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tips for:

DEALING WITH CRITICISM AT WORK

Almost all of us hope for positive feedback from bosses, co-workers and clients. After all, you work hard at your job and a little recognition for the value you add, makes it all seem more worthwhile.

But what do you do when feedback is less positive and not quite the encouraging pat on the back you'd expected?

It's important to remember that managers, team leaders and workplaces in general, are always aiming to improve their efficiency, increase their quality of service, and lower overheads. So, with this in mind, suggestions for improvement should be no surprise, yet more often than not, they can feel like an attack and can even leave us feeling a little wounded.

How do you deal with criticism? Here are a few helpful tips for remaining professional and turning workplace criticism into an opportunity for improvement.

HERE ARE THE KEY STEPS:

Take a Deep Breath

1

No one likes to be criticised, especially not at work, but it's important to maintain your composure. If you feel yourself getting mad or upset, take a deep breath and mentally remove yourself from the situation momentarily. In most cases, criticism isn't a personal attack, but rather a form of expressing concern and suggesting improvement. Not all companies have a great feedback culture, so the person offering the criticism may not know how to state their message in any other way.



Listen Closely

2

Make sure you're listening logically, not just emotionally. Take in the full message and don't be afraid to ask questions to make sure you understand what the criticism is about. This not only helps you to know what the person you're talking to is asking, it can also help them to clarify their points and say what they mean in more positive way. What could have started out as a clumsy correction could be turned into honest, constructive feedback.



Assume Good Intentions

The vast majority of the time, criticism in the workplace isn't actually personal or even an attempt to undermine the hard work you've been doing. From a manager or supervisor, it's often an attempt to guide you toward greater success or away from a tactic they see potential problems with. From a co-worker, it might be a way to voice their concerns about how well your work will go down with others. It could actually stem from a desire to form a more effective work relationship with you.

3



Consider All Criticism Helpful

Not everyone gets regular opportunities to see how their work is affecting others, or gain insight from others on how to improve. Try considering all forms of feedback, including criticism, as valuable information to help you get better at your job and make those around you happier to have you on the team. Criticism from others at work can be used in the same way as advice from an industry consultant. Even messages from unhappy clients can be used as invaluable insight on how to improve customer satisfaction in the future.

4

Don't Take It Too Hard

While it's important to take criticism seriously and improve your work methods with the information, don't beat yourself up about whatever the issue is. On the one hand, everyone will have an opinion on everyone's work (not just yours!), and on the other hand, everyone (even you!) can make an honest mistake. The best thing you can do is to accept the feedback and think about whether you could adapt anything in the future.

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Say Thank You

When someone has gone out of their way to share their concerns, even if it seemed unfriendly at first, be sure to thank them. Even if you're upset, remain professional. This will create a positive feedback loop and may even mean that the next time they have a suggestion for you, it will arrive through a friendlier and more enjoyable conversation.

While it's never fun to face criticism, you have the power to turn even negative feedback into a positive experience for both you and the person who has expressed their concerns. If your company lacks a helpful feedback culture, why not start the trend by dealing with any criticism that comes your way with a positive attitude, adaptability and appreciation for the opinion of others.

