



Georgia Tech College of Engineering
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Feedback & Design Critique

“Feedback is a gift”

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Who am I?

Tasos Karahalios

Design thinking, product design,
mechanical engineering, user
experience, business strategy

McKinsey
Design

IDEO



Three types of feedback that are prevalent in companies



Coins Model

A model for sharing **individual feedback** in a clear and concise manner. As delivering and receiving feedback can be an uncomfortable process, this approach **simplifies the process into 4 clear steps**. Continued use of this approach makes individuals more comfortable over time with both giving and receiving feedback in **constructive ways**.



360 Degree Feedback

A process that is coordinated to provide **anonymous feedback** from a **wide range of sources**. This often includes peers, managers, and direct reports. This is a very structured approach, often managed by company HR departments, to ensure participants get a clear assessment of their performance to **avoid blind spots**.



Design Critiques

These are sessions thoughtfully created to **share current progress** on a project. The intention is to communicate what the current design is, share concerns, and solicit feedback from a **wide range of individuals** to rethink and question current approaches, as well as **arrive at alternative directions** to explore.

The COIN Feedback Model

Context

Provide context as to what prompted you to give this feedback. Why was there? Where it happened?
Time and date?

Observation

Describe the actions and behaviors you observed that you want to give feedback on. Use facts.
Avoid emotions and making judgments.

Impact

Describe the impact the actions you observed had on you and others. This can be tangible, e.g., we lost a contract, or intangible, e.g., I was upset.

Next Steps

Mutually agree on how to move forward. Show them what they can do differently the next time a similar situation arises.

Useful tips...

- Share feedback as soon as possible to avoid referring to past events that can be forgotten.
- Be specific with your examples so comments are easy to relate to.
- It's fine to share positive feedback in group settings, but reserve constructive feedback for personal conversations.
- Limit sharing to 1-2 situations instead of overwhelming them with too many points.

Reality...

- Sharing feedback can be hard but gets easier as you repeat the behavior.
- Receiving feedback is a skill as well, don't take it personally, see it as an opportunity to grow.
- Groups that repeat this behavior regularly create a culture where it is valued and easier to do.

Source:

<https://expertprogrammanagement.com/2022/09/coin-feedback-model/>

COIN Feedback Model Template

C	Context	<p>What prompted you to give this feedback?</p> <p><i>“Hey Josh, during your share to the client just now, I noticed how you were phrasing certain comments and I wanted to share my perspective since you will present again soon.”</i></p>
O	Observation	<p>What specific action or behavior did you observe?</p> <p><i>“When you were describing next steps to their engineering team, a few times you said ‘...the approach we are recommending is just following a basic design process that should be obvious...’ during your share of the Gantt chart you put together.”</i></p>
I	Impact	<p>What effect did their actions have on you others?</p> <p><i>“I noticed some of the clients’ lead engineers and designers squirming and had a disgruntled look on their faces when you used those words, and I know you didn’t mean it this way but it sounded like you were lecturing them or talking down to them...”</i></p>
N	Next Steps	<p>Mutually agree on how to move forward.</p> <p><i>“Let’s make sure we change tone on the schedule recommendations we are sharing, so the client feels we are all on the same team and we value their expertise.”</i></p>

Source:

<https://expertprogrammanagement.com/2022/09/coin-feedback-model/>

360 Degree Feedback



Useful tips...

- Feedback is collected from all levels of people you interact with in an anonymous manner.
- The collection can be done through an anonymous survey, or in larger organizations HR designates individuals to reach out and collect feedback on your behalf, sanitize and synthesize it, and then share it back to you.

Simple questions to get started...

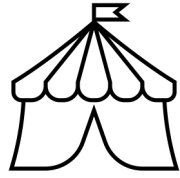
- Please share your perceptions of your colleague's strengths.
- Please share your colleague's areas for improvement.
- Please share specific examples from team or client interactions where you observed behaviors. *(HR, or individual who collects feedback responsible for sanitizing it to avoid knowing who it came from)*

Source:

https://www.cognology.sg/learning_center/360whatis/

Design Critiques

Guiding Principles



Make it an event

- Invite range of participants, those close to the work & those with unique perspectives.
- Set aside time in everyone's schedules to ensure people are focused.
- Set up the room environment to support high energy sharing and collaboration (ex: post it notes, projector screens, snacks....etc).



Prepare in advance

- Have current state information ready to share (ex: CAD models, prototypes, screen interfaces, data...etc).
- If helpful, share in advance with participants to ensure they have time to get up to speed.



Log all suggestions

- Encourage participants to share perspectives, highlighting risks as potential problems should be seen as a benefit to the team.
- Capture notes on all positive features as well as risk areas.



Stick to a schedule

- Design critiques should be limited to 1-2 hours to avoid team burnout and exhaustion.
- Although it's all right to have initial solutions proposed, do not dive so deep into the weeds during the session if you are losing others' attention, rather set up follow-up working sessions to deep dive on solutions with key people

Key Take Aways...

- 1** Feedback can be tricky to share at first but gets easier over time. The COINS model is one approach that helps keep feedback focused and prevents it from feeling personal.
- 2** Receiving feedback is a skill as well. If you noticed feedback bringing up certain emotions in you, pause to reflect on why that is. Receiving feedback should be seen as an opportunity for improvement rather than a criticism.
- 3** 360 Feedback is a useful tool when looking to understand how your impact is perceived from many perspectives. Ensure you get a broad range of feedback from those more senior to those more junior and everyone else in between.
- 4** Design critiques are a key approach to de-risk your projects. The more of them your team can schedule the better, and make sure to act on the output!
- 5** Giving and receiving feedback is a tough skills to master that takes time. Like most things the more you do it, the better you get at. It's a skill that you will need throughout your career!