



## Tool 27-1. Guidelines for Positive Feedback

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Based on Chapter 27, “Leading Across Generations” in *The ASTD Leadership Handbook*, edited by Elaine Biech, © 2010 ASTD

**Purpose:** These four guidelines for positive feedback are useful regardless of which generation you are leading.

- **Be as specific as possible.** Generic feedback isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on. Telling an employee to keep up the good work is just not specific enough. However, telling an employee what he or she did well and specifically why it was effective is the ideal way to reinforce behavior you wish to see repeated.
- **Discuss the ramifications.** Don’t count on employees to understand the big picture. Just because you compliment their efforts doesn’t mean they understand how that contributes to the bottom line. Take the time to educate them as to how their behavior has a payoff for the organization.
- **Ask for feedback.** This isn’t a one-way conversation if you’re smart. Give your employee a chance to discuss how he or she accomplished the success. It’s a great way of reinforcing his or her efforts and building confidence.
- **Tell them thanks.** Most of the time the two words that employees seldom hear—which can have a profound effect—are “thank you.” Try them. These two words can work wonders.