



## **Three Tips for Effective Coaching**

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The performance of your company is directly tied to the performance of your employees, so one of the best ways to develop your company is to develop the people who work for you. While you can motivate your employees by rewarding success and disciplining failure, these incentives and disincentives will only get you so far. If your employees only perform well to get a reward or avoid discipline, they're not truly invested in your company's success. A great way to get employees invested is to invest in them. And one way you can do that is through coaching.

Coaching is a management style that develops employees by assessing, improving, and tracking their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Whereas training is task-oriented—teaching employees how to do something or in what circumstances to do something—coaching is people-focused. Each employee you coach is different. Each has unique strengths to grow and weaknesses to overcome. Coaching meets each person where they are and guides them along the path to improvement.

Because coaching focuses on the individuals being coached, it can't be fully standardized. Nevertheless, there are ways to ensure that your coaching efforts are effective. Here are our three tips for effective coaching:

### **Take a collaborative approach**

Coaching works best when employees assume ownership over their own professional development and improvement. It's a collaborative approach, not a top-down one. The coach is there to support, guide, encourage, and empower employees, not provide them with solutions.

Coaches do all this by asking employees questions. For example, instead of telling an employee how they could be more efficient with their time, a coach would ask the employee to come up with ways to be more efficient. By asking questions along these lines, the coach puts the responsibility for finding solutions on the employee. The questions continue when it's time to evaluate the solutions the employee wanted to try. Together employee and coach discuss what worked and what didn't.

### **Coach everyone, not just poor performers**

If you only coach the poor performers, you create the impression that coaching is something to be avoided. Employees won't want to be coached because they'll associate it with discipline or performance management instead of professional development.



Everyone can improve, so everyone should be coached. The coaching of top performers might focus more on developing strengths than overcoming weaknesses, but even the best performers can benefit

from professional development. Just ask star athletes.

When everyone receives coaching, people don't look down on it or assume they're in trouble if they're coached. Rather, when you invest in the development and success of all your employees, your coaching becomes a sign of your commitment to them and the trust you've placed in them. The best way to receive commitment and trust from others is to give them your commitment and trust. Coaching can be a great way to do just that!

*"Coaching...develops employees by assessing, improving, and tracking their knowledge, skills, and abilities."*

#### **Coach with future goals in mind**

Coaching can also be a way to prepare your workforce for the future needs of the company. As your company grows, you may need employees to have new or different knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet your goals. While you may be able to hire for those future needs, you can engage your current employees (and save money in the long run) by preparing them to take on future roles in the company. In other words, you can align your company goals with the professional goals of your employees. You could do this by asking your employees to formulate their professional goals and explaining how those goals could contribute to the success of the company.

While you can't prevent employees from going elsewhere with the knowledge, skills, and abilities they gain at your company, you can give them reasons to stay. People like to feel that they belong and are important. When your employees can see that their individual professional goals will contribute to the company's success, when they have a voice in how those goals are pursued and achieved, and when they're supported throughout, they're much more likely to commit to the company.