

GIVE MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK

We've all been on the receiving end of feedback – and it can really sting!

Now, as a manager you know how important it is to deliver clear messages to your team. But even when you do your best, there's always some pushback, or worse, indifference.

This is particularly true when you need to have a conversation with one of your team about their performance.

Why it's important to give feedback

Giving feedback on employee performance is not only essential for a healthy working relationship, but as a leader, it's also something your team is expecting from you.

Did you know that more than 75% of employees think feedback from their managers is vital for their work performance?

That's right! You probably thought differently when one of your team walked out on you or you overheard them questioning your management capabilities with other drivers the last time you asked them to do a little better.

Why it's important to deliver feedback in an appropriate way

Learning how to deliver feedback is just as important as having effective conversations with your team. In fact, for 57% of people, it's more critical than any rewards or recognition.

In trucking, your extra effort can see a return across the business. Whether it's your reputation or the way your drivers treat the fleet, getting this right could be the difference between a reliable group of drivers where everyone pulls their weight and a disengaged and unproductive team that can cost you more time than you have.

Let's discover how to have a corrective discussion with a member of your team that won't break down but build your relationship with them.

What the negative impacts of ignoring best practice are

Be honest! Whether it's at work or at home, we've all been criticised in a way that hurt our feelings or self-esteem.

Do you remember how you felt when your manager bluntly called you out for something you either didn't do or you thought wasn't that important? When between two tasks, they just dropped a bomb on you based on a small piece of unverified information they overheard?

You felt anger, you started to question your manager's leadership capabilities, or you lost trust in them. You might have even resisted taking their comments onboard, or thought about leaving the company.

These feelings are normal.

Losing staff to bad management can result in reputation issues for the business, a broken relationship between the team and management, further costs to replace those who leave, and the loss of revenue during the hiring and onboarding process.

Whilst it might just feel like another hoop to jump through, there are also dangers you expose yourself to if you don't treat your people fairly and comply with the related workplace regulations.

Before you blame your staff next time for leaving you in the lurch, make sure you evaluate your behaviour and actions first. Ask yourself: "what could I have done better to save the situation, my good reputation and relationship with my employee?".

Giving constructive feedback is certainly not easy, but it is manageable when you know the right techniques and are aware of the potential consequences if you don't get it right or do it at all.

How to give constructive feedback that results in behaviour change

Every time you have a conversation with a member of your team, remember to use the fundamental methods of effective communication.

- **Ensure that sensitive and essential conversations happen face to face – it's worth the extra effort**
The best way to provide feedback is when you and your employee are in the same place, and at a time when it's mutually convenient for all parties. Bear in mind that you not only speak with your voice but also with your gestures. Watch your tone and body language and don't get too bossy otherwise you'll force a defensive reaction out of the person you're giving feedback to.
- **Always secure a quiet space for the talk and don't jump into the feedback straight away**
Try to create a positive atmosphere for your employee in which they feel comfortable, and remember to express throughout the conversation that they have your support.
- **Be specific**
Avoid feedback that is based on assumption or lacks evidence. Always comment on facts, and instead of focusing only on what they did wrong, expand and tell them what and how they could have done better.
- **Let them speak**
If you notice that they don't agree with you, let them express their perspective. Remember, you're having a conversation, so you may want to ask questions, rather than making statements.
- **Be timely**
Relate your feedback to a real problem and try to have the conversation with your staff soon after the incident.
- **Don't be afraid of the consequences of your opinion**
Telling the truth is part of building good, long-lasting working relationships. Instead of fearing their next step, encourage a 360° feedback culture, where your employees can speak up openly when they feel unsupported or disrupted by something.
- **Structure your feedback as much as you can**
When describing the situation that you want to walk them past, use the **STAR method**.

S – Situation: Set the **scene**.

T – Task: Describe the **task** that had to be done.

A – Action: Describe the **action** the member of your staff took.

R – Result: Describe the **results / consequences** of their action.

Using the same model, describe the scenario as it should have happened in an ideal world. Make sure you always paint an attractive picture of the desired outcome so people will feel motivated to follow your advice.

We provided templates to help you use these techniques in practice. Make sure you check out the supporting documents.

If you do this, rest assured your comments won't be ignored and you'll make a big step towards building a happy, engaged and high-performing team.

Helping your team develop personally and professionally and keeping them satisfied at work is much easier than finding new staff.

Remember, your employee's performance and capability are things you can influence.

So, let's see how you can put your knowledge into practice.