



## The Power of Feedback

Whether it's part of on-going coaching, during a performance appraisal meeting, or when dealing with conflict, giving feedback is a critical skill for managers. Some managers misguidedly feel that if an employee is doing well, they do not need to provide feedback. On the contrary, studies have shown that positive feedback is one of the keys to employee engagement.

Positive feedback is most effective when it is specific. Rather than saying: "You did a great job on the report," it is more helpful to say: "You did a great job on the report. I especially liked how you provided data on the product and had excerpts from the focus groups."

Of course it is a lot easier to provide positive feedback than negative (constructive) feedback. In fact, those managers who by nature are conflict avoiders will delay or sometimes never give constructive feedback because they are concerned about a confrontation.

Here are some guidelines for giving feedback:

- Be prepared - don't lash out in the heat of the moment; think about what you are going to say (some managers even script it out)
- Be genuine - show you care about the person
- Be balanced – provide both positive and constructive feedback, not just criticism
- Be the owner – don't act like it's coming from others; use "I" and make eye contact
- Be descriptive – describe facts or observations and avoid making value judgments
- Be constructive – your goal with negative feedback is to help the employee improve
- Allow response – allow the person to speak; it should be a dialogue, not a monologue!

## What's a Disability now Under the ADA?

In the 18 years since the ADA was passed, the courts have developed an increasingly clear view of who is covered by the act. Last fall, in an effort to broaden its coverage, Congress amended the ADA. Some preliminary results are in and it appears the courts may still review ADA cases with a close eye. The lesson for employers is to treat all requests for accommodations seriously. Consult with counsel whenever there is any doubt whether a disability exists, as a limitation today may be a disability tomorrow.

## Meet Howard Renensland

Howard Renensland is a Consultant with Learning Dynamics who has presented workshops in such areas as customer service, diversity, team building and sexual harassment.

Howard is also a professional actor who has appeared in theatre, film and television. He has appeared in over 400 television commercials and in such shows as Family Ties and Hill Street Blues. He often speaks to clients on issues around disabilities, based in part on parenting his disabled daughter. Howard is currently writing a memoir, "Including Victoria," chronicling his experience.

Howard holds a B.A. from Washburn University and an M.A. from Trinity University. He has taught as an adjunct professor at Case Western Reserve University and Kansas University. Active in the community, Howard has been a special education and disability advocate for over twenty-five years.

## Read Any Good Books Lately?

The Learning Dynamics consultants recommend The Science of Success: How Market-Based Management Built the World's Largest Private Company. The book was written by Charles Koch, CEO of Koch Industries.

## Learning Dynamics Tidbits

Barbara Bellinger presented "Motivating High Performance Teams" as part of a leadership program at a financial services client ... Calvin Morgan presented multiple sessions of "Common Decency" for a multinational healthcare client... Barbara Phillips presented "Motivating and Retaining a Multi-Generational Workforce" for an insurance client... Jim DeMaio presented performance appraisal training for a university client... Dr. Barbara Vallera presented "Creativity and Innovation for Business Performance" for a multinational consumer goods company... Howard Renensland presented "Communication Skills – One of the Keys to Teamwork" for a hospital client... Nat Brown presented "Bringing out the Best in Team Members" for a manufacturing client... Barbara Phillips presented "Getting Results through Effective Time Management" webinars for a pharmaceutical client... Several Learning Dynamics consultants delivered presentation skills workshops for a Fortune 500 company.