Some senior executives are afraid to provide feedback, because they know that their feedback will be given too much weight

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I recall a conversation I had with Steve Sinofsky, back when he was in charge of Windows. As you might expect, he gets to see early versions of a lot of things, his laptop is running dogfood everything, and everybody is asking for feedback.

And he rarely gives any.[1]

Not because he's a jerk, but because he understands that if he provides any feedback, it will get magnified from an idea to a suggestion to a recommendation to a direct order.[2]

"Why isn't there a Frobnicate button right next to the Widget? The main reason I go to that page is to find a Widget to frobnicate."

This becomes "Steve wants to add a Frobnicate button right next to the Widget", and then "Steve says we have to add a Frobnicate button right next to the Widget".

I guess, if he is moved to make a suggestion or share an idea, he can mention it to somebody and add "Tell the XYZ team, but don't tell them it came from me." I don't know if that's what he actually does.

[1] Presumably he gives feedback on the functionality as a whole, but today I'm talking about feedback on the level of feature requests or tweaks, like how the UI should be laid out, or the order of the pages in a wizard, or whether a wizard should be used at all.

[2] I hesitate to mention that at the time Exchange was being developed, the `Ctrl`+`F` standard *did not yet exist*. Try it: Fire up your archived copy of Windows 95, launch Notepad or Wordpad or whatever, and hit `Ctrl`+`F`. Nothing happens. At the time, the standard hotkey for Find was `F3`. (And, in fact, many applications today still accept `F3` as a shortcut for Find.)

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