



Feedback Norms

Create a culture of learning and alignment



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Introduction

Help your team or entire company develop a stronger feedback culture by selecting a small number of norms, or agreed ways of operating.

Norms take the guesswork out of feedback conversations, increase psychological safety, and promote shared accountability.

To set your norms:

- Invite everyone to propose one norm idea.
- Ask for clarifying questions.
- Remove any duplicates.
- Vote for 1 norm to try in the next 30 days.
- Check back in 30 days to discuss how the norm is going and whether to add more.

Be sure to document your new norms along with existing norms. Share them with new team members and refer to them regularly.



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Sample Norms



- **Knock before you talk:** Ask if someone would like to hear feedback before sharing (e.g., "Can I give you feedback on X?").
- **Lock it in:** Don't leave a feedback conversation without locking in the learning (e.g., "What should we agree to moving forward?").
- **Feedback Fridays:** Pause for 15 minutes every Friday to either ask someone for feedback or offer feedback.
- **Monthly retros:** Hold a retrospective at the end of every month to explore what's working well and what to improve in the way you collaborate.
- **Calibration check:** Start every project or collaboration with an alignment on goals, roles, communication, and feedback expectations.



Sample Norms, Continued

- **Go directly to the source:** No second-hand feedback or gossip allowed.
- **Feedback for all:** Give feedback to anyone at the company, regardless of role.
- **Designated critic:** Pick one person every quarter to be the go-to for reviewing and giving feedback on work before it goes out.
- **To avoid doubt, write it out:** Write down notes from your feedback conversations so you can always look back at them if there is any confusion.
- **Down the ladder:** Share feedback as data rather than climbing the 'Ladder of Inference.'
- **Feedback nudges:** Embed a prompt to exchange feedback in all 1-on-1s.
- **Feedback in private:** Deliver feedback on someone's behavior in private.



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About Scarlet Spark

Scarlet Spark is a nonprofit dedicated to the people side of the animal protection movement. We offer evidence-based training, consulting, and coaching focused on improving organizational culture, leadership, performance, engagement, retention, diversity, equity, inclusion, and overall effectiveness.

Our goal is to help build workplaces that lead all animals to flourish, humans included.



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