

# Seek and Ye Shall Find: An Empirical Examination of the Effects of Seeking Real-Time Feedback on Employee Performance Evaluations

Does seeking real-time feedback from colleagues improve the quality of performance evaluations, or does it introduce bias and affect how employees are rated and how they respond?

Subodha Kumar and colleagues examine how seeking real-time feedback through digital workplace applications influences employee performance evaluations and future engagement with the feedback process. As organizations increasingly adopt digital tools for performance management, features that allow employees to request feedback and rate its helpfulness are becoming essential to workplace communication. This study analyzes a dataset of approximately 11,000 feedback exchanges from four large organizations spanning different industries, offering a unique view into how feedback-seeking behavior modifies the nature and outcomes of evaluations.

The authors find that employees who actively request feedback tend to receive lower numerical scores compared to unsolicited feedback. However, they are significantly more likely to receive comments that are longer, more subjective, and more positive in tone. Feedback providers appear to respond to feedback-seeking as a sign of initiative or openness to improvement, offering deeper and more thoughtful input. Significantly, employees who receive lower scores are not discouraged. Those who sought feedback are actually more likely to continue seeking it in the future, suggesting a growth-oriented mindset.

The study also finds that anonymity reduces the richness of feedback. Anonymous comments are generally shorter and less influenced by whether feedback was requested, indicating that named feedback supports more meaningful engagement. To strengthen the validity of their findings, the authors use several statistical techniques including instrumental variables, matching models, and selection bias corrections.

The findings highlight the importance of promoting feedback-seeking behaviors to enhance workplace communication, learning, and continuous development.

---

## MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Seeking feedback results in lower scores but more thoughtful, positive, and personalized comments.
- Feedback-seekers value detailed feedback over high ratings and are more likely to seek feedback again after critical input.
- Anonymous feedback is generally shorter and less responsive to solicitation, affecting the richness of evaluations.

---

## WHO NEEDS TO KNOW:

- Human Resources
- Managers
- Academics

---

## CONTACT US:

- Subodha Kumar, Professor, Statistics, Operations, and Data Science  
[subodha@temple.edu](mailto:subodha@temple.edu)
- Software Components and Product Variety in a Platform Ecosystem: A Dynamic Network Analysis of WordPress
- Journal: Information Systems Research
- DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2021.0130>