

Positive feedback cheat sheet

The 3-part formula, 6 rules and before-and-after rewrites on one page.

The formula: situation, behavior, impact

Part	What to say
Situation	Say when and where. "In Tuesday's client call..." This helps the person recall the moment.
Behavior	Describe what the person did, in words anyone could have seen. "...you answered the pricing question without checking your notes..."
Impact	Say what changed because of it. "...and the client agreed to move to the next step."

Example: In Tuesday's client call, you answered the pricing question without checking your notes. The client agreed to the next step in that meeting.

6 rules

- **Be specific.** "Great work" is nice. "The way you set out the table made the numbers easy to compare" tells the person what to repeat.
- **Give it soon.** Within a few days, while the person remembers the situation.
- **Mean it.** People notice when praise is automatic. Give it only when there is something real to say.
- **Say it in the right place.** Some people like a public mention. Others prefer a private word. If you are unsure, ask.
- **Keep it separate.** Do not add "but" and a criticism. Give the praise on its own.
- **Give it to everyone.** Check whether the same few people receive most of the feedback. Quiet contributors need it too.

Before and after

Before	After
Good job on the project.	The project came in on time, and the client said the final report was the clearest they had seen.
You are a great team player.	When [name] was behind on the figures, you stayed an hour to help. They finished on time.
Thanks for your hard work.	Thank you for finishing the audit by Thursday. It meant we could send it to the client before the deadline.
Nice presentation.	Your presentation had 3 slides, and the group made a decision before the end of the meeting.
Keep it up.	Please keep using the weekly summary. It saves the whole team time.