

How much positive feedback to give your team?

We all like to be told we are doing well. We can all remember bosses that provided honest feedback, and particularly those that praised our work. Studies show that to keep staff motivated and happy, these compliments should outweigh the criticism by 3:1. [In marriages, 5:1]

Compliments all round?

Does this mean we should be complimenting our staff all the time? No. What you compliment is as important as how you compliment. We should make sure compliments have been earned through individuals producing good work or displaying good behaviours & attitude. Make sure you provide detail—vague compliments don't carry nearly as much weight as carefully thought through specific ones. Demonstrating that you care about your staff is a very powerful motivator to staff.

Ask "how did you do it?"

One of the best ways to compliment is to ask how did you do it? E.g. "I really liked the way you did X, please can you tell me how you did it?" This gives the individual a chance to tell their story and also requires them to think about what they have done. What better way to reinforce and share learnings with others.

Be honest

This is a very important quality for a manager because your staff need to trust you—and vice versa. Trust requires honesty and being genuine. Too many managers try to take quick fix routes or do nothing at all. Building a good team takes hard work on the part of the manager.

Our English culture

We are very polite and most of us find it hard to honestly and constructively point out shortcomings in our staff. Most skirt around the real issue providing vague feedback that we hope won't offend. This management behaviour is a real barrier to getting the best out of staff, particularly the top performers. Good people want to get better. How can they do this if they don't really know where and how they need to improve?

Don't shy away from the harder conversations

It is equally important to give honest constructive feedback when things haven't gone so well. Detail the what and how they can improve rather than making vague statements. If a person doesn't know or understand why something did not go well, how are they going to be able to improve next time?

Why the hard work is worth it

Building a team of effective, happy team players that delivers consistently takes hard work as a leader & manager. If you support your team, fight for them, recognise and celebrate good work, then the team is much more likely to work hard for you. When this happens, the business wins through better productivity and results. You and your team win though achieving more, getting a better bonus, pay rises, creating more learning opportunities and promotion opportunities.

Creating a positive team starts with you the leader.

