

Tips for increasing the quality of feedback within an organisation

- Encourage sharing and an active interest in what is going on all through the organisation.
- Stimulate an interest in learning about learning. Moving a living human system to a higher level of feedback requires greater curiosity about the processes of learning itself.
- Resist a hierarchy that only allows information to flow from the top down and allow a distributed, inclusive decision-making process that values all inputs.
- Agree on a solidarity of purpose (a shared set of values and objectives) that gives each participant a sense of responsibility for and ownership of the vision.
- Raise the energy of the whole system. Get people excited about the challenges facing them.
- Value and examine the lessons brought by failure rather than fostering a culture of blame and defensiveness.
- Give each other permission to risk new ideas and small short-term experiments to generate new feedback for fresh perspectives.
- Improve communication for its own sake. Get the conversation going and keep it going.
- Try and include as diverse a set of people and opinions in dialogue, in order to gain as many different sources of information as possible.
- Allow people the freedom to choose and change their level of participation in the conversation.
- Create “safe enough” spaces in which giving and receiving feedback can be experienced positively and in which people know that it is OK to express themselves honestly and openly.
- Coach people in how to give, receive and use effective feedback as part of nurturing a culture of institutional learning. Encourage people to explore and experiment with novel ways of providing feedback.
- Maintain record-keeping systems that are open to all participants in the dialogue.
- Avoid an overly rigid, established way of doing things that does not allow innovative solutions to be integrated into day-to-day practice.
- Appreciate a sense of humour that allows people to stand back from their context and engage their challenges with more playfulness increasing the chances of making unusual associations. Encourage sharing and an active interest in what is going on all through the organisation.