Manager's Toolbox:
SCORE Feedback

Giving your team feedback on their performance is your most important job as a supervisor. Your team won't know how they are doing unless you give them feedback that they can understand and use. Even worse, without good feedback, employees who are performing badly might think they are doing great, and employees who are excelling might think they are failing. Remember the acronym SCORE to give effective feedback.

Specific and to the point. Focus your feedback on behaviors and tasks that can be named, not just general observations. For example: "You did a good job cleaning that equipment today, thanks for doing such careful work." Not just, "Good job."

Credible. Team members need to believe the feedback, be sure you understand the work enough to recognize good and bad performance. If you have computer information systems gathering feedback for employees, make sure they understand what the numbers mean.

On-time and frequent. Feedback gets stale over time! Give feedback as soon as possible after you observe performance, don't wait for planned meetings like an annual review. It doesn't matter if the feedback is praise or redirection, give it as soon as possible after the observed performance.

Relevant. Give feedback on behaviors that directly affect performance. Focus on tangible items like following procedures, but don't overlook less tangible things. If keeping a positive attitude is important for your team, then give redirection when you see behaviors that reflect a negative attitude. Focus on behaviors, not the person.

End looking ahead. Always end your feedback with a look ahead. Talk with your team member about how they can do better in the future. No one can go back in time to fix poor behaviors, but looking ahead helps your team member feel like they have another chance to do better.

> Supervisors need to interact with their team members in order to be a credible source of feedback. Get onto the production floor or out in the field with employees. Even the night shift needs to see you sometimes!

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Feedback Options

Your team members need feedback to tell them how they are doing so they can make adjustments. You have four options for effective feedback.

1. **Positive or Praise**. When a team member does well, tell them about it! Praise good performance and the specific behaviors that led to the good results. Praise motivates people, builds up their confidence, and helps them perform even better. It's a win-win that you simply must practice.

2. **Redirection or Constructive**. Sometimes a team member gets off track and they need feedback to get back on. If they are not following procedure, point that out and explain why the procedure is important. Get their agreement to change. End looking ahead and share your expectations for their behavior going forward.

3. **Ignore or No Feedback**. Think of a brand new person learning a job, you need to give feedback on the important tasks but some of the unimportant little steps they can figure out on their own.

> **Silence Is Not Golden! Don't Ignore the Important Stuff!**
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> Choosing to not give feedback is an option, it sends a message that the person's performance on that task is unimportant. Unfortunately, many supervisors ignore team member's performance on important tasks. That's a very wrong message, one that leads to confusion and discouragement for team members!

4. **Negative or Punish**. Most of us don't like to give or receive punishment but supervisors need to know when and how to use it. When a person *knowingly* breaks a rule or violates expectations, the supervisor needs to respond to head off that behavior. The punishment might be a simple verbal reprimand, or it might escalate to more severe consequences for repeat or serious offenses. One key point, don't punish a person learning a new task or job, just redirect when they mess up.

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Two-Way Communication

When giving feedback, keep the lines of communication open both ways. Do this by first sharing your performance observations, then asking for your team member's perspective. Listen carefully to your team member's input, often it will change how you respond. Share the rest of your SCORE feedback, especially the "end looking ahead."

A New Habit

Giving feedback becomes a habit for effective supervisors, they are constantly analyzing results and observing performance in order to give effective feedback to their team members. Like all habits, SCORE feedback is learned. Use this worksheet each week to develop your feedback habit for leading your team.

Example Weekly SCORE Feedback Worksheet:

Week of: *June 12, 20XX*

Feedback should be: **S**pecific, **C**redible, **O**n-time, **R**elevant, **E**nd looking ahead.

Team Member	Strength Notes	Growth Notes	Look Ahead Notes
Ernesto	1. Set personal record for accounts opened. 2. Great job handling confused customer.	Still struggling with shipping dept. Needs to learn shipping process and build relationships there.	Visit shipping next Tuesday to learn process.
Kate	Mastered procedure for feeding operations. She learned quickly in her first week.	Wants to attend training on livestock health.	Keep focus on feeding and relate how her work affects herd health.

Of course, you can give feedback more frequently than once a week. This process is to help you build a habit of giving feedback *at least* once a week. Save your worksheets and refer back to them, you will see growth and progress in your team members if you give them feedback diligently.

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AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Week of: _____

Feedback should be: **S**pecific, **C**redible, **O**n-time, **R**elevant, **E**nd looking ahead.

Team Member	Strength Notes	Growth Notes	Look Ahead Notes