, you have a senior manager with a new hire in the same group, you're showing that everyone at every level is buying into this feedback culture, and it demonstrates that the organisation is taking it seriously.
- Use examples in the training (videos, role plays etc.) to highlight good and bad feedback and let people practise giving and receiving it.
- Everyone will be on the same page. So, for instance, if everyone has done the same training, then it might be easier to approach somebody to say:

'I did the training about feedback recently, so I wonder if I could put it into practice with you and ask you for some feedback about X or if you have some feedback about X.'



Role of Technology in Building a Feedback Culture

Technology can play a significant role in building a feedback culture within an organisation by providing tools and platforms that facilitate the collection, analysis, and sharing of feedback.

For example, using Sorwe's feedback module, you can design and conduct small/large scale feedback surveys within minutes to gather feedback from employees and stakeholders on various aspects of the organisation such as:



Our mobile first approach allows employees to complete the survey through their smartphones at their own convenience.

Sorwe also allows managers and team members to share peer-to-peer feedback which is only visible to the sender and receiver of the feedback.

Such features can help you to break down communication barriers and foster a culture of open dialogue and transparency.



Data analytics

Such tools can be a powerful resource for analysing feedback data and gaining insights into the needs and perspectives of an organisation's employees. By identifying patterns and trends, leaders can make data-driven decisions to improve the organisation's culture, processes, and performance.

One such tool is Sorwe's People-Analytics module, which provides user-friendly data presentation reports that make data analysis easier. With Sorwe, leaders can quickly identify key feedback trends and take action to address them, ultimately improving employee engagement and driving business success.

Overall, technology can be a valuable tool for building and sustaining a feedback culture within an organization, but it should be used in conjunction with other strategies, such as leadership buy-in, training, and ongoing communication.



How to make 360 degree feedback simpler for everyone with the help of technology?

The key to encouraging employees to participate in 360-degree feedback is to try and make the process a positive and pain-free experience where it's easy to give and receive feedback regardless of your work pattern or location. It's crucial to use specialist technology to help you collect such feedback because it's not something you want to send to somebody on a piece of paper or e-mail!

At Sorwe, we help you to make your 360-degree feedback process into an experience that is easy to manage and incredibly user-friendly for your people.

We use 21 different ready-to-use template sets or you can upload your own evaluation questions and create a custom-made feedback experience for your people.

Sorwe will distribute the questions to relevant individuals to make it easy for them to complete responses, and you can edit the number of individuals, direct reports and customers for the evaluator groups.





Other methods to collect feedback

In addition to asking people to give feedback to others, as an organisation, you can find other ways to give feedback to your people outside of performance-related feedback, including:

- **Milestone dates for the organisation:** Set meetings in advance where you can share feedback and communicate with all staff. These may include all staff updates at the end of the financial year, or every quarter to keep people updated on company performance. Or when you carry out surveys, set up meetings to communicate the feedback and action plans.
- **Asking for feedback:** Make it easy for people to give feedback whenever they want and wherever they are. You can use physical suggestion boxes in the office, but these are outdated and don't cover virtual feedback. Therefore, use a portal on your intranet or an app where individuals can proactively give their input.

Overall, technology can be a valuable tool for building and sustaining a feedback culture within an organisation, but it should be used in conjunction with other strategies, such as leadership buy-in, training, and ongoing communication.

General Tips on Giving Feedback



A. Planning feedbacks

Even though feedback could be spontaneous, it's important to plan what you're going to say, when you are going to say it and how you are going to say it.

For example, if you have some constructive feedback to give an employee, it's not appropriate to start going into the feedback in the middle of a team meeting. The timing could make it very awkward and could come out of the blue.

Therefore, plan when you will give somebody feedback so that you can plan a meeting and find somewhere quiet to discuss it. Ensure that you've got enough time to do it properly rather than rushing it or squeezing in some feedback right at the end of the day when the person needs to leave.



B. Come up with examples

For most types of feedback, it's always helpful to have examples ready to discuss. This works for both positive and constructive feedback.

If you are giving somebody some constructive feedback about how they could improve something, it's really helpful to be able to give an example of when they may not have done the job as expected or could have done something better. That way, you illustrate your point and back it up in case they get defensive.

The same goes for positive feedback as you'll look like you are much more interested in them and aware of their performance if you can say when they did something really well.



C. Be specific

Feedback needs to be specific so that individuals clearly understand what you're telling them because vague comments are not going to help development or improvement. For example:

'You included brilliant data in your report last week.' Rather than, *'Great report last week.'*

You should always give feedback that is achievable so that individuals walk away knowing exactly what they need to keep doing, improve or look to develop. This way they have clarity about what they need to do rather than coming away feeling confused or vague. For example:

'Can you ensure that you get your weekly report to me before midday on Monday rather than by Tuesday afternoon because I need it for a Tuesday morning meeting.'

Feedback also needs to be delivered promptly because it's easy to forget or forget specific details and it's more impactful close to the event rather than six months after. If you are conducting somebody's six monthly or annual reviews, then try to use feedback from recent work rather than work from months ago.





D. Avoid overcomplicating your feedback

Don't overcomplicate feedback by trying to cushion constructive feedback by giving positive feedback on either side. Although this can feel like a comfortable way to deliver something a bit trickier, it can lessen the impact and value of the constructive feedback and may mean the person you're delivering feedback to just remembers the positive comments on either side.

And when you're giving feedback, whether it's positive or constructive, remember to give feedback on somebody's effort rather than their ability.



E. It's a two-way conversation

And finally, don't forget that feedback discussions are two-way conversations. So, if you are the one giving feedback, it makes sense that you are organising the meeting and giving your feedback, but you need to give the other person the chance to respond whether they want to do that on the spot or come back to you another time. Feedback isn't just about you telling them something; it is an open conversation.



About Sorwe

Sorwe is a people-first end-to-end digital employee experience platform, based in London.

We combine employee experience with human analytics to create connected teams for companies who believe in a people-first approach as the secret of success. The end result is a seamless digital experience that increases retention, performance, and strengthens workplace culture for everyone.

We shape the future of work with the experience we have gathered from more than 75,000 users from 10 countries.

Book a Introduction Meeting



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Thank You