**3 Critical Considerations When Giving Feedback**

As you may know if you’re a regular reader of this column, the strongest reason for employees leaving is due to the quality feedback (or lack of) process of the direct manager. Corrective feedback and discipline are part of your responsibility. But, who likes giving it? Yes, this is a very difficult part of the manager’s job. Here are some basic guidelines to help you make it easier for yourself, and the employee.

**1.Timeliness**: B.F. Skinner still has a place in behavioral shaping. Just as rewards lose their meaning if delayed, discipline and corrective feedback will have less meaning if it doesn’t occur immediately after the infraction or event. Take action as soon as possible while the behavior is still fresh in the employee’s mind. Many times supervisors wait fat too long hoping the behavior will correct itself. Or, they may delay for their own fear of the discussion. Delaying will most often cause a negative emotional response because the employee’s perception of the event has changed, and now feels like the “manager is out get me.”

**2.Performance:** the discussion must be around what actions or behaviors the employee did or did not do. Keep personal issues out of the conversation. Focus on what the individual did, without speculating on why he or she did it and without bringing personalities into the discussion. For example, “you were just trying to cut corners to save yourself ….” Is making a judgement about the employees intent. The employee has no other option but to get defensive. Performance must always be behaviorally based and measured. This conversation may reveal to you that the employee may not have known what the standards are. This is your opportunity to clear that up. Alternatively, you may discover that you may not have clearly specified the standards.

**3.Fairness:** Although you need to respond quickly to issues, be careful that you have your facts in order. Make sure you understand what happened. A hasty decision that doesn’t take everyone’s position into account will increase tension and reduce productivity in the long run. You may need to do a little more digging before leaping into action. As a matter of fact you may find out good reasons for why the employee did what s/he did. The manager who treats employees fairly, creates trust and loyalty. Those are 2 qualities that are often missing in the workplace today, and lead to high turnover.

Although these 3 considerations are focused on correcting workplace performance, how do you think they may apply outside the workplace?