

# **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR TODAY'S LEADER**

**FREQUENT ERRORS  
WHEN GIVING FEEDBACK**



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Providing adequate feedback to people is a key ability for leaders; doing so in planned sessions with collaborators allows:

- Setting clear measurable goals
- Providing feedback for good and bad performance
- Motivating collaborators' behavior
- Assuring the best results

However, for different reasons, in many companies, feedback sessions do not always fulfill the purposes previously mentioned. These are some of the most frequent errors:

01

**Giving negative feedback in public.**

When people are reprimanded in public, this is perceived as an aggression, and only angers the people involved, hindering communication.

02

**Making feedback a punishment or revenge.**

Honest feedback is a way of helping and improving performance, not a way to punish.

03

**Disregarding the tone of voice and body language.**

Feedback in which the words, tone, and body language are incongruent can be hurtful and cause confusion.

04

**Giving feedback without assertiveness or in an aggressive tone.**

The most appropriate tone to confront another person during feedback is with rational assertiveness.

05

**Forgetting the data that allows us to concentrate on facts.**

If we have the data handy, it will allow us to be objective and not make suppositions, which cause confusion and distance the interlocutors.

06

**Preventing the other from speaking.**

Correct communication happens both ways; however, if we observe people are defending themselves before everything we say, we can ask them to first let us express ourselves, promising to listen carefully to what they want to say when we have finished.

## A tool to prevent these errors

An effective way to prevent these errors and carry out positive feedback sessions is by following the GROW Model.

The GROW Model was developed by Timothy Gallwey, a tennis coach who observed the errors of other coaches of this sport. He recommended changes in the way of giving performance feedback to players in order to improve their performance.

In the first place, he concentrated on the difficulty of players to keep their eyes on the ball. Because of this tendency, some coaches gave general recommendations like: “keep your eyes on the ball.” The problem with this type of instruction is that some novices could do it for a short time, but they couldn’t maintain it. Gallwey, observing this, requested trainers to ask their players to say out loud, “bounce” when the ball bounced and “hit” when they hit the ball. The result was that the players improved their performance because they could maintain their eyes on the ball. The next step was to ask trainers to stop giving basic instructions and to ask the players to suggest ways of improving, according to specific situations.



The GROW Model works similarly. The first step is to establish the objectives that the collaborators desire or need to reach. In this case, a tennis player would say that she wanted to have 7 out of 10 serves to be effective, while the trainer would watch and give specific feedback about what was well done and what needed to improve. Later the trainer would ask sensitizing questions like, for example, “What did you do differently on this occasion so that the ball bounced right before the line?” This question would allow the player to analyze what was accomplished and modify what was necessary in order to reach the goal. Thanks to these questions, she would have defined obstacles and improvement options and, therefore, the players would have learned on their own which actions to keep and which to modify in order to improve their performance.

In this sense, the GROW Model is an effective tool for the leader because it causes an assertive confrontation that seeks continuous improvement of performance, and at the same time makes the collaborators co-responsible for their own performance.