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3 Golden Rules for Mastering the Art of Workplace Feedback

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In the workplace, feedback comes in many forms. Quarterly reviews, big client reviews, and most importantly: daily feedback between team members. More often than not, this process has the potential to create animosity between business owners, employees, and clients. As a leader, you don't have the luxury of not giving feedback – it's important that employees know how they are doing.

The common practice of "no news is good news" needs to change.

No matter what industry you call home, much of our working world revolves around performance and growth in the workplace. It's that reason alone that has every business looking to give and receive feedback, no matter what format they choose to facilitate feedback with.

It's inevitable. So, stop trying to escape the inevitable. Instead, transform your approach and remove the negative connotation associated with the word 'feedback'. Feedback in

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the workplace is important. The process creates a timeline to measure our success by, as well as a roadmap for where to grow next.

1- Remove the Stigma from the Word 'Feedback'

Life is all about perspective. Once you look past the obvious anxieties of feedback, you can truly appreciate what the experience brings to the table:

You unlock new potential in yourself and your team.

Not all feedback is positive... But not all feedback is negative! Sometimes, feedback is just feedback – perspective. One of the greatest treasures in workplace feedback is discovering new talents in yourself and your employees. By a coworker sharing their appreciation for your organizational skills you may discover a talent for data management that leads to the next step in your career.

Likewise, your constructive criticism may provide an employee with the element they were searching for to dominate with their sales pitch.

You find new ways to innovate yourself and your brand.

When it comes to interpersonal workplace feedback, team discussions and one-on-one meetings can be extremely beneficial for innovating how you do business – or your brand as a whole.

In another light, customer feedback can be the most valuable indicator of where you or your business needs to grow. The core purpose of Google Reviews, customer surveys, and 'How Did We Do?' signs is to gain feedback from customers and clientele alike.

You can use all of these tools to see what your customers enjoy about you, as well as what they don't like about your business. In fact, you can find some of your marketing campaigns by simply asking people where you can improve and what they'd like to see in the future.

Don't forget about the bigger picture: Feedback is birthed from the idea that we can do better. No matter how difficult the process is, workplace feedback creates a continuum of improvement and ultimately makes everyone happier. We find more efficient ways to work, better solutions to our customer's problems, and grow professionally within our careers.

When people are sharing their feedback with you it's usually because they care.

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When someone doesn't care for you or your business they won't bother with giving you feedback. Approach feedback as a positive experience and nurture that attitude across your organization. I can *almost* guarantee the results will be amazing.

2- Facilitate a Positive Environment/Culture

No one plans to have a bad environment/culture for feedback or reviews. Rather, they don't take the time to ask themselves what a positive environment/culture really looks like. Far too often we're focused on what has gone wrong, masking all of the success achieved thus far. Even when we start a review with the best of intentions, the situation can quickly deteriorate from an unpleasant experience to a horrible one.

This is exactly why it's so important to make sure that you're creating a positive environment/culture before, during, and after the facilitated feedback. If you have negatives you need to discuss, make sure you take the time to celebrate the positives, too.

No matter what situation has called for workplace feedback, apply etiquette to how your organization handles feedback as a whole:

Give Adequate Notice

Do not be the leader that walks in Monday and announces performance reviews will take place on Friday. In the same light, don't let your open-door policy become a complaint box. Understand that your feedback shouldn't be thrown around loosely. It should be planned ahead of time to allow both parties to feel prepared for positive communication. And keep in mind, you might have an open-door policy for your team to come in, but remember the door is open for you as a leader to go out too.

Have a Format

Both parties should know what to expect. It's not enough to say, 'we have to talk about..." You need to have a format for how workplace feedback is orchestrated in your organization.

Answer questions like: Who will be leading the conversation? If the conversation has more than 2 parties, how will you maintain equal communication? Being mindful of your listening style (internal, focused, global). How will you record the feedback session? This can be as simple as sending a bulleted agenda via email or as complex as a formal list of guidelines.

Set Boundaries

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It's important to set the tone for what kind of language can and cannot be used. Accusatory language (also known as the 'blame game') is not only lethal to self-esteem, it's eliminates the opportunity for growth.

Whether you're giving or receiving feedback, address the issues from an objective standpoint and use common courtesy when conversing with others. Keep your body language in check and allow the other party to speak without interruption.

If either person become emotionally charged, that would be a good opportunity to reschedule the feedback session.

3- Be Solution Oriented

Not all feedback is positive. It's another reality of life and business. That being said, it's important to be serious about creating solutions for problems revealed from feedback that you can *realistically* accomplish.

In other words: You need to create a solution you can act on.

For example: If your marketing team has recently discovered that questions from customers on social media are going unanswered, make an actionable solution for solving the problem instead of pointing fingers. Whether that's hiring a part-time employee to maintain your digital presence or outlining who will tend to social media and when, creating an actionable solution eliminates the problem and helps your team grow.

Even if your solution doesn't work out in the end: it's an opportunity to try again knowing what doesn't work. It gives you, your team, and your customers the sense that complaints and issues do not go unnoticed. Foster a culture of action-takers through being solution-focused.

Remember: It's not easy to master the art of giving or receiving feedback. It takes a large degree of emotional intelligence to not only accept feedback, but to facilitate a real solution from it. If you can master this element, you can overcome nearly any challenge you face personally or professionally. Stay open to feedback, accept it willingly, and take action!

Growth is on the other side of feedback.

Give Us Your Feedback

How do you turn constructive criticism into actionable growth? More importantly, how do you facilitate healthy feedback between your team members?

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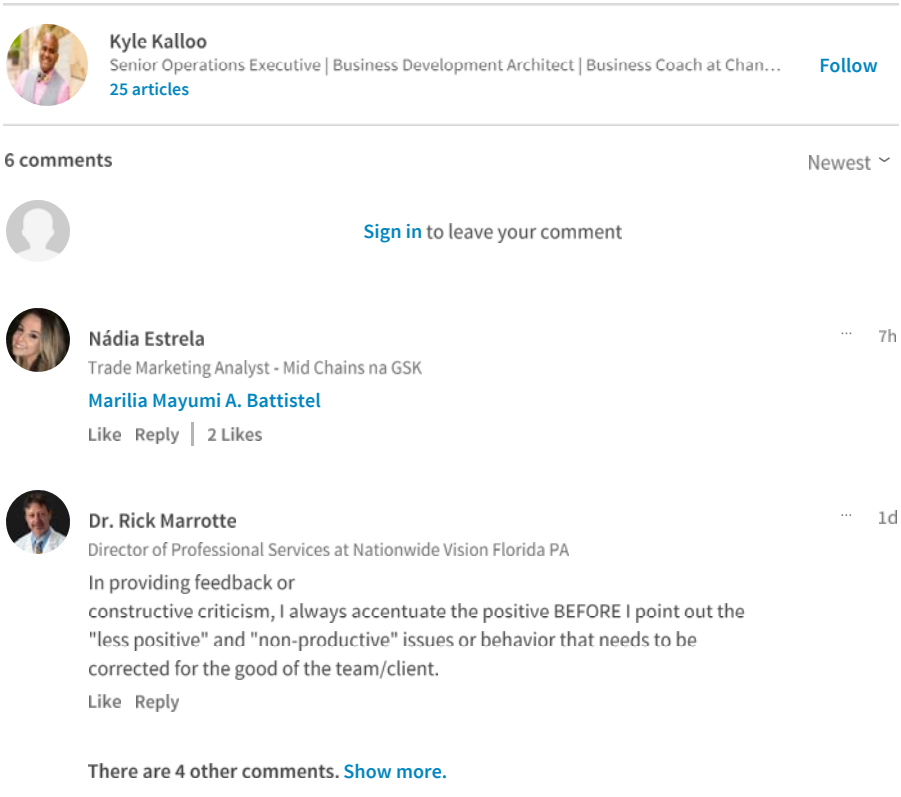

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