Capitalizing upon the Power of Feedback

In the present IT-dominated work environment which brought a revolution in speedy communication and opened new vistas for promoting candidness in communication, the effectiveness of feedback has increased manifold. It has now emerged as a more powerful tool for individuals and organizational growth mainly because of widening geographical and ethnic boundaries. Unbiased and on-time feedback are among the key factors which help to reach the desired objectives of the feedback within a short time.

What precisely is feedback? We hear the term all the time, but do we really know what it is and why it is so important?

In simple words, we may define that Feedback is communication to an individual or a group providing information as to how their behavior is affecting or persuading you. It may also be a response by others as to how your behavior is influencing them. Feedback can be verbal or non-verbal.

Feedback arises when an environment reacts to an action or behavior. For instance, 'customer feedback' is the buyers' response to a company's products, services, or policies and procedures; and 'employee performance feedback' is the employees' response to feedback from their manager the exchange of information involves both performance anticipated and performance demonstrated.

Constructive Feedback

The purpose of constructive feedback is to give feedback to a person in a way that will lead to improvements or corrections. This is imperative, as it improves personal and professional growth in individuals. For example, constructive feedback can improve employee morale.

Guidelines for Constructive Feedback:

- Do not blame people for undesirable outcomes
- Do not compare people
- Focus on actions, not personal characteristics
- Acknowledge when a team should be praised
- Be specific about ways to increase performance

- Allow a controlled manifestation of feelings
- Challenge the receiver to do better
- Increase the receiver's sense of independence and self-control
- Reinforce a can-do attitude.
- Constructive feedback is a strong tool for creating a healthy environment, increasing productivity, and attaining improved results. It affects communication, team members' interaction and teamwork result in different fields.

Rozina Muzammil, FCMA
Ph.D. Scholar and Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO)
The Institute of Bankers Pakistan [IBP]

Types of Feedback

Following are the types of Feedback:

- Reinforcement / Punishment
- Corrective feedback
- High information feedback

Reinforcement / Punishment:

Type of reinforcement and punishment apply pleasant or unpleasant consequences to increase or decrease the frequency of a desired response or behavior. These types of feedback provide the smallest amount of information on job level and no information on the levels of procedure or self-regulation.

Corrective Feedback:

Corrective types of feedback classically contain information about the job level in the form of "right or wrong" and the provision of the correct answer to the assignment. Feedback not only refers to how successfully a skill was performed (knowledge of the outcome) but also to how a skill is performed (performance knowledge).

For some types of feedback, i.e., modeling, additional information is provided on how the skill could be executed more successfully.

High-information feedback:

Feedback was categorized as high-information feedback when it was created by information as described for corrective feedback and contained information on self-regulation from monitoring attention, motivation during the learning process.

Reasons for Giving & Receiving Feedback

Following are the reasons for giving and receiving feedback:

● It allows personal growth

● Enable the provider to learn about the self

● Create an open environment for effective operational and interpersonal Communication

● Aids in preparation for the future, not dwelling on the past

Guidelines for Giving & Receiving Feedback

Giving Feedback:

● Should be specific

● Focused on behavior rather than on the person

● Should meet the needs of the receiver

● Focused towards behavior which the receiver can do something about

● Should be solicited rather than imposed

● Sharing of information rather than giving advice

● Should be well in time

● The amount of feedback information should not overburden the receiver

● Focus upon the problem/issue at hand

● Should be evaluating rather judgmental

Receiving Feedback

● Establish a receptive environment

● State why you wanting feedback

● Checked what you have heard through parroting, paraphrasing, or asking for clarification

● Maintain an objective attitude about the feedback

● Share your reaction to the feedback, if practical

360 – Degree Feedback

Pros & Cons of 360-Degree Feedback

Pros:	Cons:
• Provides feedback to employees from a variety of sources	• Pocuses on employee weaknesses & shortcomings instead of strengths
• Develops & strengthens teamwork & accountability	• Provides feedback from inexperienced raters, & groups can "game" the process
• Reveals specific career development areas	• Requires large degree of data collection & processing in some cases

the balance

360 - degree Feedback- also recognized as multi-source feedback, is the appraisal of someone's performance by several individuals which is feedback to the individual. The appraisers usually include their line manager and subordinates but to these may be added colleagues and even, rarely, clients/customer.

In 360-degree Feedback, the appraiser rates aspects of performance such as leadership, teamwork, communication, organizational skills, decisiveness, drive, and adaptability. Questionnaires are normally processed within the organization or, most commonly, provided by external suppliers. Feedback is accessible to individuals, often anonymously but sometimes by their manager.

If the purpose of the system is primarily progressive, as should be the case, the action may be left to individuals as part of their personal development plans, but the planning process may be shared between individuals and their managers if they both have access to the information.

Even if the data only goes to the individual it can be discussed in a performance review meeting so that joint plans can be made, and there is much to be said for adopting this approach. Expert counseling and coaching for individuals as a result of the feedback may be provided by a member of the HR department or an outside specialist.

The advantage of 360-degree feedback is that persons can get a more rounded view of their performance from various perspectives than they can get if their only appraisal is by their manager. The disadvantages are that the process can be stressful, people do not necessarily give candid feedback, and it involves quite a lot of administration. Grint (1993:68) argued that 360-degree feedback "merely replaces single assessor subjectivity with multi-assessor subjectivity".

The term 360-degree feedback is sometimes used to refer to upward feedback where this is given by subordinates to their supervisors. This is the most common approach and is more properly described as 180-degree feedback.

## Knowing about self; a prerequisite for personal growth

How can you know yourself better? Going for 360-degree feedback is the answer, where you share your knowledge about yourself with others for soliciting their extended feedback. In other words, for stretching the known area of your personality, you have to share additional information about yourself with others so that they can evaluate you better and provide you feedback even on such facets of your personality which were not earlier known to you.

The concept of knowing self is very well taken up by the Johari Window which is used for understanding and training self-awareness, personal development, improving communications, interpersonal relationships, team development, and intergroup relationships.

What is Johari Window

● It is named after the first names of its inventor Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham

● It is a communication window for giving and receiving information

- It one of the most useful models describing the process of human interaction
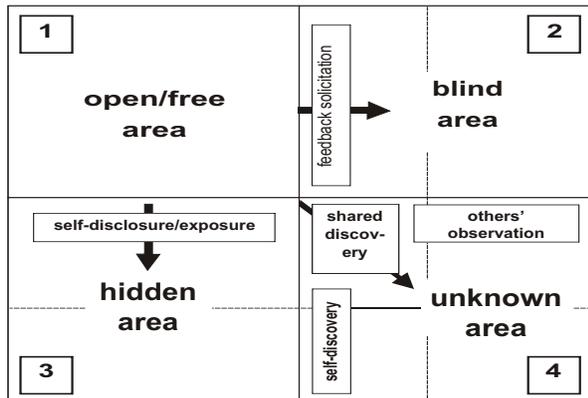
The Johari Window for 360-Degree Feedback

The **Johari window** is a technique that aids individuals in better understanding their relationship with themselves and others. It was designed by psychologists **Joseph Luft** and **Harrington Ingham** in 1955.

The method of passing on and accepting feedback is interpreted in this model. A Johari is embodied as a common window with four panes. The horizontal side of this window represents the extent of knowledge carry about yourself while the vertical side carries others' knowledge about you. The information transfers from one pane to the other as the outcome of mutual trust which can be attained through socializing and the feedback got from other members of the group.

Open:

The first windowpane is referred to as 'open' or 'arena'. This quadrant signifies the actions, behaviors, and information that are known to the person and those around them. This information is public and made available through communication and interactions between the individual and others. This includes information about facts, skills, and attitudes anything that is public knowledge.

Blind:

The second windowpane is referred to as 'blind' or 'blind spot'. Information in this area is mainly useful in 360 reviews for personal and professional development. Actions and conducts in the blind area are known to others, but the individual is not aware of them. The information in the blind spot can be positive or negative and contain hidden strengths or areas for improvement. The blind spots that are revealed in a 360 evaluation give a great understanding of how others observe the individual, which forms the initial point for development. The access to this area can be extended only by soliciting feedback from others i.e., you have to 'ask' others to comment on your personality.

Hidden:

The third windowpane is referred to as 'hidden' or 'facade'. This information is known to the individual, but not known to others. This may comprise of private information, which the individual chooses to keep hidden. Feelings, aims, motives, dreams, and opinions may be withheld from the group by the

individual out of fear of undesirable reaction. Once the individual beliefs others they may choose to disclose some of their hidden information i.e., by 'telling' the others about your hidden traits and inviting their feedback there against, the known area of your personality could be increased.

Unknown:

The last windowpane is referred to as simply 'unknown'. This includes information, skills, behaviors, etc. that are unknown to the individual and also not known to others. This comprises subconscious information that no one is aware of such as early childhood memories, undiscovered abilities, etc. An encroachment to this unknown pane is possible with the shared discovery or through intuition or by an abrupt reaction to an abnormal situation, e.g., you saved a child from drowning in the river. What happened here is that you jumped into the river, grabbed the child, and swim back to the bank. Here it revealed accidentally that you can swim, which was earlier unknown to you and others.

Feedback is a Gift

If you take care of the dos and don'ts while giving and receiving the feedback, it wouldn't be less than any precious gift. Start exchanging the gift by observing the rules below:

Giving a Gift:

Do's	Don'ts
Do start with positive comments	Don't start with criticism!
Do confine comments to presentation only (including facilitation skills)	Don't be personal
Do give concrete suggestions for improvement – suggest what could be done rather than pointing to what wasn't done	Don't say the presentation wasn't good or was bad - rather, say 'the presentation can be improved if …'
Do only offer suggestions that haven't been raised by others	Don't carry outside situations into the training hall (either friendships or past scores) and vice versa
Do try to create a win-win situation for everyone	Don't criticize the group for issues that aren't part of the session plan

Receiving a Gift:

Do's	Don'ts
Do thank those who offer you advice	Don't be defensive
Do listen carefully & take notes for the future	Don't get angry or retaliate
Do see feedback as helpful, not personal or hurtful	Don't give additional meanings to what people say – if you're unclear about a comment, ask for clarification.

About the Author: *The writer is a Fellow member of ICMA Pakistan and presently working as Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO) at The Institute of Bankers Pakistan. She is an Independent Director at Loads Limited and Chairperson of its Human Resource Committee. Presently, she is serving as Vice President Professional Education on the Board of the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA). She has a diversified experience of 20 years at the executive level in Corporate Governance & Management, Auditing, Finance, Costing, and Budgeting. She has served as GM Finance in FMCG industry and worked as Executive Director at Pakistan Institute of Public Finance Accountants (PIPFA). She is also a Fellow member of PIPFA, a qualified Director, and a Ph.D. Scholar (pursuing a specialization in HRM). She has authored a book on Accounting, titled Fundamentals of Accounting, published by an HEC recognized University in 2014.*