

DEVELOPING THE COACHING SKILLS OF YOUR MANAGERS AND LEADERS

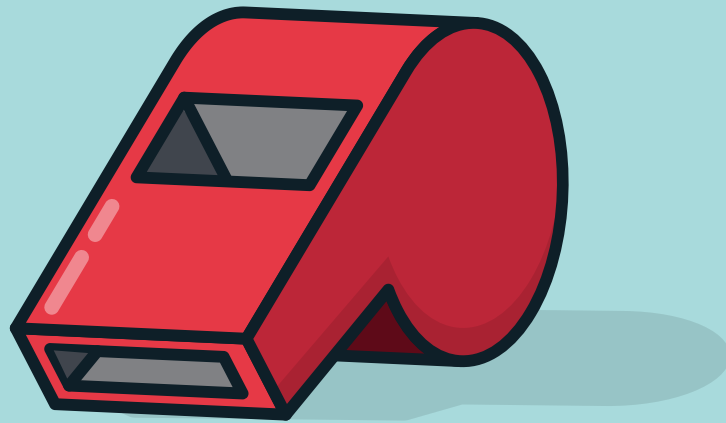


TABLE OF CONTENTS

2.....	What Are the Obligations of Managers?
4.....	New Skills for a New Workforce
4.....	Why Coaching Skills are Important
6.....	The Coaching Formula
7.....	Becoming a Great Coach
7.....	Key Competencies of Coaching Effectively
9.....	7 Coaching Tips for Managers
10.....	The Courage to Coach

What Are the Obligations of Managers?

The answer to this question varies from organization to organization based upon several factors such as industry, culture, department, skill level of the team, etc.

At your organization, for instance, managers may be expected to meet with each employee every week and discuss their career.

At another organization, management might only discuss issues with employees as they arise.

Regardless of the organization, every manager faces the same challenge, in some degree: should management be confined within an organization to a strict set of expectations and achieving KPIs through a set of clear guidelines, or should managers have the freedoms of higher leadership to help create culture and achieve KPIs by virtue of their leadership skills?



MANAGER OBLIGATIONS

At any given time, a manager will function someplace on this continuum.

Managers may have to perform well at various places along this continuum, ranging from ensuring employees comply with established processes and procedures at one end, to career development and skill improvement towards the other end.

Managers must be aware of situations within their department that fall within this spectrum, but it's difficult for organizations to determine where along the spectrum a manager should spend most of their time.

On one hand, if everything in a department is about achieving goals, you might lose out on culture by putting too much performance pressure on teams. You could experience turnover for this, and that's bad for business.

Wells Fargo serves as a grim reminder about what happens when managers focus too much on the goals end of the spectrum. In 2016, an investigation revealed that sales reps were opening false credit cards just to make their managers happy and achieve quota.

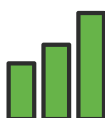
On the other hand, we know that results are important; results are what keep your organization up and running and everyone employed.

That makes it difficult to determine which of these outcomes is most important. With so many possible outcomes and objectives legitimately competing for your attention, are there a set of uniform skills or competencies we can use to guide our managers' ongoing training and development?

Every organization has specific needs for its managers, because the skills needed to successfully manage expectations at one organization might be completely different in another organization. However, there are some foundational managerial skills that every person leading a team should master to some degree. A great manager can quickly find success at most organizations when they develop these skills:



Communication



Performance Management



Business Acumen



Emotional Intelligence

There are other skillsets to master, but these are the four foundational sets of competencies that your managers will need to master if they're going to be effective coaches.

Before we move on, take a few minutes to reflect on this information for yourself. Which of these skills are you unsure how to develop? Which of them do you know what you can do to improve?

Keep in mind that writing things down is a powerful way to get things done – one study discovered that Harvard graduate students who had written goals earned ten times more than Harvard graduate students who had goals but never wrote them down.

Write down the skills that you know you need to improve, how you will improve them, and how you'll know your skills have been improved.

What skills do I need to improve?

How will I improve them?

How will I know I've improved my skills?

New Skills for a New Workforce

The marketplace is changing, and so are our workplaces. While many traditional coaching models provide excellent guidance without modifications, they may not fully prepare our managers for successful coaching experiences with today's workforce.

To be a successful coach today, managers must be able to discover what their team members need to succeed, help develop their skills, and delight in their successes.

Why Coaching Skills are Important

Organizations that invest in leadership development are more profitable, more innovative, and more likely to be market share leaders than their competitors. **Allocating the time and resources to effectively develop leaders at every level of your organization is no longer optional – it's a necessity.**

One of the most significant issues confronting businesses today is a glaring lack of next-generation leaders, coupled with a stunning lack of success for both newly promoted leaders and leaders recruited from outside the organization.

There is a genuine leadership talent crisis brewing, which makes coaching current leaders and current talent a critical mission for organizations. It also means that developing your own leadership skills makes you a powerful asset for your company, and highly sought-after in the talent marketplace.

More than 60% of employees who report to managers who are not good coaches are thinking about quitting, versus 22% who report to the best.

- Zenger Folkman study



Developing your managers' and leaders' coaching skills is good business sense: coaching skills can help managers retain key employees and develop their skills. While there are other important leadership skills and competencies, coaching is central to improving the performance of entire teams.

The significance of coaching can be seen statistically, too: a Bersin study found that organizations with senior leaders who coach effectively and frequently improve their business results by 21 percent!

Coaching is becoming more and more important to gain a competitive advantage as an organization, but you may still be wondering...

What exactly is coaching?

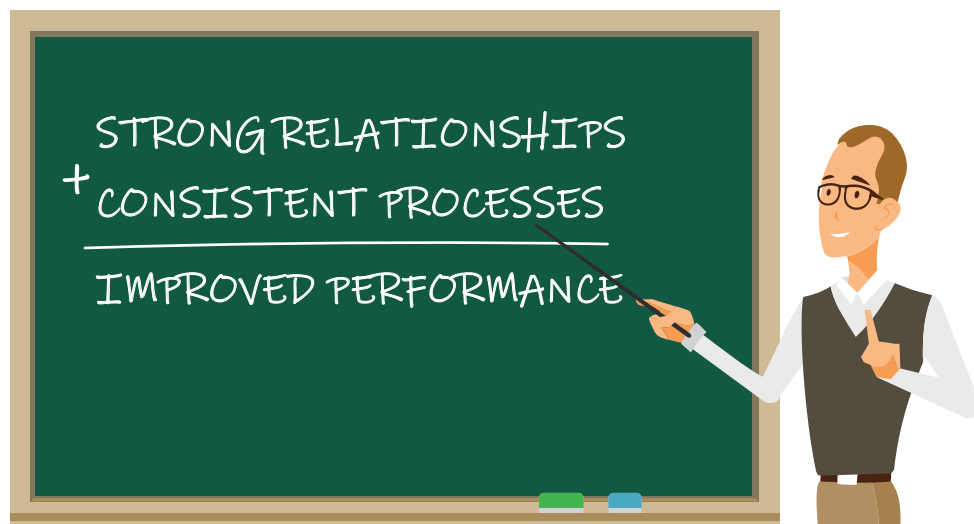
The Coaching Formula

Coaching can be defined as building one on one relationships and managing a process that results in specific improved performance in targeted areas.

In that definition, there are two important keywords to pay attention to: **relationships and process**. These are the two constants you can rely upon as points of reference within different coaching styles.

The result of combining these elements should be improved performance. This is the objective of every coaching engagement, without exception.

Thus, coaching can almost be written as a formula:



Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. To be successful, a coach requires a knowledge and understanding of process as well as the variety of styles, skills, and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place.

- Eric Parsloe, *The Manager as Coach and Mentor*

Because great coaching is so closely tied to business success, there have been plenty of models developed to help managers become coaches.

Here are a few of the most popular ones:

G.R.O.W.

Goals
Reality
Options
Will

C.I.G.A.R.

Current Reality
Ideal
Gaps
Action
Review

O.S.C.A.R.

Outcome
Situation
Choices/Consequences
Actions
Review

C.L.E.A.R.

Contracting
Listening
Exploring
Action
Review

S.T.E.E.R.

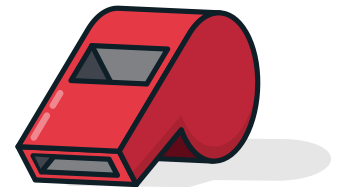
Spot the Opportunity
Tailor the Intervention
Explain the Task
Encourage
Review

C.O.A.C.H.

Clarify the Issue
Open Up Resources
Agree on the Future
Create the Journey
Head for Success

The various models all offer something of great value to the coaching conversation. Taken collectively, the models prove that coaching skills can be learned, and that coaching is a process. Traditional coaching models essentially do the following:

- Help the coach assess current performance
- Identify gaps or areas for performance improvement
- Help to develop a plan to close gaps or improve performance
- Provide a framework to act on the plan



For many coaches, one or more of the models will be helpful.

That said, there is no one-size-fits-all solution when dealing with human beings, and performance improvement is no exception. Each coach, employee, and situation will be different, so the models may be useful as is, or they may require a degree of modification.

Ultimately, models provide a good framework for coaching, but they do not help employees comprehend the skills needed to effectively execute the process or deliver on the desired results of improved performance.

That is the big gap that many coaches find frustrating when studying or learning a specific model. For instance, the GROW model is a good model in many situations, but how does the coach effectively communicate the “R” (reality) aspect of the model to an employee who lacks self-awareness or reacts over-emotionally?

The skills and competencies needed to navigate this situation and series of conversations don't lend themselves to the simplicity of a linear model that GROW implies. The skills are nuanced, complex, and take time to master. In this sense, every existing coaching model falls short, because they fail to answer the fundamental question at the heart of this discussion:

What does it take to be an effective coach?

Becoming a Great Coach

Coaching is a process, not an event. Coaching isn't simply about building a relationship, nor is it about power or a hierarchy. **It's a process-driven relationship with a clear objective, which is to help the subject of the coaching improve their performance.**

While it can be difficult to pinpoint what makes a successful coach, it is a useful exercise to identify common traits, skills, and behaviors. Effective coaches are forward-looking, optimistic in nature, and outwardly focused.

Great coaches are not motivated by their own success – they are motivated to help others succeed. To help others find success, they must be able to answer these questions about their employees:

- What does this team member **need**?
- What does this team member **offer**?
- What does the organization **need**?
- What does the organization **offer**?

Think of the department that you manage. Can you answer these questions for every employee? It's a valuable exercise for coaches to regularly check in with employees and try to discover the answers to these crucial questions.

Key Competencies for Coaching Effectively

Communication Skills

Complex communications skills are necessary for effective coaching. These skills include active listening, understanding how to frame and ask questions, and navigating difficult conversations. Training for these skills should be delivered outside of coaching sessions – don't leave your managers to learn these skills only through trial by fire.

Recommended Resource:

LEARN MORE

ACTIVE LISTENING

COMPETENCY GUIDE



Performance Management

Since the core objective of the coaching relationship is to improve performance, coaches need to understand what elements of the work environment improve employee performance. This may seem self-evident, but the nuances of performance management are difficult to learn.

Your managers may be great communicators and skilled business professionals, but if they don't have the foundational comprehension of things like motivation (intrinsic vs. extrinsic), engagement, productivity, and conflict resolution skills, they'll struggle to become successful coaches.

The blend of performance improvement elements in each organization will vary some, but generally you want to make sure coaches understand the principles and causes of motivation and engagement, and how to apply these principles to improve day-to-day performance.

Recommended Resource:

[LEARN MORE](#)

DRIVING RESULTS
— COMPETENCY GUIDE —



Business Acumen


Coaches need to have a high degree of business acumen. This forms a foundational set of knowledge and experience from which the coach can pull lessons and advice for the coachee. Business acumen is a highly evolved competency. A well-developed sense of business acumen usually takes time to establish in employees.

Having coaches with a deep understanding of the way businesses operate and the ability to translate that understanding into effective decision making is vital to successful coaching of junior managers and leaders.

Recommended Resource:

[LEARN MORE](#)

BUSINESS ACUMEN
— COMPETENCY GUIDE —



Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has always been at the heart of successful leadership, and likewise emotional intelligence is required for successful and effective coaches.


No two employees are the same when it comes to handling emotions. Effective coaches use skills in social awareness and relationship management to reach, guide, and develop every team member.

To accomplish these results, coaches require a developed sense of emotional intelligence to read and understand people and to respond to the wide variety of coaching situations that will arise.

Recommended Resource:

[LEARN MORE](#)

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
— COMPETENCY GUIDE —



7 Coaching Tips for Managers

1. Teach managers to ask good questions to enable the process. Thoughtful questions lead to thoughtful answers, and that leads to productive conversations.
2. Meet the employee on the employee's terms – ask what their preferred coaching session would look like and take that into account.
3. Remember, the motivation to coach comes from the reward of seeing others succeed.
4. Help managers understand how to guide conversations. This is where communication skills and emotional intelligence really come into play. You guide a conversation by asking questions, not by giving directives. Employees learn and grow the most when they uncover the answers themselves.
5. Reinforce effective listening skills to make sure the feedback is understood by the employee. Show managers and coaches how to ask follow-up and clarifying questions to do this and make sure every communication is clear and understood by all parties.
6. Emphasize to managers their central role in the success of the development programs of their employees. No other stakeholder has as much influence over the productivity, engagement, and learning as the manager over their direct reports. Support both the employee and manager in this effort.
7. Teach the importance of coaching in the moment. Learning often happens best when things are occurring. Employees learn best by doing, so coach as you go!

The Courage to Coach

Managers are critically important to the health of our organizations. Great managers usually have great relationships with their employees.

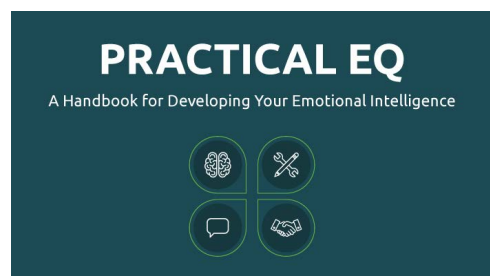
Coaching is a key managerial skill that can be taught and learned. When it comes to learning to be a coach, some important traits are having a positive attitude, being future-oriented, and being curious.

These traits help coaches and employees expand their scope beyond the day-to-day tasks and look at the potential they have to impact business results.

Coaching skills include being highly collaborative, facilitating learning, and being a teacher. These skills also reflect an “outward” world view and an approach to work that focuses first on the success of others or the team. Coaches don’t think in terms of “I,” but they are accountable to the success of the team.

While some coaches are born, coaching skills can be learned and improved. If your organization is looking to gain a competitive advantage and retain top talent, it’s time to make training for coaching skills a top priority for your managers and leaders.

Recommended Resources



BIZ **LIBRARY**

YOUR ONLINE LEARNING PARTNER

Sources

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joefolkman/2015/02/19/5-business-payoffs-for-being-an-effective-coach/#680627882afb>

http://resnikpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Bersinstudy2executivesummary_000.pdf

<https://www.amazon.com/Manager-Coach-Mentor-Management-Shapers/dp/0852928033>