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Critical feedback elements
every manager should know
for enhancing
workplace communication



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Managers often make common
mistakes when delivering
feedback to employees



Introduction

- Feedback long recognized as an important component of any productive workplace
- Yet managers often make common mistakes when delivering feedback to employees
- Such mistakes can drive employee performance in the wrong direction

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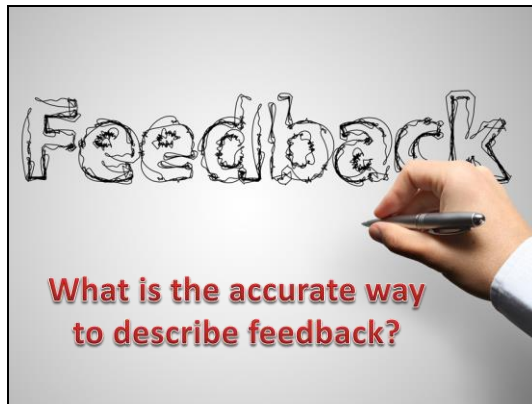
Sub-standard communication
often prevents organizations
from tapping into the true
potential of their employees



Introduction Continued

- As a result, this sub-standard communication often prevents organizations from tapping into the true potential of their employees.
- This talk will draw upon a wealth of behavioral science research from diverse areas such as
 - pedestrian safety, food service industries, trade, transportation, manufacturing, clerical work, online training and workplace simulations to identify the essential rules for performance-enhancing feedback.
- These are commonly neglected or misunderstood.

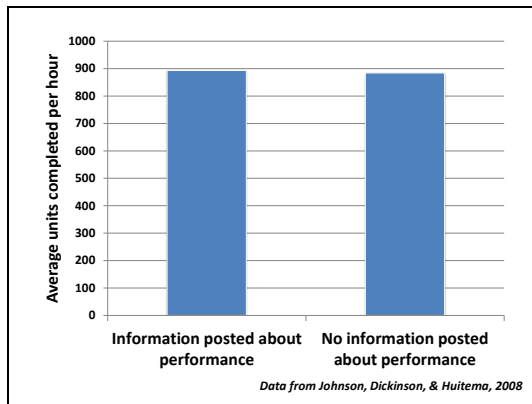
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Information must possess two functions to be considered feedback?

- It must tell you where you stand relative to some target or goal
- It should tell you what to do to improve

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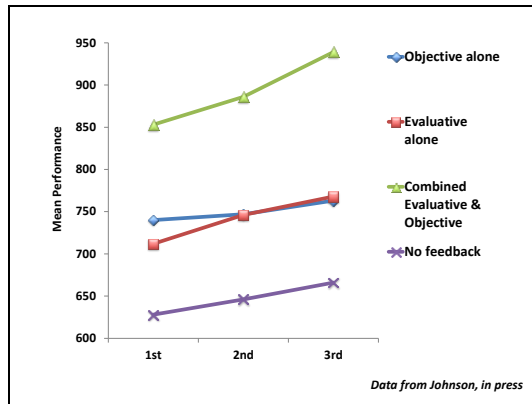
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How feedback viewed in organizations?

- As information, however, information alone is not effective in changing behavior
- Do not confuse information and data for feedback
- If information and data do not tell you which behavior to change, then it's not feedback
- Just knowing information does not lead people to change their behavior

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Important elements for feedback

- Evaluative and objective will enhance beyond either alone

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• 76% of the U.S. Hispanic population over the age of 5 speaks Spanish at home
• with a little more than half unable to read and/or write in English

yet...training and feedback is often in English for these workers

Data from Hurley & Lebbon, 2012

- The language barrier has been cited as a possible cause for higher injury rates among Hispanic workers.
 - 76% of the U.S. Hispanic population over the age of 5 speaks Spanish at home,
 - with a little more than half unable to read and/or write in English
 - almost 40% of Hispanics have not completed high school (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011)
- According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, workers with limited English proficiency receive less safety training
- Feedback must be clear and well-understood,

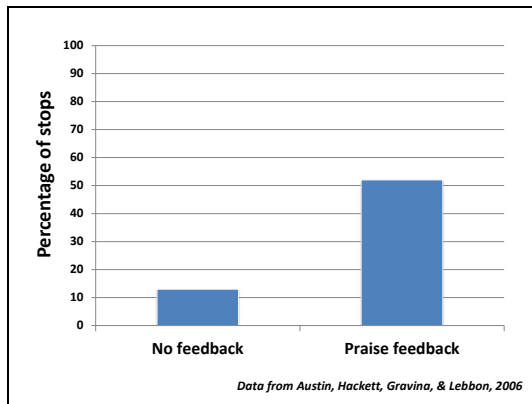
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Unclear or subjective feedback might as well be another language

- Clear and immediately
- Obvious feedback vs. muddled feedback full of technical jargon
- Graphed and easily understood immediately

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You don't have to have a long relationship to have an impact

- A visual prompt and feedback by a stranger with no control over driver consequences did change behavior

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System Barrier		System Barrier	
1. Slip hazards	S / U / X / Y / N	5. Personal protective equipment	S / U / X / Y / N
Wet/dry floor, No foot on floor, Dry floor, Obstruction in de/dishwashing area.	Other?	Cleaning hot surfaces, Transferring hot items, Sliver aimed on, Mask glove when cleaning sliver.	Other?
Comments/Other:		De/dishwashing, cleanup dishes.	Other?
2. Trip hazards	S / U / X / Y / N	6. Burns	S / U / X / Y / N
No organized pathways, No debris on floor.	Other?	Eye on task, cooking, Slacking warm trays on carts, Bunch back when opening control covers.	Other?
Comments/Other:		Rotary cover, "COP"	Other?
3. Work surroundings	S / U / X / Y / N	7. Work with machines	S / U / X / Y / N
Handles inside shelf, No unattended knives, Stacking, 1 foot from top shelf bottom.	Other?	Hemmy Pressure, Slide and return, Cut deep fibers, Rotate, Mixer, "COP" for adding a string.	Other?
Comments/Other:		Comments/Other:	
4. Cuts	S / U / X / Y / N	8. Back safety	S / U / X / Y / N
Eye on task (when cutting or slicing), Sliver pick-up, Cut away from self, Fingers curled, Uncluttered workspace, Use spatula for surface cutter, Use proper tools, No cutting into palm, Cutting board used.	Other?	Lifting, Use hip, Straight back, No twisting, Load close to body, Straight back when stationary, or when reaching, Repetitive handling, Shoulder level.	Other?
Comments/Other:		Comments/Other:	
Key: S = Safe U = Unsafe X = Not observed Y = Yes N = No		9. Lubrication in cooking area	Y / N
		Work 2 hours or more?	Y / N
		# "YES" = Replacement after 2 hours?	Y / N

Form from Lebbon, Sigurdsson, & Austin, 2012

Feedback on the most critical behaviors

- Feedback weakens the more behaviors you add to the feedback list
- If you were given feedback on 20 items, how many would you remember?

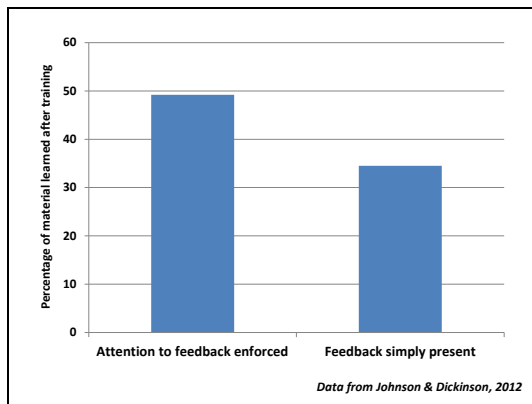
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History of feedback

- Typically the word "feedback" has been established as an antecedent for punishment
- Interventions should emphasize positive feedback to overcome this history so performers begin to seek out, rather than avoid feedback

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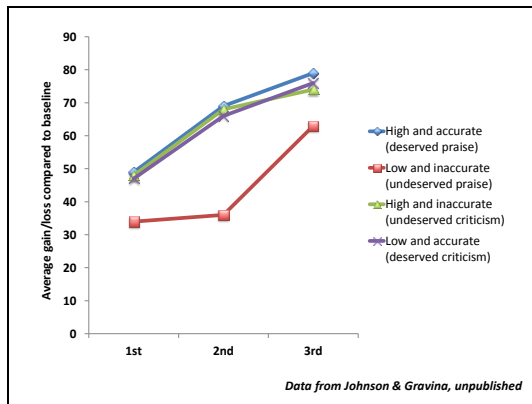
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Paying attention to feedback

- Feedback will be enhanced if the environment is structured so that employees will be forced to somehow attend to the feedback, even if only briefly

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Accuracy of feedback

- Nice but inaccurate feedback can be damaging
- In an effort to develop more positive interventions, do not start blindly labeling all performance as praise worthy

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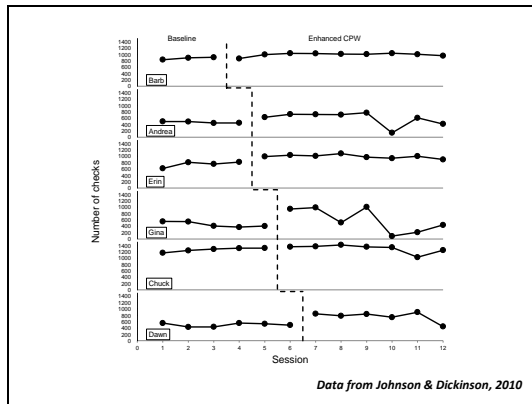
Western Michigan University and Lehman College, City University of New York

March 22nd, 2013

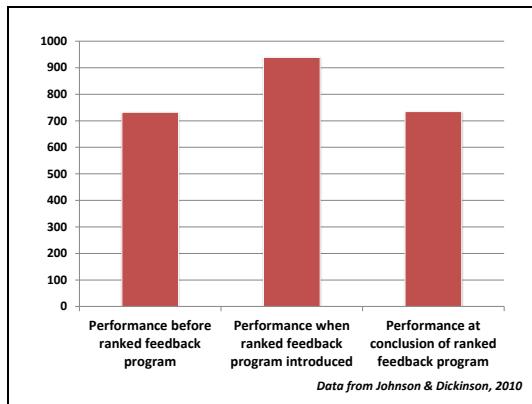
Academic and Business Research Institute International Conference, New Orleans, LA

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Refuse the urge to compare to other employees' performance

- Every organization possess outliers
- Comparing to the outlier is unfair and only creates resentment & competition that may harm the internal culture resulting in poor retention and succession plans
- Feedback is based on that specific employee's past performance
- Performance that is below average, but an improvement for that individual, may be worth rewarding

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Some key findings

- Simply posting data may do little to enhance
- Both evaluative and objective elements needed
- Feedback must be clear and well-understood
- Feedback can be quite effective, even from a variety of sources
- Overcoming history of feedback as punishment
- Set it up so that workers must pay attention to feedback
- Nice but inaccurate feedback can be damaging
- Avoid using feedback to pit employees against one another



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*What is the shortest word in the English language that contains the letters: **abcdef**?*

**Don't forget that
feedback is one of the
basic building blocks for
organizational effectiveness**

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