



Key Principles of Coaching

Every Manager is a Coach

Every manager is a developmental coach. Developmental Coaching is a process where a manager-coach interacts with others to help them perform more effectively. Every interaction with an employee can be considered an opportunity to coach, develop, and improve.

Successful coaching of employees requires similar guidance. To the extent you as a coach can accurately determine an employee's readiness for change, you will succeed at motivating them to implement change faster. Successful coaching raises employee performance to the next level.

The stage of learning is important to acknowledge – good coaches don't push beginners into a situations where they are likely to fail. A coach's job is to structure the situation, following proven principles and a context for discussing how to achieve performance improvement.

This model emphasizes five key principles of coaching. Each will be explained below:

- 1) Build Self Esteem
- 2) Validate Understanding
- 3) Generate Options
- 4) Inspire Action
- 5) Recognize Results

#1 Build Self Esteem

The best way to build someone's self esteem is to make positive statements describing their ability to achieve desired results. By recognizing above-standard performance, you let employees know you believe they are capable of high achievement. Conversely, if you demean or ignore others, you negatively impact how they value themselves.

#1 BUILD SELF ESTEEM

Be Sincere
Be Specific

#2 VALIDATE UNDERSTANDING

Listen for Thoughts
Listen for Feelings

#3 GENERATE OPTIONS

Create Alternatives
Choose Strategies

#4 INSPIRE ACTION

Empower Next Steps
Set Check-Back Methods

#5 RECOGNIZE RESULTS

Recognize Efforts
Reward Results

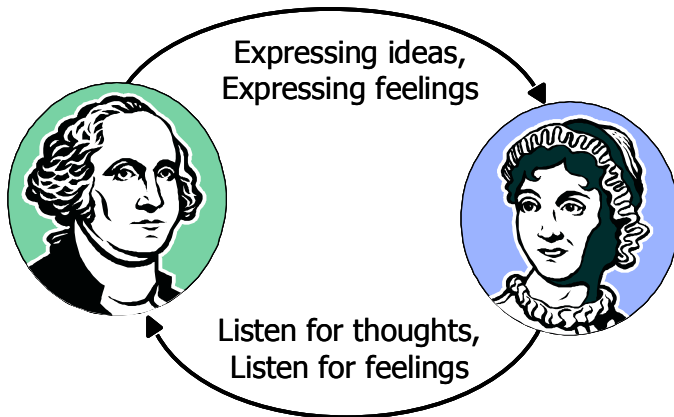
The Pygmalion effect, introduced by Henry Higgins in the musical "My Fair Lady," suggests that reinforcing desired behaviors results in a much greater likelihood those behaviors will be repeated. As a coach, you are the Henry Higgins in your workplace. A few guidelines:

- Avoid global generalities; be specific. "You're such a nice person" isn't nearly as helpful as "I appreciate your thoroughness in completing these reports."
- Be sincere when identifying positive behaviors, attitudes, and skills; employees will notice the consistency between non-verbals (tone of voice, eye contact) and the content of your message.

2) Validate Understanding

There are two distinct channels for communicating at work: the "instrumental" language of tasks and the "interpersonal" language of relationships. Both feeling and content messages must be communicated to build strong relationships.

This key principle focuses on listening, which is the ability to suspend judgment to absorb the content and feelings of someone's conversation. Then comes the challenge: how to respond to the speaker on both channels. This allows the sender (the speaker) to "validate" that you (the listener) understand what was said.



Shared realities: The speaker's expression is based on their perception of reality, which may or may not agree with yours. Successful coaching begins by developing a shared view between the coach and the team member about what they see as "reality." The best way to develop a shared understanding is through listening and engaging.

Shared feelings: In order to communicate well, the coach encourages expression of feelings to obtain information on 1) team members' opinions about a current situation; and 2) team members' feelings when certain events occur. Checking in on both content and feelings helps develop an effective coaching relationship.

3) Generate Options

This principle is based on the everyday core value of treating people with respect. Simply telling a person what to do or providing a solution can feel like a put down. By asking people to identify their own solutions, you are showing respect for them, indicating that you value their ideas as much as your own.

At this stage, you expand the territory by asking open-ended questions. Both the talker and listener are equal players in problem analysis – not only because two heads are better than one, but because people feel empowered when their ideas are solicited.

Invite your co-worker's help by asking these kinds of questions:

About the Situation:

- Help me understand the problem.
- How do you see the situation?
- Help me see why this happened.
- Who are the people involved?

About the Target:

- What is the ultimate goal?
- What will this look like when it is solved?
- How will you feel when this is no longer a problem?

About the Proposal:

- What can be done about the situation?
- How can we reach the target?
- What suggestions do you have?

Involving other people in pinpointing the causes of problems and identifying solutions will, in fact, increase their commitment to action plans and their effectiveness in implementation.

4) Inspire Action

Inspiring action means unlocking a person's energy to use their own wisdom to create solutions. Your role is to ask questions to help an employee generate a list of potential next steps: "What do you think will work? How will you get started?"

As the person generates practical ideas and suggestions, the coach provides closure. Your role is to help the person evaluate their own ideas for improvement, and select ways to begin. Using questioning techniques, invite them to define doable, near-term steps in their plan. Then, jointly determine how you will reconnect to communicate the status of the problem.

By establishing defined next steps, along with check-back dates and methods, you encourage employees to act with accountability. This means your coachee must know what is to happen, when it is to happen, and their level of authority to carry out action. The five levels of authority are:

- I. Clear authority to act
- II. Act & inform immediately
- III. Recommend, get approval prior to action
- IV. Ask what to do
- V. Wait before taking action

As the person defines what they feel able to do, your role is to delegate the authority you want to extend. Provide closure to the discussion by clarifying the level of authority.

The adage, "A pinch of sugar is better than a pound of salt," is relevant here. People respond better when we acknowledge their successes, rather than what they are doing wrong.

Recognizing results is an ongoing process. This principle invites you to point out goals that have been achieved as well as those that are implied: "I'm confident you will give this your best effort."

If a person is working hard (effort) but not achieving results (outcomes), your coaching should solidify the linkage. "If you do X, then Y will occur!" Once they begin to achieve the outcomes, your role is to express appreciation for a job well done. The preferable method is to link outcomes to positive rewards for them as an individual, for their work group, and for the company as a whole. Some examples:

"If you can meet the target (effort), we will see a 20% increase in sales (outcome)."

"Because you have cut costs so significantly (outcome), you will qualify for the bonus category (reward)."

In summary: Link individual effort to pre-established goals. Link individual goal attainment to team objectives. Link team performance to success of the company, and you'll have winners all around.



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