

# Providing and receiving Inspirometer meeting feedback

... exploring the myths and the realities

## Providing Inspirometer meeting feedback

Inspirometer meeting feedback is simple, effortless and anonymous.

Despite this, it is not unusual for people to feel an initial resistance to providing it. This resistance arises for any one (or more) of a number of reasons:

- Lack of awareness of how simple and easy the feedback is
- Concern that the feedback can be traced back to them
- Lack of confidence that the feedback will make any difference
- Uncertainty over what the faces actually mean (how they will be interpreted)
- Uneasiness over the idea of 'judging' another person
- Discomfort with the whole idea of a feedback system



These reasons need to be addressed if we are to ensure the healthy flow of information which will help our meetings to improve and achieve their full potential. The following sections take the above list one item at a time, and explains how to ensure that your feedback will achieve the purposes you intend for it with minimum implications for you.

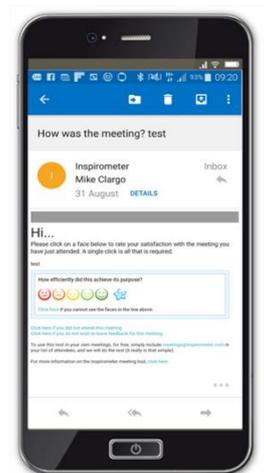
### Lack of awareness of how simple and easy the feedback is

The Inspirometer feedback system is literally single-click. It has been designed to be minimum effort. Even the scale of faces has been selected in order that it can be engaged with intuitively without having to read and interpret a series of words or phrases.

The idea is that participants at a meeting will already be feeling how they are feeling about the meeting, and clicking a face that represents that feeling should be the easiest thing imaginable.

One click, and you are done.

You can of course leave a comment or attach simple flags to your feedback in order to give it greater meaning, but that is your choice, and should be based on the extent to which it will usefully use your time to add value to your colleagues and the business you work for.



## Concern that the feedback can be traced back to them

Your feedback is anonymous. Nothing about your identity is attached to the data that your colleagues or your organisation receives.

The Inspirometer system of course knows who you are (so that it can keep your own stats updated) but it does not divulge that data\*.

The data you provide is only defined by the meeting (and the agenda item) it is associated with, the time it was given, and any supporting comment that you provide.

However, in situations where your identity can be clearly associated with your feedback by other means (such as if you are the only other person in the meeting, or if you include something that gives a clue to your identity in your comment) then we would encourage you to be circumspect in terms of the potential implications this may have for you.

*\*Inspirometer will keep your responses entirely confidential except in serious cases where responses clearly infringe an individual's legal or civil liberties, such as cyber bullying, offensive abuse, or hate crimes.*



## Lack of confidence that the feedback will make any difference

Meetings have continued to suffer from ineffectiveness and inefficiency even while all of the processes around them have been improved and transformed. The primary reason for this is that all of the other processes have data in respect of their effectiveness while meetings have none.

But now meetings have the data which will enable them to be improved. Your data! But only if you click that face.

Meeting feedback data makes a difference pretty much everywhere it is given. If you feel dissatisfied with a meeting, and you fail to register that fact, then you should not be surprised if you are dissatisfied with the next meeting also.

However in most situations where people do register the fact they see changes occur: they get involved in discussions about how to improve; they get asked for ideas; and they see the results of that in more productive use of their time.

Inspirometer provides you with the simplest easiest means possible to influence how you feel about the time you and your colleagues spend in meetings. It will make a difference, and you will be part of that difference.



## Uncertainty over what the faces actually mean (how they will be interpreted)

The faces are intended to be simple and intuitive, but that does not mean that everybody will see them exactly the same way (even though this is far more likely than with number scales or most sets of words or phrases). We offer the following explanation purely as a means to build your confidence that you have the correct interpretation.



Totally dissatisfied – I feel that the meeting has completely wasted my time – it has not added any value, or it may have even made things worse.



Somewhat dissatisfied – I feel that a significant proportion of the meeting was a waste of my time – the value the meeting may have added did not warrant the time it consumed.



Neutral – I feel that the meeting was not actually a waste of time, but its value barely justified the time that was spent in it.



Somewhat satisfied – I feel the meeting fell somewhat short of my expectations in terms of its potential to add value, but we got more out of it than we put in.



Completely satisfied – I feel that the meeting fully realised my expectations and its potential – it was a good and productive use of the time spent in the meeting.

Please note that the normal scale for meetings consists only of the five faces identified above. To use the sixth face (the blue star) indicates that you feel that there was something exceptional about the meeting.



Inspired / Delighted – I feel that the meeting exceeded the expectations I had for it – there was potential realised that I had not anticipated and it was a great use of my time.

A big factor in the ultimate effectiveness of your meetings will be the attitudes that people adopt within the meeting. Using the faces for feedback within the meeting can help people to lift themselves out of the detail of what is going on and better consider the role of attitudes within that. For more information on this particular use of feedback, take a look at the blog article on [Meaningful Conversation](#).

## Uneasiness over the idea of ‘judging’ another person

You are not judging another person, and it is vitally important that you understand this fact.

How can you judge? In all probability you are not equipped with the detailed knowledge concerning all of the issues they had to contend with, or the conditions in which they had to prepare, or any number of other factors that pertain.

In fact, the only thing you are fully equipped to judge is the impact of all of this on you personally – and you are somewhat of an expert on that!

All we are asking you to evaluate is how you feel about how the event utilised your time to add value – because that is the value that it had for you, and you will act in accordance with that. In reality, for you, the value of the meeting is the value you perceive.

By clicking a face, you are simply signalling what the outcome of the meeting was in terms of the value you perceive. Not whose fault that was (it might have been yours), or how you feel about anybody in that meeting. Only the result on you. And the sum of all of those clicks will then be the sum of the results on the people who attended.

That ‘sum’ is very useful information for the meeting organiser. It is an indication of how close he or she has come to achieving their intentions for the meeting, and it informs their options on what they might do next. It is not a measure of them, it is a measure of what has emerged from an event, and it gives them insight which will be helpful for them to influence future events and outcomes.



## Discomfort with the whole idea of a feedback system

We all have experience of seeing feedback systems abused. Of seeing people misinterpret, over-analyse, or fail to contextualise the information, and inconvenience others as a result. Given this past experience, discomfort is entirely reasonable.

But Inspirometer is not about 'feedback on others', it is about 'feedback on us' (and we are anonymous). It doesn't judge 'what another person gave', it reflects 'what we feel we have received' and accepts that there were many steps in between that neither of us may have had control over. It measures the outcomes without seeking to critique the inputs.

For this vital reason, Inspirometer is a learning tool, not a tool for evaluation. It is about equipping people with insight, not labelling them with 'grades'. This is such an important principle that Inspirometer's terms and conditions clearly state: 'Where you are aware of the performance of others through their Inspirometer feedback data (*this specifically refers to the feedback received through clicking faces, not to data related to tool usage*), you will not use this information to coerce a change in their behaviour by means of guilt, pressure, or any form of threat or sanction. You may however use the data to coach and support them to develop their own approach to improvement where the approach is of their own free choice'.



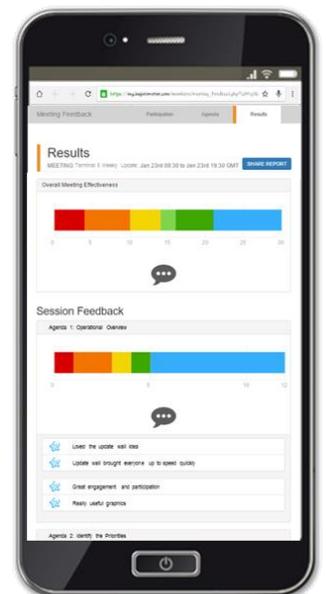
The facts are, we need data on the impact of meetings on people to be able to improve them, so we need this feedback to finally make a difference to something that has been a source of stress and dissatisfaction for far too long. But the people we employ are good people, and with the right information they will fix these issues for themselves. We do not need to 'grade' them as part of this process, and attempting to do so is likely to prove counter-productive anyway.

## Receiving Inspirometer meeting feedback

The email that alerts you that you have received meeting feedback via Inspirometer makes the following very important statements:

1. Your feedback is NOT an evaluation of you! It is simply a reflection of 'how people feel' as a result of these interactions.
2. 'How people feel' is a result of a number of factors, many of which may be outside of your control
3. However, it is important for you to know 'how they feel' since this will affect what they do (or don't do) as a result, and may affect your intended outcomes
4. Furthermore, while you may not control all the factors which affect 'how people feel', you are probably well positioned to help facilitate their improvement

If you have read the previous section on providing meeting feedback you will appreciate that these are not simply platitudes to make you feel better about your results – it is a rational and heart-felt explanation of the reality of Inspirometer.



You are seeking to become more effective. Your effectiveness is a function of how well your interactions transfer value between you, your colleagues and your customers. Feedback is a means of gaining an understanding of how well those interactions are achieving your purposes.

Where your performance depends on others, feedback is an indicator of that performance and will help you to understand what can be improved. But it is vitally important to recognise that the feedback is a measure of those interactions, NOT OF YOU!

## You are not your feedback

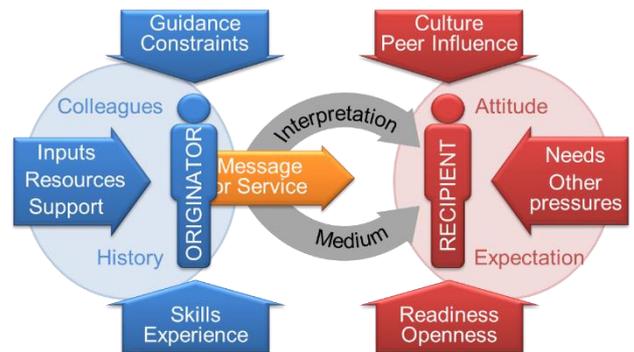
So how is a measure of your interactions not actually a measure of you?

Every interaction that you have involves at least two people: you and the person that you are interacting with. This is true even if the interaction is written, and the reading of it is a time and a distance apart. Your performance is a function of how productive these interactions are: how accurate, relevant, encouraging, informative, efficient, timely etc.

However, you do not have full control of the interaction: both parties have an influence; their baggage and understanding is a factor; the context of the interaction and the environment both have an effect; and there are numerous other aspects which will have a bearing on the outcome (see right).

Furthermore, in a meeting environment, these interactions occur between many different people.

Therefore, when your respondent provides feedback on their perceived value of the interaction, they are evaluating the net impact of all of these things, and you are just one part of that.



## The perils of identifying with your feedback

Sadly, we tend to overlook this point, and this creates an emotional backlash to feedback.

Logically, we accept that feedback is both important and good for us, and that we need to seek it, but we often resist it subconsciously because of how we fear it may reflect on us, and on who we are. It is not that we consciously avoid seeking feedback, it is just that we subconsciously find reasons to delay it, or to de-prioritise it, or to dismiss it altogether.

## Trying to make feedback fair is counter-productive

The fact is, seen from the perspective of it 'being a measure of you', feedback 'is not fair'.

Furthermore, the more we try to make it a fair reflection of who we are, the more we seek to adjust what it says, limit it to things entirely within our control, and rationalise out the bits we don't like. As a result we weed out the really important information about the obstacles around our interactions that are undermining our performance and blocking us from achieving our potential.



We need feedback to be 'unfair' because a lot of what we need to improve is about the things that make it 'unfair' - the things around the interaction.

## Feedback is a fair reflection of your 'performance'

Even though the feedback is not measuring you, it IS measuring 'your' performance in impacting others, and that performance will be a factor in your success.

The reality is that your performance is affected by a number of factors, not all of which you can control. In many ways, your performance is as unfair in its reflection of you as your feedback may be.

But, unfair or not, your performance will determine what you can achieve.

And you can control (or at least influence) far more of the factors affecting your performance than you may realise. It is an important fact to recognise: That successful people tend to take control of far more of the factors that affect their performance than their less successful colleagues.

## How do you take control?

The first step in controlling these factors is in understanding their impact, and that is where you need feedback. Without feedback you may be oblivious to the importance of these factors, but the feedback shows you where these factors are an issue, and helps you to deal with them and monitor progress.

In summary: Your performance is not 'you' - it is a whole load of other stuff as well. Feedback does not rate who you are as a person, it only measures your performance through your interactions. But it is YOUR performance, and you need to take control of it if you want to be successful.

### How mature is your attitude to improvement?

Which of the following statements reflects your most frequent perspective on issues?

- 0 My service is perfect (in its own way) - the problem lies with others
- 1 My service is not perfect but there is no point in me fixing small issues until the others fix the big ones
- 2 The big problems may lie with others but if I can improve small things, it still helps
- 3 The problems may lie with others, but I still have a responsibility to help them
- 4 Any problem, anywhere that affects overall performance places responsibility on us all to work together to fix it
- 5 Any problem with anyone I touch is an opportunity for me to find creative ways to improve my service to them

## How did we do?

Please rate the usefulness of this guide to you  
All it takes is one simple click ...

