The Role and Importance of Feedback in Building a High Performing Organization

Philanthropy New York
Foundation Administrators Network Meeting
A focus on Human Resources, TED Style
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Presented by Lisa Cribari, Chief Human Resources Officer, Ford Foundation
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<th>Feedback – Why it’s important</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
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<td>Feedback accelerates achieving higher levels of performance.</td>
<td>Feedback can be obtained from internal and external constituencies about the many aspects of organizational life including leadership and vision, management and internal practices and operations.</td>
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<td>Creating a feedback-oriented culture is key to becoming a high performing organization.</td>
<td>Surveys are used to collect the opinions of internal staff and external stakeholders.</td>
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<td>To create an open, feedback-oriented culture, people need to be receptive to giving and receiving feedback, and to understand when and how to give it.</td>
<td>These types of surveys –</td>
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<td>Feedback comes in different sizes and shapes –</td>
<td>- <strong>Empower staff</strong> and others to share their views about what’s working well and not so well.</td>
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<td>- <strong>At a macro-level:</strong></td>
<td>- <strong>Uncover issues</strong> – which are often opportunities to evolve and transform a culture.</td>
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<td>- Internally from employees.</td>
<td>- <strong>Enable HR to establish an agenda</strong> to help the organization achieve higher levels of performance and accountability (as defined by senior leadership).</td>
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<td>- Externally from stakeholders -- grantees, donors, partners.</td>
<td><strong>Types of Feedback:</strong></td>
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<td>- <strong>At the micro-level:</strong></td>
<td>- Ideally feedback is obtained through an anonymous process conducted by a third party (e.g. CEP; Gallup; independent consultant). A software tool (e.g. survey monkey) can facilitate data collection.</td>
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<td>- In one-on-one performance conversations between a manager and an employee.</td>
<td>Surveys often include a comparison to industry best practice norms.</td>
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<td>Data is typically collected and analyzed using a 5-point Likert Scale (<em>ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree</em>).</td>
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<td>After a survey is conducted, an action planning process should be facilitated across the organization to address issues, with the goal of:</td>
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<td>- Demonstrating a commitment to change,</td>
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<td>- Having a positive impact on the culture,</td>
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<td>- Improving internal or external perceptions and opinions.</td>
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<td>Improvement in scores at various organizational levels (organization-wide, unit or individual manager level) can be tied to performance appraisals and even pay decisions.</td>
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<td>High neutral scores represent an opportunity to change so-so opinions into positive ones.</td>
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<td>Surveys can be done periodically or embedded as a regular process (e.g. repeated every 18 months or two years).</td>
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**One word of caution, only embark on a survey effort with a serious commitment from senior leadership to address issues.**
### Performance Discussions and Annual Appraisals

- Performance feedback at the individual level keeps the organization running.
- One-on-one feedback is how organizations create and sustain a continuous improvement mindset.
- When people are engaged in a culture of giving and receiving direct and honest feedback, individuals and organizations learn, develop, grow and improve.
  - Without challenge, there’s no growth and development.
- Every boss has a boss, so feedback exchanges occur at all levels, all the time -
  - Between a manager and employee
  - Between an executive and a manager
  - Between the Board and the CEO
- The key is to make these exchanges as effective and impactful as possible.
- Holding managers accountable for giving clear, direct, honest and timely feedback, and empowering staff to ask for feedback when they need it or are not getting it, creates a healthy tension in an organization.
- An effective technique in helping managers deliver feedback is the Balanced Feedback Technique – otherwise known as the “Feedback Sandwich”. Using this technique makes it easier for managers to give constructive feedback.

**The “Feedback Sandwich”** --

- Position constructive feedback between two positives:
  - **Accentuate the positive** *(what the person is doing well).*
  - **Deliver constructive feedback** *(what could be improved upon).*
  - **End with positive reinforcement** *(and recognize strengths).*

**Feedback is a “gift”** --

- The giver took the time to share the feedback.
- When delivered effectively, the receiver embraces the feedback, learns from it, and modifies their behavior.

### Coaching and Mentoring

**What is the difference between coaching and mentoring?**

- **Mentoring** –
  - Mentors provide advice and show the way.
    - Give navigational advice. Share what they know.
    - Share facts and information (e.g. Don’t talk to so and so; here’s how you get this done.)

- **Coaching** –
  - Empowers people to take risks and explore new options.
  - Stimulates creative thinking.
  - Gets people to do things for themselves.

**Allows an organization to leverage the strengths of its managers and leaders.**

- By taking a “coach approach”, managers and leaders can –
  - Move people to higher levels of performance.
  - Empower people to take risks and make their own discoveries.

- **“GROW” model – Goals/Reality/Options/Will (Sir John Whitmore):**
  - A manager coaches an employee by asking open-ended questions:
    - What are you trying to accomplish?
    - What is your planned approach?
    - What will success look like?