

# 14 Tips to Help You Give Feedback to Your Boss

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Giving feedback to your boss can be scary. You may be concerned about damaging your relationship or even losing your job. On the other hand, many bosses will appreciate your input, especially if you have sincere intentions and skillful communications.

**An emotionally intelligent manager knows they need feedback from their team in order to do their job.** They will also be sensitive to the power imbalance in these relationships.

How can you tell if your boss will be receptive to your comments? Try these tips for offering upward feedback.

### Preparing to Give Feedback to Your Boss:

- 1. Consult your teammates.** Ask your coworkers about their relevant experiences. They may have advice for how to approach your boss and hold a productive discussion.
- 2. Understand your workplace culture.** Does your company have a strict hierarchy, or does it provide ample opportunities for dialogue between employees at different job levels? **You may be able to tell whether upward feedback is likely to be appreciated.**
- 3. Address the context.** Timing is important. If you just received an unflattering performance review or you're hearing rumors about layoffs, your boss might feel a little defensive. Wait for things to calm down before you speak up.

4. **Examine your intentions.** Your feedback is more likely to succeed if you're trying to be helpful. Think about how you can be of service to your employer rather than advancing your own views.
  
5. **Set priorities.** You'll usually make more progress if you tighten your agenda. **Pick one item at a time to discuss with your boss.**
  
6. **Choose safe subjects.** Maybe certain topics are off limits with your boss. Maybe you lack the access or expertise to evaluate some activities. Stick to areas where you can make a positive difference.
  
7. **Trust your instincts.** You may decide that the risks of confronting your boss outweigh the potential benefits. **Sometimes it's sensible to remain silent.**

#### **Delivering Feedback to Your Boss:**

1. **Respect privacy.** Would you rather receive criticism behind closed doors or in the middle of a staff meeting? Your boss feels the same way, so schedule a private session for speaking your mind.
  
2. **Meet face to face.** Email is quicker, but **in-person communications are safer for discussing sensitive subjects.** You'll be able to gauge how your boss is reacting in case you need to clarify any misunderstandings or reframe your message.
  
3. **Act promptly.** Give feedback as soon as possible so your boss can consider it while the situation is fresh in their mind and make any necessary changes. A direct approach also helps to keep grievances from growing.

4. **Be specific.** Use precise language and concrete examples. It will make it easier for your boss to understand their conduct and its impact.
  
5. **Stick to facts.** Feedback needs to be based on observations and evidence rather than opinions and interpretations. Let your boss know that you need more than 10 minutes notice to prepare a status report rather than concluding that they're inconsiderate or unreasonable.
  
6. **Propose solutions.** Your boss may have their own ideas about what to do or they may be happy to collaborate. **Be ready to suggest a reasonable solution - ideally, something you could do to help remedy the situation.**
  
7. **Stay calm.** Even if you've done your homework and your boss is receptive, you might still feel nervous. Make your conversation less stressful by reminding yourself of what you like about them and taking a few deep breaths. You may also want to rehearse with a trusted friend.

If your boss is wise enough to value other perspectives, offering upward feedback may benefit you both. You'll be giving your boss helpful information and strengthening your working relationship.