



The Feedback Delivery Framework

A Guidebook + Worksheet for Working Professionals Clear, constructive, and confident feedback — every time.



Why This Resource Exists

The Feedback Problem No One Talks About

Most professionals know feedback is important. But when the moment comes — in a performance conversation, a team debrief, a peer review — something goes wrong. The words come out too harsh, or too vague, or not at all. People leave the room confused, defensive, or unchanged. Nothing improves.

This is not a skills gap. It is a **framework gap**. Most professionals were never taught *how* to structure feedback in a way that lands well and drives change. They default to what feels natural — and natural is rarely effective when emotions and power dynamics are involved.

This guidebook solves that problem. It gives you a repeatable, professional-grade framework for delivering feedback that is honest without being harsh, direct without being unkind, and specific enough to actually change behaviour. Whether you are a manager giving a performance review, a consultant flagging a deliverable issue, or a peer trying to improve a team dynamic — this guide is your starting point.

What This Resource Solves

- Vague feedback that changes nothing
- Harsh delivery that damages trust
- Avoided conversations that fester
- Inconsistent messaging across teams
- Feedback that feels personal, not professional

How to Use This Guide

- **First read:** Go cover to cover for the full framework
- **Reference mode:** Jump to the step you need before a conversation
- **Worksheet mode:** Fill in the templates before key feedback moments
- **Team use:** Share with your team to build a common language

Module Overview

Your Roadmap Through This Guide

This resource is structured as a six-step journey — from understanding why feedback fails, to delivering it with precision, to following up for real change. Each section builds on the last, and each includes practical tools you can use immediately.

The Feedback Mindset

Shift from evaluation to enablement

Before You Speak

Prepare the content and context

The SBI-R Framework

Structure every feedback conversation

Delivering with Clarity

Language, tone, and pacing

Navigating Reactions

Handle defensiveness and silence

The Follow-Through

Close the loop and track change

- Each step includes: a short explanation, practical guidance, real-world examples, and a worksheet or reflection tool you can use before your next conversation.

Step 1 — Mindset

The Feedback Mindset: From Evaluation to Enablement

Before you say a single word of feedback, you need to examine *why* you are giving it. This sounds obvious — but most feedback goes wrong before it is ever spoken, because the person giving it is operating from the wrong mental model.

There are two fundamentally different mindsets you can bring to a feedback conversation. The **Evaluation Mindset** positions you as a judge: you have assessed someone's performance, found it lacking, and you are now delivering a verdict. This mindset — even when well-intentioned — triggers defensiveness. The person on the receiving end feels judged, not helped.

The **Enablement Mindset** positions you as a partner. You have observed something specific, you care about this person's success, and you are sharing what you noticed to help them grow. This shift is not just semantic — it changes your tone, your word choices, your body language, and ultimately, the result of the conversation.

1

✓ Enablement Mindset

- "I want to help them do better"
- Feedback as information and direction
- Focus on the future — what is possible
- Receiver-centred: supporting their growth
- Triggers: openness, curiosity, commitment

2

✗ Evaluation Mindset

- "I need to tell them what they did wrong"
- Feedback as verdict or judgment
- Focus on the past — what went wrong
- Sender-centred: relieving your own discomfort
- Triggers: defensiveness, shutdown, resentment

"Your intention does not guarantee your impact. But your mindset determines your intention — so start there."

Step 1 — Worksheet

Mindset Check: Before You Enter the Room

Use this quick reflection before any significant feedback conversation. Take 3–5 minutes to write honest answers. You do not need to share these — they are for your own clarity. If you notice evaluation-mode thinking, do not judge yourself. Simply reframe before you speak.

1

Question 1

In one sentence, what is my *real* intention in giving this feedback right now?

Write your answer here: _____

2

Question 2

Am I giving this feedback for *their* benefit, or to relieve my own frustration or concern?

Write your answer here: _____

3

Question 3

What do I want this person to *feel* at the end of our conversation?

Write your answer here: _____

4

Question 4

What do I genuinely appreciate or respect about this person that I should hold in mind?

Write your answer here:

- Reframe prompt:** If your answers reveal evaluation-mode thinking, try this: "I am sharing what I observed because I believe this person is capable of more, and I want to support that."

Step 2 — Preparation

Before You Speak: Preparing the Content and Context

Unprepared feedback is the source of most feedback disasters. When you walk into a conversation without clear preparation, you default to vague language ("your attitude needs improvement"), emotional language ("I was really frustrated"), or generalisation ("you always do this"). None of these land well — and all of them trigger defensiveness or confusion.

Effective preparation has two dimensions: **content preparation** (what you will say) and **context preparation** (when, where, and how you will say it). Both matter equally. You can have the most perfectly structured feedback in the world, but if you deliver it in front of the person's colleagues or right before they head into an important meeting, the message will be lost in the noise of the setting.

Content Preparation Checklist

- I can name one specific situation or event
- I can describe the observable behaviour (not my interpretation)
- I can articulate the actual impact on the team, project, or stakeholder
- I have a specific, actionable change to request
- I am prepared to ask questions, not just talk

Context Preparation Checklist

- The setting is private and free from interruption
- The timing is not immediately before/after a stressful event
- I have allowed enough time — at least 20–30 minutes
- I am calm and not giving feedback from a place of anger
- The feedback is timely — within a reasonable window of the event

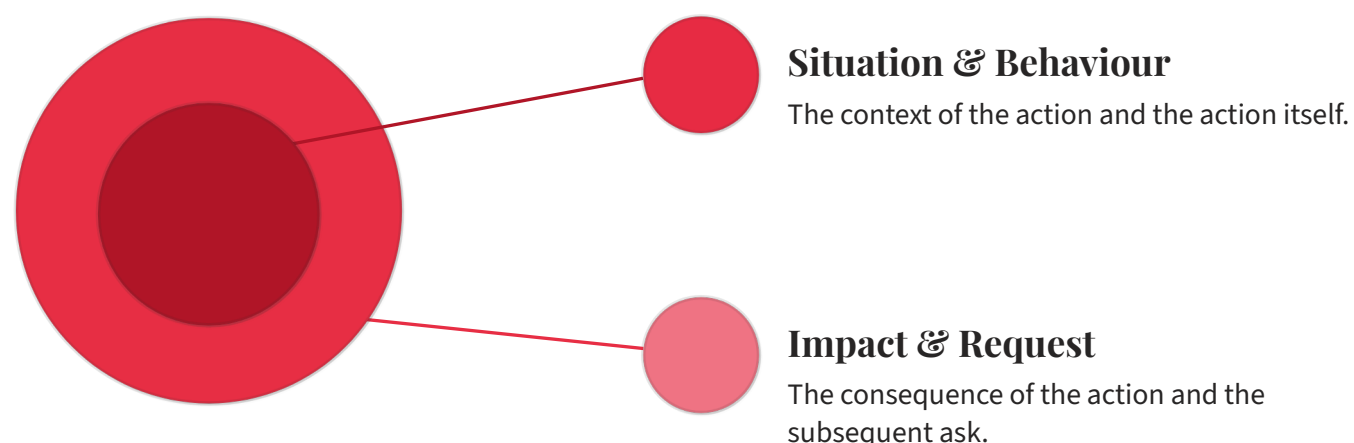
A useful rule of thumb: **the more significant the feedback, the more preparation it deserves.** A quick "hey, I noticed this" for minor course corrections is fine. But for anything that touches performance, relationships, or professional development — prepare fully.

Step 3 — The Core Framework

The SBI-R Framework: Your Feedback Blueprint

The SBI-R Framework is the structural backbone of this entire guide. It stands for **Situation** → **Behaviour** → **Impact** → **Request**. It is one of the most widely used and validated feedback frameworks in professional development, used by leadership coaches, HR professionals, and executive teams globally. And for good reason: it works.

The power of SBI-R lies in its precision. Each element forces you to move from the vague to the specific, from interpretation to observation, and from complaint to direction. When you follow this structure, your feedback becomes almost impossible to misunderstand — and much harder to dismiss.



The SBI-R framework transforms emotional, vague feedback into a structured, professional conversation. By moving through each element in sequence, you anchor the feedback in fact, connect it to consequences, and end with forward momentum — not backward blame.

Step 3 — SBI-R Deep Dive

Breaking Down Each Element of SBI-R

1

S — Situation

Name the specific context. Not "recently" or "in meetings" — give a date, a project, or a particular moment. This anchors the feedback in reality and prevents the receiver from arguing about whether it happened.

Weak: "In your recent presentations..." **Strong:** "In Tuesday's client presentation for the Axis account..."

2

B — Behaviour

Describe what you *observed* — the actual, visible action. Not your interpretation, not the person's character, not their intention. Behaviour is what you could record on video. This is the most critical — and most difficult — element to get right.

Weak: "You seemed disengaged and disrespectful." **Strong:** "You checked your phone three times and gave one-word answers to client questions."

3

I — Impact

State the actual consequence of the behaviour — on the client, the team, the project outcome, or you. Impact makes feedback feel real, not arbitrary. It answers the question: "Why does this matter?"

Weak: "It wasn't a good look." **Strong:** "The client flagged concerns about our team's engagement in the follow-up email."

4

R — Request

End with a specific, actionable ask. Not a vague direction ("be more professional") but a concrete behaviour you are requesting going forward. This is what turns feedback into a growth action.

Weak: "Please be more present next time." **Strong:** "In future client meetings, I'd like you to keep your phone away and prepare two questions in advance."

Step 3 – Worksheet

Build Your SBI-R Feedback Script

Use this template before your next feedback conversation. Fill in each field with specific, observable, factual information. Avoid adjectives that describe character (lazy, careless, difficult). Stick to what you saw, heard, or experienced. Once filled, practise saying it aloud — delivery matters as much as content.

1	Situation "In [specific situation / date / project / meeting]..." <i>Your notes:</i> _____ _____
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2	Behaviour "I observed / noticed that you [specific observable action]..." <i>Your notes:</i> _____ _____
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3	Impact "The impact of this was [on the team / client / project / me]..." <i>Your notes:</i> _____ _____
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4	Request "Going forward, I'd like to ask you to [specific, concrete behaviour]..." <i>Your notes:</i> _____ _____
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- Pro tip:** Read your completed script aloud before the meeting. If any part sounds like a character judgment rather than an observation, revise it. Your goal is to sound like a coach, not a judge.

Step 3 – Examples

SBI-R in Action: Three Real-World Scenarios

Below are three complete examples of SBI-R feedback applied across different professional contexts. Notice how each example stays grounded in observable fact, connects to real impact, and ends with a specific forward-looking request. These are templates you can adapt directly.

1

Scenario 1: Manager » Direct Report

S: "During last Thursday's team standup..."

B: "...you interrupted Priya twice while she was presenting her update."

I: "This made it harder for the team to hear her point, and she seemed visibly flustered after."

R: "Going forward, I'd like you to let each person finish before responding. Could you do that?"

2

Scenario 2: Peer » Peer

S: "In the Q3 report we submitted to finance last Friday..."

B: "...the revenue figures in section 3 were not reconciled with the source data I shared."

I: "Finance sent it back for revision, which delayed our cycle close by two days."

R: "For future reports, can we agree on a 24-hour check-in before submission to catch these?"

3

Scenario 3: Consultant » Client Stakeholder

S: "In our project steering committee call on Monday..."

B: "...the decisions we needed on vendor selection were deferred for the third consecutive week."

I: "This has moved our go-live date to March, and the development team is now blocked."

R: "I'd like to propose we schedule a focused 30-minute decision session this week. Can we do that?"

Step 4 — Delivery

Delivering with Clarity: Language, Tone, and Pacing

Even with a perfectly prepared SBI-R script, delivery can undermine your message. The words you choose, the pace at which you speak, and the tone you carry into the room all shape how feedback is received. Research consistently shows that people remember *how* something was said long after they forget *what* was said.

The goal in delivery is to sound **calm, direct, and caring** — all at once. This is harder than it sounds. Most people default to one extreme: either softening the message so much that it loses its impact, or delivering it so bluntly that it triggers a defensive reaction. The language strategies below help you find the precise middle ground.

Language Strategies That Work

- **Use "I" statements** — "I noticed" not "You always"
- **Separate observation from interpretation** — say what you saw, not what you concluded
- **Be specific, not comprehensive** — address one behaviour at a time
- **Ask, don't assume** — "What was your thinking there?" before "Here's what you did wrong"
- **Invite dialogue** — end with a question, not a monologue

Language Patterns to Avoid

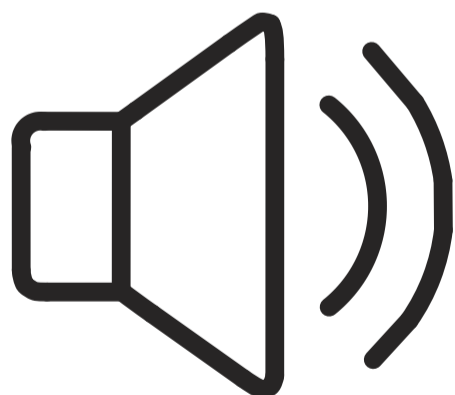
- "You always / you never..." — generalisations invite argument
- "To be honest with you..." — implies you are usually dishonest
- "No offence, but..." — signals an offence is coming
- "I feel like you don't care about..." — assigns motivation
- "Everyone has noticed..." — amplifies shame, removes safety

Pace matters too. **Slow down.** Nervous feedback-givers tend to rush — filling silence with more words, hedging, qualifying. Pause after your impact statement. Allow the person to process. Silence is not failure; it is the sound of thinking happening.

Step 4 — Tone Guide

The Tone Spectrum: Finding the Right Register

Your tone is a signal. It tells the other person whether this conversation is safe or threatening, collaborative or punitive. Understanding the spectrum of tones — and where you naturally sit — allows you to calibrate consciously rather than default unconsciously.



Signs You Are Too Soft

The person leaves not realising anything needs to change. You used phrases like "just a small thing" or "it's probably nothing." You feel relieved — they do not.



Signs You Are in the Zone

The person is thoughtful, not defensive. They ask clarifying questions. You both agree on next steps. The conversation ends with forward momentum, not unresolved tension.



Signs You Are Too Harsh

The person becomes defensive, shuts down, or goes quiet. You notice their body language close off. They agree to everything in the room — and do nothing afterwards.

Step 5 – Navigating Reactions

When Feedback Does Not Land Smoothly

Even the most carefully delivered feedback sometimes triggers unexpected reactions. Defensiveness, denial, tears, silence, counter-attack – these are all normal human responses to receiving information that challenges someone's self-image or threatens their sense of competence. Your job is not to prevent these reactions. Your job is to be prepared for them and know how to navigate forward.

The most important rule: **do not withdraw your feedback in the face of resistance.** Well-meaning professionals often mistake discomfort for damage. When someone pushes back hard, the instinct is to soften, hedge, or backtrack. This undermines trust in the long run. It signals that your feedback was optional – and that resistance is an effective strategy.

Defensiveness

Pause. Acknowledge their feelings without retracting the observation. *"I can see this is bringing up strong feelings. That's okay. What I observed was still [X]."*

Denial

Return to your specific observation. Do not argue – re-anchor to fact. *"I understand you see it differently. What I specifically saw was [behaviour]. Let's focus on that."*

Silence

Invite, do not interrogate. Give them space to process. *"Take your time. I'd genuinely like to hear your perspective on this when you're ready."*

Counter-Attack

Stay grounded. Do not engage in debate about the past. *"I'm open to discussing your feedback on me – separately. Right now, I'd like to stay on this topic."*

Step 5 — Worksheet

Reaction Readiness: Prepare Before the Meeting

Before a significant feedback conversation, use this planner to anticipate likely reactions and prepare your responses. This is not about scripting a debate — it is about staying grounded if the conversation becomes uncomfortable, so you do not abandon a message that needed to be delivered.

Anticipated Reaction

Based on what I know about this person, the most likely reaction is...

My Grounding Statement

If they push back hard, I will say...

My Re-Anchoring Move

If the conversation goes off track, I will bring it back to...

My Success Condition

I will know this conversation succeeded if...

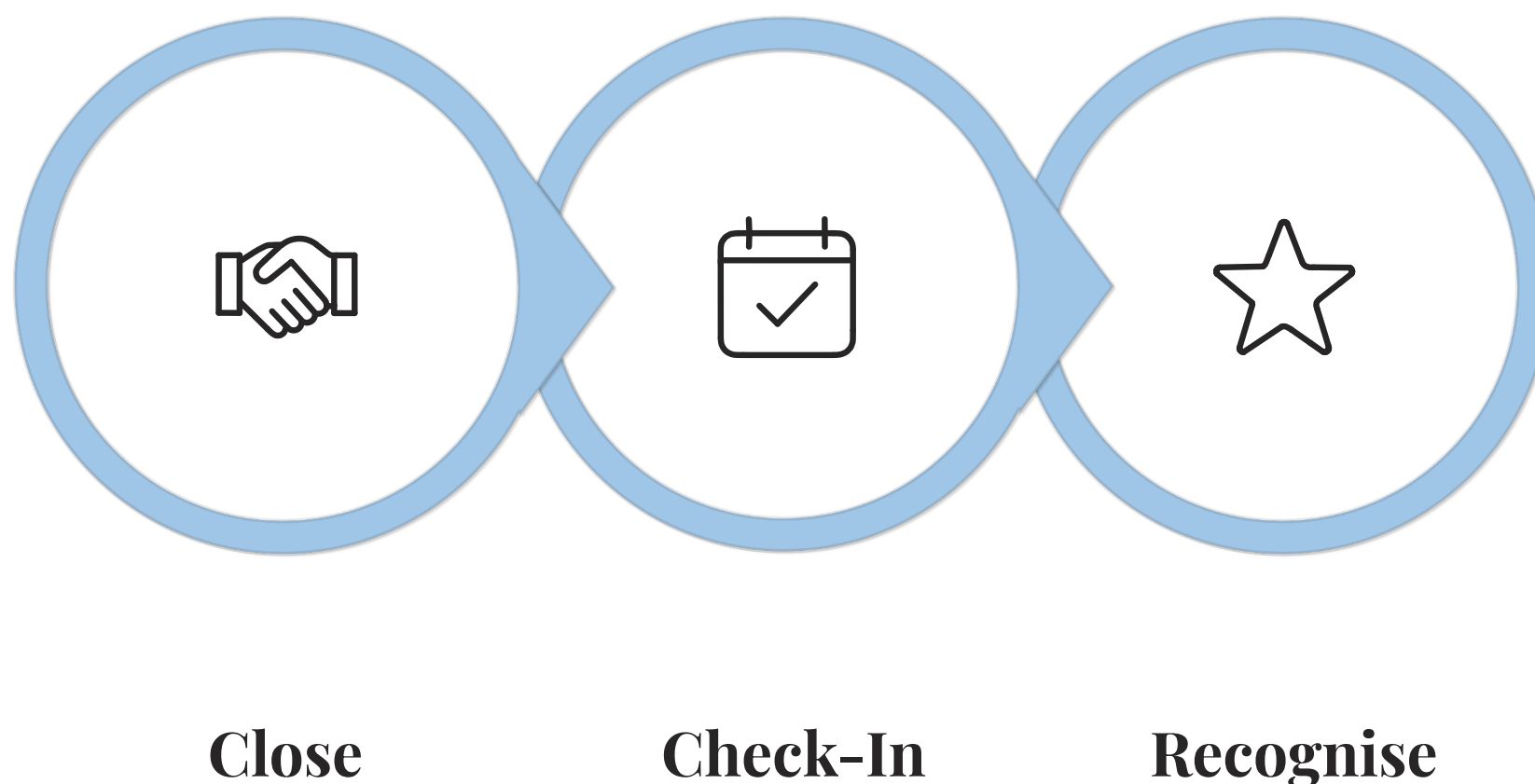
- Remember:** A difficult reaction to feedback is not evidence that the feedback was wrong. It is evidence that the feedback matters. Stay in the room — professionally and emotionally.

Step 6 — Follow-Through

Closing the Loop: The Follow-Through Framework

Feedback without follow-through is just a conversation. Real change happens in the space after the meeting — in the small actions, check-ins, and acknowledgements that signal you are invested in this person's progress, not just in the performance event you wanted to address.

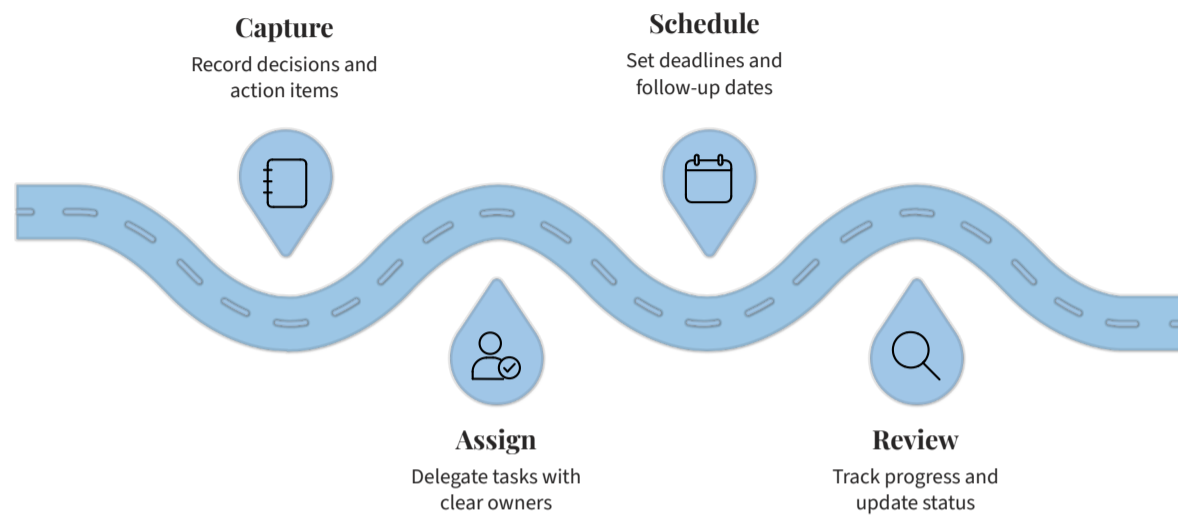
Most professionals under-invest dramatically in follow-through. They deliver the feedback, feel relief, and move on. But the person who received the feedback is now navigating a real challenge — trying to change a habit, shift a pattern, or repair a relationship. They need to know you are still watching, still caring, and still invested. That attention is itself a form of coaching.



The follow-through phase is where trust is built or broken. If you deliver feedback and then never acknowledge the effort the person makes to change, you communicate that the feedback was more about your discomfort than their growth. Close the loop. Notice the effort. Name the progress. That is what transforms a single conversation into a coaching relationship.

Step 6 – Tools

Follow-Through Toolkit: What to Do After the Meeting



1

Immediately After

Send a brief, warm follow-up message. Confirm the key takeaway and your continued support. Do not restate the full feedback — one clear sentence is enough.

2

Week 1

Observe actively. Notice any behaviour change — however small. Do not wait for perfection. A small shift in the right direction deserves acknowledgement.

3

Week 2

Schedule a brief check-in — even 10 minutes. Ask how they are finding the adjustment. Offer support, not audit. Make it feel collaborative.

4

Week 4+

Revisit the original request. Have you seen sustained change? Acknowledge it specifically. If not, consider whether a second feedback conversation is needed.

"The best feedback givers are not the ones with the sharpest observations. They are the ones who stay in the room after the hard conversation — in spirit, in attention, and in care."

Real-World Application

Common Feedback Mistakes — and How to Fix Them

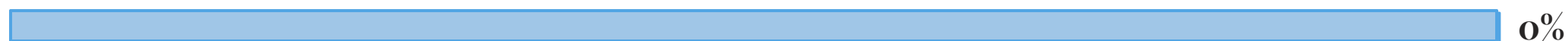
Even experienced professionals fall into predictable feedback traps. The following are the seven most common mistakes observed in workplace feedback conversations — across industries, seniority levels, and team structures. For each, a specific fix is provided so you can course-correct immediately.

Common Mistake	Why It Fails	The Fix
The "Feedback Sandwich" (positive → negative → positive)	The negative message gets buried. People remember the praise and forget the ask.	Be direct. Lead with the situation and behaviour. Save warmth for the close.
Waiting too long to give feedback	The behaviour is no longer fresh. The person cannot connect feedback to action.	Give feedback within 48–72 hours of the observed event.
Giving feedback in public	Triggers shame, not reflection. The person defends their image, not their behaviour.	Always give corrective feedback in private. Reserve praise for public moments.
Piling on multiple issues at once	Feels like an attack. The person cannot absorb or act on everything at once.	One behaviour per conversation. Prioritise the most impactful issue.
Ending without a clear request	The person does not know what "better" looks like. Nothing changes.	Always close with a specific, actionable request. Confirm understanding.
Talking about character, not behaviour	"You're careless" is unfalsifiable and feels like identity attack.	Describe the specific action. "The report had three unchecked errors" is fixable.
Skipping the follow-through	Signals the feedback was more about you than their growth.	Schedule a check-in. Notice the effort. Name the progress.

Self-Assessment

Your Feedback Style Audit

Use this self-evaluation to understand your current feedback patterns — where you are strong and where you have room to grow. Rate yourself honestly on each dimension. There are no right answers, only honest ones. This audit is for your own growth — not for performance management.



Starting Point

Mark your honest self-rating on the scale below each item

Feedback Capability	Rarely (1-2)	Sometimes (3-4)	Consistently (5)
I give feedback within 72 hours of observing the behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I focus on specific behaviours, not character or intention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I state the real impact — on the team, project, or stakeholder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I always end with a specific, actionable request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give corrective feedback in private, not in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I stay calm and grounded when the person pushes back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow up after a feedback conversation to acknowledge change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I invite the other person's perspective, not just deliver mine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

After completing the audit, identify your lowest-rated item. That is your highest-priority development area. Return to the relevant section of this guide and use the worksheet for that step before your next feedback conversation.

Quick Reference

The One-Page Feedback Cheat Sheet

Save this page. Screenshot it. Print it. Refer to it before every significant feedback conversation until the framework is second nature. This is your fast-access reference when you are short on time but cannot afford to deliver feedback poorly.

The SBI-R Script Template

"In [specific situation]..."

"I observed that you [specific behaviour]..."

"The impact of this was [real consequence]..."

"Going forward, I'd like to ask you to [specific request]..."

"What's your perspective on this?"

Pre-Meeting Checklist

- My intention is their growth, not my relief
- I have one specific situation ready
- I can describe the behaviour — not the character
- I know the real impact
- I have a clear, specific request
- The setting is private and calm
- I am not angry or emotionally charged
- I have time for dialogue — not just delivery

1

Tone Target

Calm. Direct. Caring. Not apologetic. Not aggressive.

2

Language Rule

"I observed..." not "You always..." One behaviour. One conversation.

3

The Non-Negotiable

End with a specific request. Always. Every time. No exceptions.

Key Takeaways

Summary: What You Now Know How to Do

You have worked through a complete, professional-grade framework for delivering feedback that is clear, constructive, and effective. Below are the seven core principles that sit at the heart of everything in this guide. These are the things to remember when the moment arrives and the pressure is real.

1 Mindset before method

Check your intention before you open your mouth. Feedback given from an enablement mindset lands differently than feedback given from an evaluation mindset — even when the words are identical.

2 Specific beats general — every time

One named situation, one observable behaviour, one real impact. Vague feedback protects the feedback-giver and helps no one else.

3 SBI-R is your scaffold

Situation → Behaviour → Impact → Request. Follow this structure until it is instinctive. It works across every context, seniority level, and relationship type.

4 Delivery is part of the message

Tone, pacing, language, and setting all shape whether feedback is received or rejected. Prepare all four dimensions — not just what you will say.

5 Stay in the room when it gets hard

Resistance is not a reason to retreat. Know your grounding statements, re-anchor to observable fact, and stay present through the discomfort.

6 Always end with a request

Feedback without a clear ask is just criticism. A specific, actionable request is what converts a difficult conversation into a growth opportunity.

7 Follow through or do not bother

The check-in, the acknowledgement, the notice of progress — these are not optional extras. They are the difference between a one-time correction and a lasting culture of feedback.

Next Steps

Your Commitment to Action



Knowing the framework is the beginning. Using it is the practice. And using it consistently — across easy conversations and difficult ones, with people above and below you, in moments of low stakes and high — is what makes you someone others trust to tell them the truth.

The professionals who are most valued in their organisations are not necessarily the smartest or the most technically skilled. They are the ones who can have honest conversations clearly and kindly, who do not avoid difficult truths, and who help the people around them grow. That is what this framework makes possible — if you use it.

This Week

Identify one feedback conversation you have been avoiding. Use the SBI-R worksheet to prepare it. Deliver it before Friday.

This Month

Share this framework with one colleague or team member. Agree to use a common feedback language — it makes all conversations easier.

Ongoing

After every significant feedback conversation, return to the self-audit. Track your growth. Notice where you are improving — and where you still default to old patterns.

"The best feedback you can give someone is the feedback you were almost too afraid to give — delivered with enough care that they can actually hear it."

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