

Leader Feedback Processes

If someone tells you that you have ears like a donkey, ignore them. If two people tell you that you have ears like a donkey, go buy yourself a saddle! I don't remember where I heard this, but perhaps a fitting story or picture as it relates to leaders and feedback.

There are numerous statistics and studies that show how little true feedback leaders get from the people around them and how important true feedback is for a leader to be effective and lead for business results.

These feedback processes can be used in a variety of settings, imagine that you are the CEO or President and you are concerned that your top management team is not really working as a team, but rather as a group of regional Barons. You deeply believe (as we do at N Vision) that the degree and quality of your top leadership team's cooperation has a direct impact on the cooperation and teamwork in your organization and ultimately your business results.

Here are two feedback processes that can help create an exchange of perceptions within your team.

1) **Appreciation and Things to Consider Feedback Exchange**

Split the management team in two groups, then ask them to mill around the room, and independently find a feedback partner. With this partner, they then should spend three minutes sharing what they appreciate about working with this management member, and also what they would suggest, (things to consider) to be a more effective member of this management team. This should take no more than three minutes and then the other partner should share the same, going the other direction. This should take a total of six minutes, both partners have exchanged with each other, and then each should get up and find another partner and the process repeats itself until everyone has given feedback to everyone else.

2) **Ambassador Feedback**

Again, split the group and ask everyone to find a partner. Each group of two is an Ambassador partnership, and each will be gathering feedback for the other person. First, each person in the partnership asks, what would you like to learn from the group about you? For example, someone might say, I'd like to know how this leadership group experiences my communication. Do they experience me as someone who communicates clearly and in a motivating way and how do they experience me as a listener (the other side of communication)? After each member of the partnership has exchanged their personal question, each of the partnership splits up and you have two groups (separate rooms are best).

Let's say you have now two groups of seven, and one person in each group will be able to ask three key questions, gather the feedback as the Ambassador, and then the pairs regroup. Three questions often used are:

- What is it that we appreciate about Linda's contributions to our group?
- What suggestions would we make that would help Linda be a more effective member of this leader group?
- And last, and always last comes Linda's personal question: Linda would like to know how this leadership group experiences her communication? Do we experience her as someone who communicates clearly and in a motivating way and how do they experience her as a listener?

Each Ambassador should gather feedback for about 5 -10 minutes and then the partner Ambassadors come together, in this case seven pairs and take about thirty minutes to update each other.

There are a number of variations to these exchanges; we are assuming that your leader team understands the importance of authentic and dynamic feedback and that the ability to give feedback constructively exists in your team!