Incorporating feedback into your business planning

Feedback is an important part of developing and improving as a business, whether it comes from employees, customers, suppliers or other business owners. However, figuring out how to incorporate that feedback into your planning isn't always easy.

Use our checklist below to categorise your feedback and turn it into actions.

Step one: Best practices for asking for feedback:

- [ ] Ask for feedback from a variety of people to get different perspectives

- [ ] Probe for facts and ask people to get as specific as possible

- [ ] Don't rely too heavily on quantitative information

- [ ] Keep your emotions in check and don't get defensive if you get negative feedback. Remember, it's an opportunity to improve

Step two: Categorise feedback:

- [ ] Compile any feedback you've received somewhere it can be easily organised. Post-it notes work for small amounts of feedback; a spreadsheet would be best for large amounts or long-term projects

- [ ] Group each item of feedback into a category. For example, customer feedback might be grouped into:

  - Product features
  - Customer service
  - Marketing and sales

- [ ] Prioritise the feedback within each category in a meaningful way. Consider the volume of requests, the importance or urgency of the feedback and the resources required to act on feedback

Step three: Factor the feedback into your business plans:

- [ ] Choose which feedback you're going to focus on. It's best to look at a mix of short and long-term issues

- [ ] Look at existing goals or objectives for your business. How does the feedback impact those? Is there a goal that needs to be refined in light of the feedback?

- [ ] Treat feedback as a shared responsibility. Speak to employees in relevant departments to get their opinions on changes that need to be made

Tools and templates

Step four: Following up:

- [ ] Follow up with people who have given particularly useful feedback, either through a personalised email or quick phone call
- [ ] Set targets based on changes you're making as a result of the feedback to hold relevant parties accountable
- [ ] Reflect on key feedback six months down the road to see what you've achieved
- [ ] Publish a blog post or report that explains the changes you've made