The Situation – Behavior – Impact™ Feedback Tool
Providing Clear, Specific Feedback

Created by: The Center for Creative Leadership

Use this tool to help people grow.
Imagine that you recently gave some feedback to a member of your team. You told him that his meeting agendas looked great, but he needed to improve his presentation skills.

You follow up a few weeks later to find out why he hasn't made any changes. You discover that he didn't understand what he could do to improve – your feedback simply prompted more questions. He was left thinking "What's good about my agendas that I can transfer to other documents?" and "What's wrong with my presentation skills?"

The Situation – Behavior – Impact™ (SBI™) feedback tool helps you to deliver more effective feedback. It focuses your comments on specific situations and behaviors, and then outlines the impact that these behaviors have on others.

About the Tool
Developed by **The Center for Creative Leadership**, the SBI™ feedback tool outlines a simple structure that you can use to **give feedback**:
- Situation.
- Behavior.
- Impact.

When you structure feedback in this way, your people will understand precisely what you are commenting on and why. And when you outline the impact of their behavior on others, you're giving them the chance to reflect on their actions and think about what they need to change.

The tool also helps you to avoid making assumptions that could upset the other person and damage your relationship with him or her.

Applying the Tool
Let's look at each part of the SBI™ feedback tool and discuss how to use it to structure feedback.

1. Situation

When you're giving feedback, first define the where and when of the situation you're referring to. This puts the feedback into context and gives the other person a specific setting as a reference.

For example: "During yesterday morning's team meeting, when you gave your presentation..."

2. Behavior
Your next step is to describe the specific behaviors that you want to address. This is the most challenging part of the process, because you must communicate only the behaviors that you observed directly. You must not make assumptions or subjective judgments about those behaviors. These could be wrong, and this will undermine your feedback. For example, if you observed that a colleague made

mistakes in a presentation, you should not assume that he hadn't prepared thoroughly. You should simply comment that he made mistakes – and, ideally, note what the mistakes were. Don't rely on hearsay, as this may contain others' subjective judgments. Again, this could undermine your feedback and jeopardize your relationship.

The examples below include a description of the specific behaviors you might want to address:

"During yesterday morning's team meeting, when you gave your presentation, you were uncertain about two of the slides and your sales calculations were incorrect."

Tip:
Aim to use measurable information in your description of the behavior. This helps to ensure that your comments are objective.

3. Impact
The last step is to use "I" statements to describe how the other person's action has affected you or others.
For example: "During yesterday morning's team meeting, when you gave your presentation, you were uncertain about two of the slides and your sales calculations were incorrect. I felt embarrassed because the entire board was there. I'm worried that this has affected the reputation of our team."

Next Steps
Once you've delivered your feedback, encourage the other person to think about the situation and to understand the impact of her behavior. (The **Perceptual Positions** technique can help her to explore how other people may think.) Allow her time to absorb what you've said as well, and then go over specific actions that will help her to improve. Also, where someone has done something well, help him to think about how he can build on this.