

Upward Feedback: 22 Employee Examples to Aid Development

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Executive Summary

This article, published by Leapsome, addresses the practice of upward feedback — the process by which employees provide structured input to their direct managers — as a mechanism for leadership development and organizational culture improvement. The author argues that upward feedback is increasingly important in 2025 given evolving workforce expectations, particularly among younger generations, and the documented gap in formal management training. The article cites a Gallup statistic noting fewer than half of managers receive formal management training, and references a figure that 74% of Gen Z employees feel comfortable providing upward feedback. The piece presents 22 categorized example statements — spanning communication, decision-making, recognition, emotional intelligence, workload, and conflict resolution — framed as both positive and constructive feedback. Quotes from Amy Gallo of Harvard Business Review and Rachel Bosch of Fringe PD are used to validate the argument. The article concludes by positioning Leapsome's own products — Instant Feedback and Leapsome Reviews — as the preferred mechanisms for operationalizing upward feedback processes at scale.

Key Insights

1. Upward feedback is described as a component of 360-Degree Reviews, providing managers with ground-level perspectives from direct reports that complement top-down evaluation.
2. 74% of Gen Z employees reportedly feel comfortable giving upward feedback to managers and supervisors, suggesting a generational shift in workplace communication norms.
3. Psychological safety is identified as a foundational prerequisite for effective upward feedback, with the article noting that most organizations are not structurally set up to support feedback flowing upward.

Practical Takeaways

- The 22 categorized feedback examples — covering 11 workplace scenarios — provide a reference vocabulary for employees who may find it difficult to articulate upward feedback, particularly constructive commentary.
- The article distinguishes between positive and constructive upward feedback formats, illustrating how specificity and behavioral anchoring (citing particular incidents) strengthen the quality of feedback given.

Frameworks Mentioned

360-Degree Review — A multi-source feedback methodology in which input is gathered from multiple directions — including peers, direct reports, and managers — to provide a holistic view of an individual's performance.

Critical Analysis

Strengths: The article provides concrete, scenario-specific examples that are immediately applicable across a range of workplace contexts. The inclusion of both positive and constructive variants adds practical balance. The reference to the Gallup State of the Global Workforce Report 2025 provides an externally verifiable data point. **Limitations:** The article is produced by Leapsome, a commercial HR software vendor, and its primary purpose appears to be lead generation for their products — every section concludes with calls to action for Leapsome demos. The 74% Gen Z statistic is stated without a citation, which reduces its evidentiary value. Expert quotes from Amy Gallo and Rachel Bosch are used decoratively rather than analytically. The piece does not address known risks of upward feedback such as grade inflation, social desirability bias, or retaliation risk in low-trust environments. No independent research is cited to substantiate the claimed links between upward feedback and employee retention or engagement outcomes.

Organizational Practice

Organizations are described as implementing upward feedback as part of broader 360-degree review cycles, using purpose-built digital tools to collect structured employee input on manager behavior across dimensions including communication style, decision-making, recognition, EQ, workload management, and conflict resolution. Psychological safety is noted as a cultural precondition organizations are expected to cultivate to enable candid upward input.

Strategic Implications

The article reflects a broader trend toward multi-directional feedback architectures in performance management, with upward feedback moving from informal practice to structured organizational process. The framing of Gen Z comfort with upward feedback as a driver of adoption points to demographic pressure on traditional hierarchical evaluation norms. The emphasis on purpose-built tooling suggests market movement toward integrating upward feedback within broader continuous performance management platforms rather than treating it as a standalone annual exercise.

Validation Status: passed
