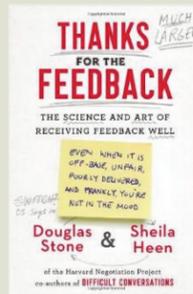


LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

BOOK REVIEW

Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
 Penguin Group: NY, NY; 2014
 Authors: Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen



The value of receiving and acting on feedback for growth and professional development is widely understood. Then why are people so afraid of it? Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen, coauthors of the *Thanks for the Feedback*, address this issue head on and deliver another bookshelf staple. They argue that receiving feedback, especially when it is developmental in nature, can create somewhat of a conundrum. While we innately desire feedback, it can be intimidating or threatening if it exposes a weakness or vulnerability.

The authors argue that it is necessary to learn from those around you in order to take charge of your own development. How people receive feedback may be more crucial than how it is delivered. This book gracefully teaches readers how to approach feedback and extract maximum value in order to

learn and become more self aware. Well written and insightful, this book will be useful to both givers and receivers of feedback.

In a question and answer lead-in to their book, they provide three tips that are beneficial for eliciting feedback that is helpful:

- Ask for feedback in a way that invites honesty.
 - For example, instead of simply asking for feedback, ask “What is one thing you see me doing, or failing to do, that is getting in my own way?”
- Do not just ask for feedback from your friends.
 - People we have had difficulties with or struggle to work cohesively with are in a better position to provide insight.
- Objectively evaluate feedback that seems wrong.
 - Make a list of both what is wrong and what is right about the feedback, in order to be more balanced in your evaluation.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Suzanne M. Miklos, Ph.D.

Leadership competencies are a challenge for many of us who work in leadership development because they are becoming tired and sometimes clichéd. We can now play leadership corporate bingo with phrases like “emotional intelligence”, “strategic” and “agile learner”, etc. (Go to our website to find one for fun). The challenge is that people rarely mean the exact same thing when using these phrases. It is concerning to see sophisticated companies using lists that do not have shared meaning, validation for their environment or matching measurement tools across the leadership lifecycle. However, line managers are attracted to the face validity of these popular phrases. Some competencies become Super Competencies meaning that they contain a high number of competencies. In consequence, the Super Competency becomes an all encompassing silver bullet. This really creates problems for HR leaders who are trying to maintain and evolve leadership development frameworks. This is one of the criticisms some professionals have about learning agility models. They don't focus on the unique contribution but try to encompass all in order to be holistic and maximally predictive. This is fine if you're starting from scratch, but challenging if your model is more mature.

Competencies were initially very useful. They allowed HR professionals to bundle what used to be individual traits. These traits were placed into a core set of memorable and generalized buckets, which facilitated a connected framework for managing the employee lifecycle. Competencies facilitate organization wide communication of expectations. However, it is still useful to thoroughly understand and document the behaviors and traits that make up the most essential competencies



in a particular organization. There are four key lenses from which to approach the work. Look at the current high performers, as distinct from average performers, through the lens of performance data analysis, 360 data analysis and focus group data. This will allow you to zero in on a few critical behaviors that behaviorally define the

competency model. A second key approach is to clearly define behaviors within competencies that correspond to fit with culture and values. This approach can be especially effective when there is a fairly stable environment in the organization.

In any organization with a strategic plan that represents significant change, new competency development is a key element of implementation. Mapping key capabilities that are demanded in the strategic plan becomes critical. For example, leadership skill sets that will be increasingly valued in implementing a strategic plan will often be in shortage. Finally, there are many industries for which change is occurring across the sector. Understanding the available industry research that demonstrates success criteria for companies that will remain successful is a powerful way to validate and update leadership models, particularly if this data is vetted through the other three lenses.

Competencies are still a valuable organizing tool and framework when the “ingredients” and behavioral grounding are specific and meaningful to the business challenges of the organization.

DO YOUR COMPETENCIES REFLECT THE EXPECTATIONS YOU HOLD FOR NEXT GENERATION LEADERS?

Past Paradigms	Current Paradigms
• Own what you lead	• Build shared accountability
• Direct Reports	• Partners and Vendors
• Straightforward reporting	• Complex interpretation
• Operational leader	• Community facing leader
• Local Focus	• Focus on Virtual and Global
• Guide and coach a team	• Build Coalitions

FEATURED PRODUCT: REAL LEADERSHIP 360° SUITE™

The REAL Leadership 360° Suite™ is a powerful process for generating REAL awareness that results in REAL change. By focusing on behaviorally based feedback, leaders can pinpoint learning opportunities. Through an online action planning system, we provide the plan and support that a leader needs to turn his or her inherent strengths into actions.

Effective action planning ensures that everyone knows what and how to do the project. By thinking out the steps to your end goal, you also can avoid problems before they occur. Action planning establishes focus, identifies ownership, allows for opportunities, and provides opportunities for innovation. When beginning an action plan, answer the following five questions.

1. What needs to be done?
2. When should the activities be completed?
3. Which employee(s) will be included in the activity?
(May not apply when working on personal approach)
4. What could happen to prevent me from reaching my goal, and how will I deal with obstacles?
5. What are the expected outcomes, or how will I know I've reached the goal?

Each goal should be **Specific, Measurable, and Attainable.**

We understand that leaders are not born; they are developed. The implementation of the REAL Leadership 360° Suite™ encourages listening to multiple perspectives and sets the tone for good communication. REAL leaders have been shown to have increased employee job satisfaction and less employee turnover.

We partner with you to make REAL change. Easily customizable, the REAL Leadership 360° Suite™ allows organizations to tailor items and competencies to fit within their workplace as a part of their unique business strategy.



SUPERVISOR'S CORNER

MAXIMIZING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

Diane Govern, Ph.D.

Like most organizations, you have invested time, energy and financial resources in training your workforce. But maximizing your investment may be another story. How can you be sure your employees are retaining what they have learned, and, more importantly, applying it to the job?

Of course, it starts with hiring employees who fit well with your organization and have the skill sets for the work at hand. On-the-job training is vital. Although, for managers to maximize learning for their direct reports, on-the-job training needs to be taken a few steps further.

The first step is to assure that the manager is an effective teacher. Among other characteristics, effective teachers are respectful and patient with learners. They are good communicators who have a thorough understanding of their material and field. Also willing to admit when they don't know the answer to a question, they will readily seek it out. Successful teachers truly love teaching and exude this love. Above all, they make it about the learner, not about themselves. This builds confidence in students and helps them succeed.

Making this manager/"teacher"-employee dynamic work in any business setting is key to an organization's growth and overall success. Managers can maximize their employees' potential and ensure learning retention and personal career growth in several ways:

- Clearly articulate the direction and strategy of your organization. Then immerse your employees in the culture of your business. Whether it is your organization's particular method for solving problems or your process for making widgets, all employees need to "get" your organization's way of doing things at a fundamental level.
- Show your employees how their role fits into the organization as a whole. Every employee is a piece of a puzzle that is put together for the greater good. People need to internalize that their work matters.
- Keep in mind that two people may approach and accomplish the same task in completely different ways; allow for that. People have different learning styles. Vary your approach to teaching and training employees. Consider employing segmented training as a way to master skills and build confidence between tasks. To boost retention, training shouldn't occur in a vacuum. It should be an on-going process. Make learning part of the daily work experience. Encourage on-going learning and continued education.

- Create a positive work and learning environment. You can do this by being patient, allowing for mistakes and providing constructive criticism, as well as positive feedback. Along those lines, don't tell your reports what to do. Instead, make them part of the process. Help them determine how to take what they have learned and apply it to their daily jobs. Above all, acknowledge, and if it's called for, reward your employees' successes. Tell them when they have done a good job. Nothing stifles and frustrates employees more than not knowing where they stand.

It's an old adage that you learn more from failure than from success. That is what learning from experience is all about.

To foster a healthy work and learning environment, managers need to allow for "failure" or at least mistakes. It is what you do next that counts. Make sure you are approachable and open to questions – in fact, encourage them. Your reports should know you are there to help them work through problems and difficult situations. Your effort in communicating this and creating a positive work environment will go a long way toward helping everyone remember what they have learned.



RESEARCH ARTICLE

GOING PROTEAN

Brendon Woghiren, M.A.

The workplace has experienced a monumental shift where employers no longer take care of employees; rather individuals must assume the full responsibility for managing their own careers and livelihood. The term "protean" refers to a concept that requires everyone to monitor and assess the job market, anticipate future industry shifts and trends, gain the necessary skills to meet the shifts and be able to adapt quickly to thrive in an ever changing workplace. While organizations have been less than eager to adapt to this changing paradigm, now more than ever, society has pushed organizations into re-thinking their organizational strategy. A **protean career** is driven by a person, not an organization. It can be reinvented by the person periodically as the person or environment changes.

The career of the 21st century will be protean. In today's fast-paced economy, "going protean," offers a better strategy for many businesses. Protean-based corporations will have the ability to change in response to rapidly adapting forces in both the market and the organization. These organizations are characterized as being made up of a tiny number of core employees. Surrounded by a large cloud of resources, the core employees are often contract or outsourced and they tend to do the majority of the work. The core employees are also tasked with managing big picture elements of the enterprise such as the culture, business model, vision, strategy, etc.

While organizations can benefit from protean employees, at its genesis, the real winners in a protean-based economy are the protean employees themselves. As outlined in Park and Rothwell (2009), protean career employees establish a contract between themselves and their work, instead of with a particular organization. As such, an individual's visions and values become the criteria by which to gauge career success. In order to become a protean-based cooperation, organizations must establish a culture that supports employees' protean careers.

Specific steps should be taken by the organization to establish a culture that empowers employees to take individual initiative in managing their careers. Among these steps include favoring learner identity over job mastery, providing excellent



career communication, and creating a continuous learning climate. Park and Rothwell (2009) further explore the importance of establishing a continuous learning climate. In their study they discovered that when organizations establish a continuous learning climate, characterized by providing opportunity for on-going education and growth, employees are more likely

to engage in self-directed career management in pursuit of subjective psychological success. When organizations provide opportunities for on-going education and growth, individuals are more inclined to assume personal responsibility for managing their own careers.

How to Create a Continuous Learning Climate

Watkins and Marsick (1996) identified seven learning organization dimensions that can be conceptualized as strategies for constructing a learning organization:

- (1) Create continuous learning opportunities
- (2) Promote inquiry and dialogue
- (3) Encourage collaboration and team learning
- (4) Create knowledge management systems
- (5) Empower people toward a collective vision
- (6) Connect the organization to its environment
- (7) Provide strategic leadership for learning

References

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Watkins, K.E., and V.J. Marsick. 1996. *In action: Creating the learning organization.* Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.