



Through coaching and mentoring, a leader can improve his/her developmental areas

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Communication is not only about speaking alone, but also listening

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According to author and management expert Kenneth Blanchard, feedback is the breakfast of champions. Regular feedback strengthens an individual's performance and enhances his/her personal and professional development. For a leader, his/her team is the best source of feedback - positive or negative, and he/she can act upon it to improve himself/herself.

"Seeking feedback from employees works wonders for leaders who are making sincere attempts to transit from an aristocratic leadership approach to a more collaborative style.

Communication is not only about speaking alone, but also listening. With leaders, employees always believe they have a sounding board to go to, and the leader who demonstrates good listening skills, is more likely to be regarded highly," says Sharad Sharma, director & chief of HR, Vertex Customer Services India Private Limited. "Taking feedback from the employees is one of the cornerstones of establishing a successful working relationship and creating a feeling of openness in the organisation," says Raman Subramanian, vice president Strategic Services Management, QuEST Global. "It helps to create a healthy, transparent and productive work environment and also preserves the work ethos of the organisation," adds Subramanian.

SOLICIT FEEDBACK

How can a leader garner feedback from his/her employees? "Leaders can seek anonymous/confidential feedback from their team by using tools like 360 degree feedback, circle of feedback, hot-seat (a face-to-face controlled feedback mechanism), HPLA (High Performance Leadership Assessment), CASE (Community, Authenticity, Significance, and Excitement) etc. Effective leaders can make feedback a part of their organisational culture and can seek non-anonymous feedback using similar tools. Leaders can also ask for feedback in a face-to-face situation, when trust levels are good within the organisation," explains Ashish Arora, founder & MD, HR Anexi.

FEEDBACK COULD BE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE; SO THE WAY A LEADER DEALS WITH THE FEEDBACK HE/SHE RECEIVES FROM THE EMPLOYEE IS IMPORTANT

Apart from encouraging their employees to speak out and ensuring a two-way communication within the organisation, many progressive leaders today adopt social media tools to gather feedback from their people. "At QuEST Global, Twitter is a major tool for communication. The COO tweets key developments of the organisation to the employees and encourages them to tweet the feedback directly to him. So, even if there is no face time with the COO, he gets to know things immediately," informs Subramanian.

The art of listening

Experts say that an effective leader is one who constantly communicates, seeks feedback and acts on it. **Priya C Nair** discusses the need for leaders to solicit feedback from the people who know them the best - the team



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ACTION PLAN

Feedback could be positive or negative; so the way a leader deals with the feedback he/she receives from the employee is important. Experts say that acting upon the feedback received is equally important as gathering feedback. If the feedback is not followed by action, then the whole effort remains pointless. "A leader should not be judgmental/subjective on the feedback he/she receives from the

team. He/she must be neutral on the feedback and must take it as a learning opportunity. A suitable action plan must be followed to act on every item of feedback to ensure team appreciation and overall employee satisfaction. Through coaching and mentoring, a leader can improve his/her developmental areas," suggests Subramanian. Adding to it, Sharma says leaders need to take stock of every input that is provided to him/her before making an informed decision. With honest and open feedback, a leader would be in a position to address a problem way before it becomes a crisis. His/her planning, decision-making and evaluation would improve multi-fold as he/she is able to collect and timely implement a constructive feedback from the team."

Accepting the feedback without justifying your actions is critical. This encourages the team to come up with more suggestions and leaves room for feedback in future too. "Receive feedback with gratitude and never shoot the messenger. Take feedback just as you receive a gift from someone you respect, even if it is not pleasant, say 'Thank You'," suggests Arora. To be a successful leader, it is imperative to seek feedback on your performance from your peers/team by asking relevant questions and listening to them without pride or prejudice!