



FEEDBACK ESSENTIAL FOR GOOD LEADERSHIP

by Peter Quarry, Psychologist

What improves customer service, quality, motivation, ability to cope with change, teamwork and morale, yet costs nothing to do and requires no special equipment? The answer? Feedback skills!!

- Asking for feedback from customers leads to improved customer service and quality
- Giving feedback increases motivation and morale
- Giving and receiving feedback helps people change, grow and develop

Feedback skills are essential in today's fast moving world for all the above reasons. But what about *leadership development*? I believe most leaders do not use feedback skills for their own development.

Do leaders get much feedback on their performance?

No! Why? Most organisations do not have what I call a "feedback culture" - a way of working where feedback is freely and frequently given. Apart from the obligatory annual performance appraisal, most leaders are left to cope on their own.

Do leaders ask for feedback?

No! Why? They feel uncomfortable, weak, vulnerable or insecure. Funny thing is, though, that the research shows that people who actively seek feedback have a more positive image in the organisation! Asking for feedback makes you look good!

Who should leaders ask for feedback?

Everyone! Where leaders do receive feedback, it is usually only from their managers. But leaders should seek feedback from colleagues, customers, even their own staff! Recently, increased interest in the concept of 360° feedback has spotlighted the need for leaders to obtain multi-source feedback.

Leadership is about setting an example.

Leaders want followers who listen, are open to change and development, and strive for excellence. Leaders need to set the example by being prepared to do exactly the same. Leaders need to listen to their followers' feedback, be open to changing their own leadership styles and behaviours in order to improve. Isn't that what leadership development is all about?

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