



Do you know how to **express your satisfaction** to your subordinates?

The challenge

Many managers fail to sufficiently express their gratitude or satisfaction toward the people who report to them when the latter make progress or surpass themselves, for lack of appropriate techniques, for fear of appearing too sentimental or simply because they fail to see the point.

Yet, positive feedback is a critical part of motivation, as it enables the recipients to assess their performance and give meaning to their work. In giving such feedback, managers also reinforce the self-confidence of their subordinates by pointing out their qualities.

Key principles

You must seize opportunities to give sincere compliments to your subordinates, while respecting four key criteria:

1

JUSTIFIED

- **Be precise and concrete**, so that your subordinate knows exactly what you appreciated.
E.g.: "Thank you for finishing the project two days early" is more useful than "You did a good job."
- **Applaud efforts deployed** rather than factors beyond your subordinate's control.
E.g.: Recognize performance, rather than the level of experience.
- **Emphasize the positive outcome** of the subordinate's efforts.
E.g.: "Your participation enabled us win the contract."

2

SUPPORTIVE

- **Prompt your subordinate to talk** about his or her own performance and listen attentively to what he or she has to say. In doing so, you show your sincere interest.
- **Make your subordinate aware of his or her own capabilities**. Discuss the methods he or she used to succeed. Understanding how success was achieved is as important as understanding why something failed.
E.g.: "How do you account for this success?" "How did you go about it?" Etc.

3

BALANCED

Unwarranted or haphazard compliments are of little value. They can even be counterproductive!

- **Don't overdo it**, or your compliments may become worthless in the eyes of employees.
- **Don't give compliments that overstate accomplishments**, or your credibility and interpersonal relationships may suffer as a result.

4

TIMELY

- **Don't delay** in expressing your satisfaction. The longer you take to give compliments, the less credible they will seem to the recipient.
- **Still, wait for the right moment**. Some people are embarrassed when they receive compliments in public. Also keep in mind that people may be suspicious of your motives if you congratulate them and simultaneously ask them for something.