

A one-page guide to giving Situation-Behavior-Impact feedback at work.

The SBI feedback model in one sentence

Replace vague feedback with three observable elements: the **Situation** where it happened, the **Behavior** you observed, and the **Impact** it had.

SITUATION

When and where did it happen?

Anchor the conversation in one specific moment. The more specific you are, the less the other person feels generalized about.

✗ Recently... / You always...

✓ In Friday's standup, when we reviewed the timeline...

BEHAVIOR

What did the person do or say?

Describe only what you observed. Not what you assumed or interpreted. Action, words, decisions — never motives.

✗ You were dismissive.

✓ You closed your laptop while she was speaking.

IMPACT

What was the effect?

Explain the effect on the work, the team, or you. Without impact, the feedback has no weight.

✗ You made everyone uncomfortable.

✓ Two people stopped contributing in chat afterward.



The camera test. Could a camera have captured it? If yes, it's behavior. If no, it's interpretation — rewrite.

Prepare your SBI in five minutes

Fill this in before your next one-on-one

BEFORE THE CONVERSATION

1. **Situation** (*date, meeting, project*)

2. **Behavior** (*observable action — what would the camera see?*)

3. **Impact** (*effect on work, team, or you*)

4. **One specific next step**

AFTER THE CONVERSATION

Their response

What you agreed on

Follow up by (date)

Phrase bank

To open and describe

To set the situation

- “I wanted to talk about something from [Friday’s call]...”
- “In yesterday’s one-on-one...”
- “During the client meeting on [date]...”

To describe the behavior

- “What I noticed was...”
- “You [verb] when...”
- “I observed that...”

To explain the impact

- “The effect on the team was...”
- “What I noticed afterward was...”
- “For me, it meant...”

For trickier moments

When you’re not sure of intent (SBII)

- “I may be missing context. Can you help me understand what you were trying to do?”
- “What was your thinking there?”

For positive feedback

- “I want to call out something specific I noticed...”
- “The impact of that on our work was...”

For upward feedback to a manager

- “I’d like to share how something landed on my side...”
- “When [behavior], the impact on me was...”

Five things to avoid

- × Using **“always” or “never”** — collapses the moment into a pattern accusation
- × Describing **personality instead of behavior** — “you’re dismissive” is a verdict, not feedback
- × **Skipping the impact** — without it, the recipient has no reason to change
- × **Waiting more than 48 hours** — specificity decays fast
- × Delivering it as a **monologue** — pause and listen after the impact

When to use SBI — and when to skip it

Use SBI when...

- ✓ There’s one specific moment to address
- ✓ You’re in one-on-ones or weekly check-ins
- ✓ You’re recognizing good work (positive specificity)
- ✓ It’s peer or upward feedback
- ✓ You’re remote or async (with extra precision on the situation)

Skip SBI when...

- It’s a pattern over time — coach instead
- It’s formal disciplinary action — use HR documentation
- It’s public praise — be plain and warm, not framework-y
- It’s purely strategic (“we should pivot”) — behavioral framing doesn’t fit

Source: feedbackpulse.com/resources/sbi-feedback-model · feedbackpulse.com

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