

Ten Steps for Powerful Feedback

1. Make it all about them.

You have strengths and stories too, of course. But don't feel the need to share them now. This is your opportunity to create a memorable moment that will grow this individual. Focus on their favorite subject—they.

2. Eliminate distractions.

Arrange for 20 minutes of one-on-one time, turn off your monitor and silence your phone. If at all possible, head to a comfortable spot outside of the office. This is a conversation that the seller is going to remember for years to come. So make it worthy.

3. Explain your purpose.

This is critical because the conversation is so unusual; it could make someone suspicious if you're not clear here. Your purpose is to highlight their strengths, give them specific feedback and examples of natural talent, and brainstorm ways for them to develop and use their strengths more often.

4. Be positive.

There will be plenty of opportunities to focus on weaknesses later—and remember, they already know these by heart. This conversation works best when it is focused on strengths.

5. Know when to give in.

Human nature and our need to focus on the negative may overpower your conversation and the salesperson may feel the need to address at least one weakness. If that is the case, fine. But do it this way; ask them, *"What do you feel you don't do well and gets in the way of your success?"* Let it come from them.

6. Talk specifics.

Discuss the behaviors you see in the individual and specific times that you have seen them. Try to steer clear of generalizations.

7. Make it interactive.

Encourage thoughts, questions, stories, and ideas. It is, after all, all about them.

8. Look for the opportunities.

When discussing a specific strength, try not to stop short of confirming how you are going to help them use it, grow it, and make money with it. Close the loop here.

9. Don't set yourself up to fail.

Never commit to a coaching strategy on which you are not certain you will be able to follow through. They will remember.

10. Reach out for help.

Ask another manager or coworker for their thoughts on an individual's strengths as well. You may receive great insight. Our Talent Analysts at The Center for Sales Strategy are also available if you need help preparing. Just eMail us at interview@csscenter.com.