

6 tips for taking constructive criticism when you're new on the job

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Constructive criticism can be very helpful advice for an employee, especially when they are new on the job. One thing that many new and young professionals may not know is that it is important to ask your supervisor to give you advice and suggestions on how to improve.

It not only shows your enthusiasm to work and improves your skills, but it helps build a stronger relationship with your superiors. They will trust you to rise up to any given challenge and may even consider giving you more responsibilities.

In the past, formal performance reviews were a common practice in which an employee would be assessed and given feedback from their managers. Nowadays, many companies choose to have casual one-on-one sessions to exchange thoughts on a worker's performance.

Whichever the case may be for your particular workplace, here are a few tips to deal with criticism at work:

Try not to take it personally

Chances are, the first time you receive criticism about the work you do, your feelings will get hurt. While that is completely natural, it is also important to place a safe distance between your work and who you are as a person. If you are passionate about your work and love what you do, this may be more challenging. However, the sooner you can accept that feedback on your work is simply a tool to help you navigate your professional world, the better. Without it, you're worse off: you may resemble a directionless ship, lost at sea.

Assess the criticism yourself

This means that you need to validate the feedback you have received. It's important to remember that not all criticism is constructive. Before jumping into responding to the feedback, make sure you identify that it will add value to your work and your overall process. Risalat Ahmed, Factory Scheduling Manager, BAT says, "Part of being in the professional world is getting used to taking criticism. There is nothing to lose really, you only have the opportunity to improve, if you so decide."

Come up with a plan

So you've received some criticism. Now what? It is a good practice to review the work you have put in during the last couple of weeks. If you have taken notes during weekly meetings, these could be



helpful. As a precaution going forward, for your own accountability it is useful to jot down the tasks completed. In many companies, you may be required to formally document your daily commitments. Taking measure of those activities, you could answer the question: What could I do differently? Some useful pointers to guide you to this answer could be the challenges or the difficulties you've been facing recently. It might be worth addressing those and bringing them up with a coworker. If you're struggling with something, it's best to speak up about it and thereby remove the risk of letting it hamper your work.

Keep yourself accountable

It is very easy to get lost amidst the chaos of a busy work week and fall into patterns. In order to prevent that, it is critical to keep yourself accountable. Once you receive feedback and you decide that you will implement some changes, it may take some time to incorporate those changes

into your daily routine, and eventually into a habit. To help with this, you may block out 30 minutes at the end of the week or every other day, to review your own performance and see if you've been keeping up with the plan you came up with initially.

Schedule follow-up feedback sessions

Regardless of whether your workplace follows the Performance Review route or not, it's a good idea to follow up with your manager based on the feedback you received. Some of the questions you could ask are: How am I doing? Are there any further areas I could improve upon? Is there anything you would like me to do differently?

The response to or feedback on your work is not stagnant. What was relevant a month ago, might not be today. As your work evolves and so does the nature of your relationship to the company, so does the feedback. So, stay updated.

Make a list of your accomplishments

This general advice can be applied to all aspects of your life - both personal and professional. Often, when you are focused on improving upon yourself or if you are having to deal with quite a lot of negativity and criticism, it is easy to get overwhelmed. In order to not fall into a downward spiral in which you lose confidence in yourself, make sure to face the facts and give yourself credit where it's due. So, just like you made a plan or list for helping you improve, create a list of your work accomplishments.

As a useful note to wrap things up, Raisa Hassan, Chief-Coordinator at Northern Tostri Group (NTG) says, "Everyone will give you criticism, but not all of it will be necessarily relevant. It's best to identify the people that you want to embody and prioritise their opinions. Everyone's path is different so don't follow anything blindly. Ultimately, all the advice you receive will shape you to be better so remain open to change."



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