



Becoming The Coach Your Team Needs

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What Does Coaching Offer Your Employees?

As a manager, being able to know when to manage your employees, when to lead them and when to coach them is an important part of your role. Sometimes one-to-one coaching is the best way to resolve any issues you might be having with specific employees, and it will help you to develop your team members and help them to become highly effective and successful in their role. But before you embark on a coaching programme with your employees, you need to understand what coaching can offer them and when it is appropriate to their needs.

The trick to building a successful coaching relationship relies on three things: your ability to know what you need to encourage your employees to learn, your ability to recognise what new behaviours your employees should be picking up and your ability to understand exactly what benefits coaching has.

These are all relatively simple, so we'll start with the first. In order to encourage your employees to learn they need to have three things:

1. Desire
2. Opportunity
3. Competence

They must want to learn, they must have the time and support needed to learn, and they must already have some degree of competency or ability to do their jobs. You can't successfully coach anyone who doesn't want to be coached.

The next thing you need to understand is the level of change a coaching relationship should cause. You're mainly looking for three things. You should see your coaching having a positive impact on your employee's customer/client relationship skills; the person you are coaching should be able to properly manage the things their learning in their coaching session and you as the manager and coach should see a recognisable change.

Finally, you need to recognise how important coaching actually is to your employees and team members. They look forward to your coaching sessions because it gives them time away from having to make their own decisions, gives them a sense of safety in a confidential setting, and make them feel as though they have companionship even though your relationships are detached.

Some managers think coaching is a waste of time but you should make a strong effort to have a coaching session with all of your employees at least once every month. After a bit of time you'll begin to see a noticeable difference in both their work skills and morale – and this is when you will start to see the benefits of coaching your team, both for them as individuals and for you as a manager of a now more effective team.

7 Top Tips To Help You Coach Your Employees

As a manager it is important for you to not just dictate instructions to your employees but to coach them along the way. Some of your employees will have more self-motivation than others but in the end they'll all need just a little bit of coaching to help them meet their career goals.

Here are a few simple tips to help you open the lines of communication as you work with each of your team members.

Find A Reason For Coaching

Don't coach for the sake of coaching. Make sure you have a clear, concise objective. What are your employee's career goals, both long term and short? What can you do to help them reach those goals? Without goals, there is no reason to begin coaching.

Direct Without Leading

As a coach, you should offer advice as to how to reach a goal without actually paving the path for your team members. Give your mentee all of the information they need to get from point A to point B without actually doing all of the work for them. Be a support system instead of a crutch.

Ask Lots Of Open Ended Questions

Asking questions allows you to judge the skill levels of your employees but should be done tactfully so as not to embarrass someone who doesn't know an answer. Ask open ended questions as opposed to yes or no questions. Yes or no questions almost always lead to disaster, as no one wants to answer "no" and risk sounding silly.

Listen to what your employees are telling you about their goals, aspirations, and setbacks and ask probing questions. Use the answers to help them develop plans for more effectively dealing with similar situations in the future.

Provide Honest Feedback

Use a few minutes at the end of each coaching session to let your trainee know exactly where you think they need improvement. Ask them to assess themselves as well. Find out what they are learning and what they are able to apply in the workplace. Make sure they walk out of each coaching session with at least one new piece of information.

Don't Use This As A Reason To Criticise

Stop before you criticise. Are you going to formulate a critique based on the fact that your employee is doing something incorrectly, or is it simply not the way you would accomplish the task? Even if your employee is doing something wrong you can't just dive in and rip a project apart. You need to formulate a plan for constructively pointing out their errors while offering tips for correction or a more effective strategy. In short, no yelling, grumbling, or making people feel bad.

Remember That Everyone Is Different

It has been scientifically proven that there are a number of different learning styles. Some people need to hear instructions, while others are better reading them. Others may need to experience a task first-hand in order to remember how to accomplish it. Keep in mind that you can't use the same coaching strategy for each employee. You're going to have to get

to know each of your team members individually in order to determine which method of coaching will work best.

Remember That You Are Only Human

You are human and, as such, are not a walking encyclopedia. Your trainee may ask you a question that you don't know the answer to and it is perfectly acceptable to admit that you do not have that answer. Simply let your trainee know that you'll have the answer for them at your next coaching session.

Keeping these things in mind as you coach will enable you to make a better connection with your employees. When you are able to connect with them, you'll find that jobs will get done faster and with fewer errors.



Great Coaching Questions

When you coach someone, you are essentially teaching others how to learn, improving your team member's ability to solve problems, find answers and learn new skills efficiently. You can also coach to help the team member remove obstacles in their way to achieving their goals.

As mentioned in the previous section of the report, asking the right questions is a critical part of being a coach, as the type of questions you ask will not only help you find out what you need to know from your employee in order to help them develop further, but these questions will also help your team member progress and learn without your constant guidance and support.

Listed below are some questions that will be really helpful for you when coaching others to their goals:

- Q. What's your target outcome?
- Q. I could tell you what I might try, but I'm more interested in finding out what you need to know to decide for yourself. Are you willing to think through what needs to be done?
- Q. Rather than me give you the answer, let's see if we help you solve this yourself. What obstacles are you facing at the moment?
- Q. How would you define a successful outcome in this?
- Q. What's most important to you in this project?
- Q. I noticed you sounded quite enthusiastic about that. Why is that?
- Q. I noticed you sounded quite bored with that task. Why is that?
- Q. How would you measure the success of this project?
- Q. Describe what approach you have taken so far and what the results have been?
- Q. Can you give me the metrics for that?
- Q. What gaps are there between where you are and where you want to be?
- Q. How can I help you remove any obstacles between the two positions?
- Q. What information do you need to progress, and how can you get that information?
- Q. What are your top priorities, now and in the near future?

- Q. What steps could you take to progress?
- Q. What alternatives have you thought of?
- Q. What if it doesn't go as well as you had hoped?
- Q. What's the worst that can happen? What is the best that can happen?
- Q. How can I help you further?
- Q. What milestones shall we put in place to help you achieve results on your journey?

Each of these questions put the emphasis on the individual taking control of the project themselves as you assist them on the journey.

Coaching should be like a voyage of discovery on the part of the team member, so that when they have issues or challenges, they can learn to think through the ideas and opportunities themselves. That way, you play the role of facilitator and guide, rather than boss and manager. It helps them grow in their knowledge, confidence and decision-making abilities, and that should free up your time to devote to other things as your team member improves.

About MTD



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