



tipsheet

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Providing Effective Survey Feedback

We've all flown through a survey or evaluation without putting much effort into its content. Even if a course, program, or project we're evaluating needs improvement, we often take the quick route with the short answer. Here is a familiar example:

Ineffective: I learned absolutely nothing in this course, and the professor was terrible.

More Effective: I learned nothing in this course because the professor covered material we learned in our core classes. The professor lectured the entire time, and I never felt engaged. I would have enjoyed discussing the concepts in class.

Notice the difference? Imagine you are the professor receiving the first piece of feedback. At best you might be confused and not know how to improve the course. At worst you might be offended and dismiss the feedback entirely. Outlined below are some tips on how to provide effective feedback.

- **Take your time** – Spend five extra minutes to provide more constructive feedback. Your input could improve the experience of hundreds of students or consumers in the future.
- **Be specific, not derogatory** – Writing in a derogatory and demeaning fashion helps no one. Share your displeasure but back your critique up with facts, observed behaviors, and experiences. Also, provide ideas for how a course, program, or service could be improved. Otherwise, the recipient will view your words as hateful and not helpful.
- **If your experience was positive, write about it** – Too often we take the time to share our displeasure but pass on an opportunity to state our satisfaction. Use the "write-in/comments" section of surveys to leave a compliment or state something you would like to see continue.
- **Don't miss an opportunity to leave feedback** – Filling out a survey or evaluation will never cause you to reschedule events for a day. Take time to leave feedback; doing so is courteous and easy.

Please take the time to write effective survey responses. Think about the type of constructive feedback you'd want to receive if you were in charge of the course, program, or service. In fact, you probably already benefit from positive experiences because someone in the past provided effective feedback.

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