

Delivering Constructive Criticism

Keep Written Records

Example of written records:

- Exchanged emails/notes/memos
- Log of employee behaviors or actions
- Action plan with improvement ideas and strategies
- Signed forms signed by the employee (acknowledgement of feedback, actions plan, etc.)

The Feedback Sandwich

Step to the Feedback Sandwich:

- Prepare and outline what you want to say or address
- Identify the positive and make a compliment
- Present the criticism and facts
- Add another positive statement and encouragement

Follow up with the employee periodically

Try to Avoid “You Messages”

When we’re angry or upset, our self-defense mode normally wants to find blame somewhere else, or on “you”. This is especially common when trying to deliver constructive criticism. Phrases such as *“You were late yesterday”* or *“Your poor attitude is affecting everyone”* can appear unprofessional and make it appear as though you are insulting the employee. Instead, focus on how it makes others feel, such as *“I felt disappointed when you were late yesterday because we went over some important topics in the meeting”* or *“Our customers were very upset when you greeted them in an unfriendly manner.”* The employee will begin to see that you are trying to portray how their actions affect others instead of feeling as though you are blaming or attacking him.

Common “You messages” to try to avoid:

- *“Your job performance has been lagging lately.”*
- *“You’ve been late every day for the past week.”*
- *“Your disruptive behavior is starting to affect your coworkers.”*
- *“You’ve been slacking off on your duties.”*