

Giving Feedback using the BOOST model

The language that we use when giving feedback can be highly influential in changing learners' behaviour. Choose your words carefully to ensure positive learning outcomes.



We use negative constructions in our language all the time, and although we may not even be aware of it, it can have a major impact on the way that we or others behave.

Negative constructions often cause us to think of the exact opposite. For example, if someone were to say to you: "Whatever you do, I don't want you to imagine that you're lying underneath a palm tree on a golden, sandy beach in the Bahamas on a gloriously sunny day, sipping a cocktail from a tall, blue glass with a bendy straw", what would you immediately think of? As illustrated, using negatives can be rather misleading.

Negative language can also unconsciously programme learners to expect failure. If you were told: "You'll find this very difficult" or "You'll get nowhere by doing it this way", you probably wouldn't have much confidence in your ability to succeed.

If, on the other hand, you focus on positive outcomes and use language that reflects this, you are much more likely to be able to create a mindset for success in yourself and in those you train.

This applies to trainer and trainee – as well as choosing your own words carefully, look out for the language used by trainees and encourage them to think positively.

Use the '**BOOST**' model to give positive and constructive feedback.

BOOST Feedback Model

Balanced: focus not only on areas for development, but also on strengths.

Observed: provide feedback based only upon behaviours that you have observed.

Objective: avoid judgements and relate your feedback to the observed behaviours, not personality.

Specific: back up your comments with specific examples of the observed behaviour.

Timely: give feedback soon after the activity to allow the learner the opportunity to reflect on the learning.

Image Credit: Flickr [Sandy Zieba](#) (accessed 06 November 2014).