



The Organized Feedback Framework

Providing and receiving feedback to/from valuable partners requires a multi-dimensional organized approach that is essential to building long-term thriving partnerships.

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All relationships flourish on feedback. All relationships require input as part of a chain of cause-and-effect and a feedback loop which hopefully drives improvements. Business partnerships are heavily founded on mutual dependencies. Providing and receiving feedback on whether a partner is getting what they need is vital to effective collaboration and producing great work. Constructive feedback, however, comes in multiple flavors. Some of it is informal, conversational, often opportunistic, and ad hoc in nature. Conversely, some feedback is highly structured and carefully staged to meet certain timing requirements. This feedback then informs key decisions like compensation and performance plans. All these input points, formal or informal, help companies assess the health of their partnerships and provide opportunities to strengthen or improve them.

Let's do a quick review of these input points and how to use them most effectively.

Leveraging all feedback opportunities.

Once an organization is committed to a partnership, both parties can leverage a wide range of feedback opportunities that, once combined, form a crystal-clear picture of the partnership.

These opportunities present themselves at different time intervals and trigger various input types (verbal, written, or both). The more formal they get and the broader they are in nature, the more likely they are to include rating-based

feedback so leadership can monitor progress being made, compare ratings to set targets, and use that data to stack rank agencies, determine bonuses or even inform action plans. Comments are often included to tease out insights and provide additional perspective and recommendations on how to tackle certain relationship and performance issues.

Combining feedback inputs for a more cohesive assessment.

The most-used form of feedback assessment is the structured survey-based performance evaluation that takes place annually

and, in many cases, at mid-year as well, allowing teams to course correct in a timely manner, instead of waiting for year-end. Ad hoc conversations, check-ins, project post-mortems and business reviews are all important input points that should be taken into consideration during this formal performance evaluation process. Participants are asked to incorporate them into their consolidated feedback and scores that otherwise, based on seasonality, may omit some important data points that could be captured throughout the year.

A Yelp-like feedback mechanism in a roster tool allows for additional ratings to be compared to the performance

	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	TYPES	RATING-BASED	COMMENTS-BASED
 <p>Performance Evaluation</p>	Highly formal survey to measure the health of the relationship.	Semi-annual (mid-year) and/or annual (year-end)	Written	Yes	Yes
 <p>Yelp-like (Roster tool)</p>	Roster tools offer Yelp-like, always-on surveys to capture ad hoc, opportunistic feedback useful for others as they select an agency.	All year long	Written	Yes	Yes/No
 <p>Post-Mortems (Roster)</p>	At the end of a given project, the team will conduct a post-mortem to discuss what worked well and what could have been done better.	All year long, upon project completion	Verbal and/or written	Yes/No	Yes
 <p>Business Reviews</p>	Formal meeting to review business performance also offers a structured venue.	Typically quarterly (aka QBRs)	Verbal and/or written	No	Yes
 <p>Check-ins</p>	Regular check-ins provide a venue and dedicated time for feedback that might be otherwise difficult to find.	Typically weekly or monthly	Verbal and/or written	No	Yes
 <p>Ad-hoc Conversations</p>	Highly informal, every conversation is an opportunity for real-time feedback.	All year long	Verbal	No	Yes

Figure 1: Different types of feedback.

evaluation results and helps draw additional insights otherwise not available. For example, why did an agency get a low performance score at year-end but received consistently good scores throughout the year? Did one of the recent challenging projects they took on overshadow the great work they did throughout the year and ultimately skew their overall performance assessment?

Constructive feedback for stronger partnerships.

We all receive feedback, from friends, family, peers, bosses, and business partners. If the feedback is fair and balanced, useful, grounded in encouragement, and includes suggestions that contribute to a positive outcome, we are more likely to act upon it. Conversely, feedback that is seen as criticism and offers little hope or insight is largely ignored or disregarded.

It fails at driving positive change and discourages people from doing something about the noted issues.

The ability to provide strong, effective, motivating feedback is not a given. This is a skillset that few people have. Yet, the impact on partnerships is critical. Most individuals have never received formal training on how to excel at giving constructive feedback that leads to positive change. Companies often provide useful tips or remind employees of techniques they can use to give and receive productive feedback. A structured, organized, and more holistic approach to feedback between brand advertisers and their agencies is the foundation of successful relationship building and more effective partnering. Of course, if you have any constructive feedback about this article, do not hesitate to share!

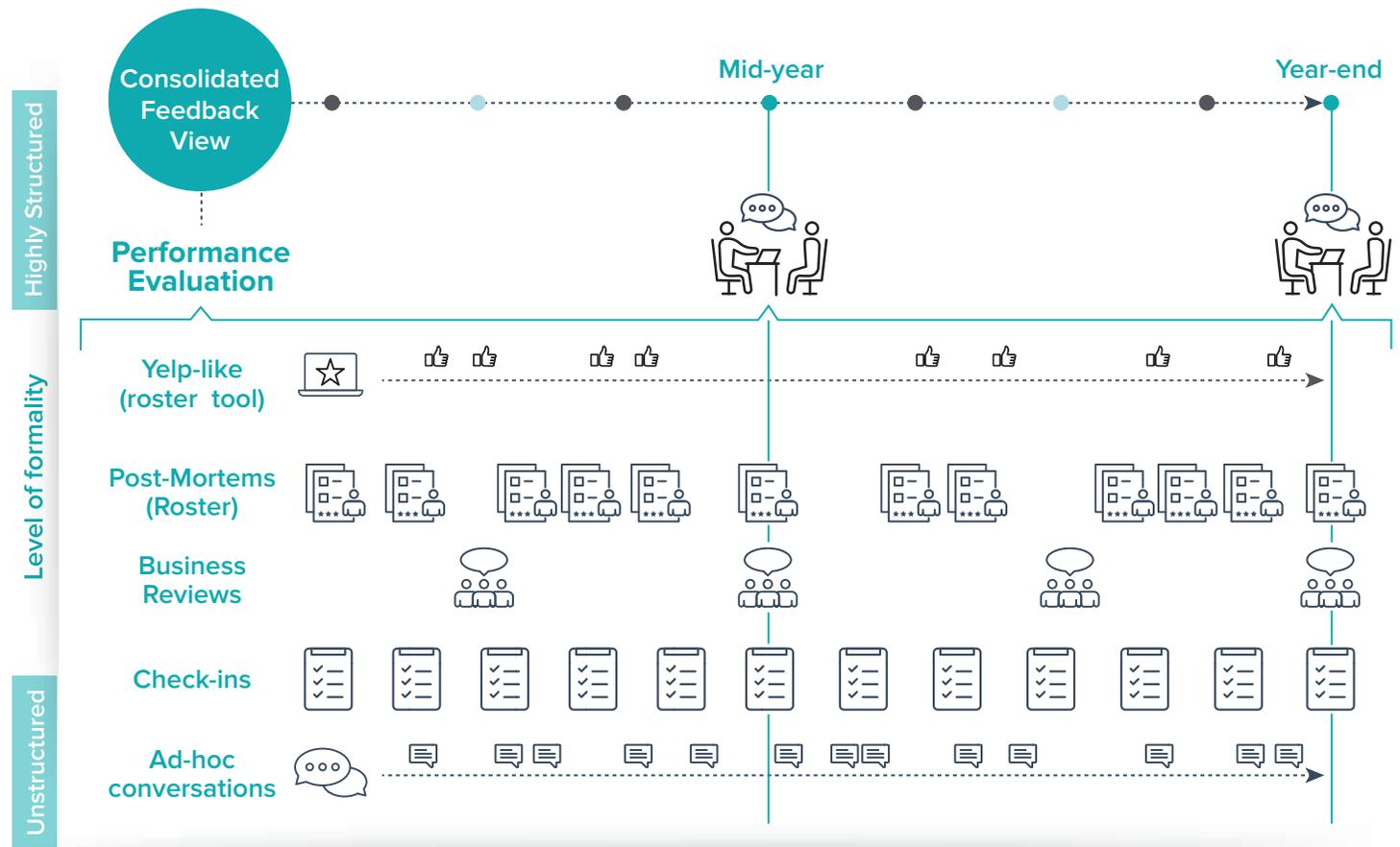


Figure 2: How different feedback input points, no matter how formal or structured, contribute to a more holistic assessment of partnerships.



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Bruno Galpois is the co-founder of Agency Mania Solutions, a premier service and technology firm specialized in helping companies realize the transformational value of managed partnerships. Bruno is the author of best-seller "Agency Mania" and the former chair of the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) Client/Agency Committee and a faculty member of the ANA School of Marketing.

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