

The Feedback Sandwich Method

From the article by Celes, here: <https://personalexcellence.co/blog/constructive-criticism/>

The feedback sandwich method is a popular method of giving constructive criticism. It is often used in Toastmasters and in the corporate environment. It can also be referred to as PIP, which stands for Positive-Improvement-Positive. With this method, your feedback process is broken down into 3 segments:

1. You start off by focusing on the strengths — what you like about the item in question.
2. Then, you provide the criticism — things you didn't like; the areas of improvement.
3. Lastly, you round off the feedback with (a) a reiteration of the positive comments you gave at the beginning and (b) the positive results that can be expected if the criticism is acted upon.

It's called the "feedback sandwich" because you wedge your criticism between an opening and an ending — like a patty wedged between two buns.

Here's an example critique about someone's website, using the sandwich method:

1. First layer, "P" for Positive, where you talk about what you like:

"Great website! I love the overall layout and how user-friendly it is. The menu is easily accessible. The overall design is nice and pleasing to the eye, and consistent with your brand. I found the intro video helpful in giving me an overview of what you do."

2. Second layer, "I" for Improve, where you talk about the areas of improvement:

"However, I think that it can be better. There is a lot of content in the sidebar that clutters up the usage experience. Perhaps if the sidebar content can be narrowed down to the key things, it would make it easier to navigate."

3. Last layer, "P" for Positive, where you reiterate the positive points and the positive results to be expected when the improvement areas are worked on:

"Overall, I love what you've done with the design, layout, and intro video. I think if the sidebar clutter is fixed, it'd really create a fantastic usage experience for any visitor."

Conclusion:

The feedback sandwich is a good framework for providing constructive criticism because by starting off with the positive comments (the first “P”), **you let the receiver know that you are on his/her side and you are not there to attack him/her**. You are also recognizing things that the receiver is doing right, rather than only talking about the issue areas which can come across as being rude — especially if both of you don’t really know each other to begin with. The receiver then becomes more receptive to your critique (the “I” in PIP).

After sharing the things you don’t like or feel can be improved, round off the criticism with more positive points (the last “P”). This helps your critique end off on a high note, rather than leaving the recipient with a sour taste in his/her mouth. It also reminds him/her what he/she is doing right and reinforces the benefits of acting on your critique.