Positive Feedback via Descriptive Comments for Improved Safety Inspection Responsiveness and Compliance

Melinda Box, MEd,
Ciana Paye, &
Maria Gallardo-Williams, PhD

North Carolina State University
Checklist

Pros –

• facilitates systematic evaluation
• increases consistency
• standardizes results
• provides proactive communication

Cons –

• has a limit in reproducibility
• effected by perspective, training, and scope
• remedy to citations not clear
• for recipients – experienced as negative
Inspiration

Skanska USA Civil Midwest I-Care program

• developed by Mike Wells
• presented at 2016 People Based Safety conference
• encourages peer-to-peer recognition
• uses informal observation
• recorded observations submitted to supervisors
• in the words of one ironworker, the program “was about reinforcing doing what’s right ... even when nobody is looking”
Hi, Dr. XXX and XXX,

I am emailing your research group to document my observations of positive conditions found during EH&S inspections in an effort to begin a process of recording these successes. My goal is to have positive feedback become a part of EH&S’s routine recordkeeping.

These observations have been reviewed and approved by XXX, head of our recent inspections:
• consistent use of PPE when in lab spaces
• chemical inventory in room temp storage well organized and maintained
• good interest in using respiratory protection with silica gel transfer
• good organization and signage in waste submission area
• good interest in useful ventilation of rotovaps
• good labeling and containment of squirt bottles
• good use of recirculation pumps to cool condensers

Let me know if you have any questions about this feedback
Finding Successes

During inspections -

• Seek with committed intention
• Make active observation of -
  • Compliance
  • Commendable Practices
• Focus on you want them to keep doing
Positive Feedback Initiative

Conditions -
• Consistent inspector
• Consistent checklist content
• Consistent format

Inspection Results One Year after initial Positive Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Safety Plan Holders</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>Remained the Same</th>
<th>Declined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 out of 10 had a newly assigned safety officer or no safety officer

Initial Year of Positive Feedback
Positive Feedback

amplifies receptivity, comprehension, and recall

motivates learning

expands willingness to try new things

increases engagement

*increases inclination to ask for assistance (i.e. in essence admit to not knowing, to uncertainty, or to deficiency)*
Why does positive feedback have this impact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supports recipients with:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>empowerment to make changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding of what excellence looks like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding of what to continue doing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Increases trust and rapport necessary for thorough evaluation |

| Affirms what’s meaningful and valuable to recipients |
Additional outcomes

- inspection form changed
- flexibility in interpretation
  - one person’s perspective
  - increased consciousness of inspection limits
- empowerment specifics
  - more confidence to question results
  - more initiative to exercise rights
What do you think?

• Issues and ideas –
  • 1x per year inspections
  • EH&S resources
  • rubrics
  • photos of exemplary findings
  • inspector credibility