

# 10 Tips for Effective Coaching

If you manage people, you should understand the importance of effective coaching. The support employees receive can have an enormous impact on their effectiveness and productivity, and thus impact the productivity of the entire team. To make sure you're coaching your staff in the way that works best for them consider the 10 tips outlined below.

## **1. Ensure you fully understand what coaching is.**

Many managers make incorrect assumptions about coaching. It's important that a manager uses a clear and consistent coaching model, and understands the "why" - to enhance staff engagement and performance - as well as the "how" - using a collaborative dialogue model of engagement. The manager should be able to distinguish between 'bossing', coaching, counselling, training, and therapy.

## **2. Check your perspective on people.**

A manager who sees people's potential is far better at coaching them towards it. A manager that judges people based on past and current performance, or believes that people are inherently limited, will not make a strong effort to engage staff for optimal performance. An engaged, well-coached employee will out-perform one who is being mismanaged by a weak boss.

## **3. Learn and practice an Effective Coaching Model.**

It's crucial that you start with a coaching model that is research-based and proven (such as the GROW model). That being said, there is a difference between taking a two-day seminar on coaching, and actually developing coaching skills. The course is an event, but the other is a process. Just as getting and staying in shape requires consistent workouts rather than just one fitness class, becoming a great coach takes a conscious effort. After acquiring the coaching knowledge, it's important to engage in continuous application. Seek out ongoing learning and support for coaching and practice, practice, practice.

## **4. Engage your Boss.**

Sometimes a lack of engagement or support from senior management can be a real coaching roadblock. Present a case for the economic benefits of coaching, and make sure that they can see the ROI involved. With engagement at all levels of the

Adapted from <http://www.growingcoaches.com/10-tips-for-effective-coaching>

organization, investment in a coaching culture will achieve greater traction and superior results.

### **5. Understand and value personality differences.**

When coaching staff, be aware that each person has different motivators and communication styles. Learn the styles of your team in order to adapt your communication to the listener for increased impact. If someone is slower to speak and respond, for example, allow them time to think and process rather than interrupting with 'helpful' suggestions. Effective coaching adapts to the unique style and needs of the person being coached.

### **6. Prioritize your time - Stay focused.**

Coaching can happen in different ways with different needs and circumstances. At times, there will be "mini" coaching opportunities that shouldn't be missed. On other occasions, longer or more intensive coaching sessions are called for. Plan your coaching times and know when enough is enough. Keep the session focused on arriving at a solution within the timeframe allowed - avoid endless verbalization about the problem, and coach to a resolution.

### **7. Stop putting out fires.**

A manager who regularly steps in to solve staff's problems isn't doing them (or himself) any favors. He's only training them to bring him the problems, rather than solving them. Coach your staff to develop their confidence and problem-solving ability. This alone will increase organizational efficiency. Sometimes the simple question, "What can you do about it?" will help to uncover a solution.

### **8. Seek regular feedback.**

To support your continued growth, make sure that you get regular feedback. Awareness of where and how you are succeeding (and not) will assist you in making the changes you need for sustained improvement.

### **9. Listen, listen, listen.**

One of the greatest skills a coach/manager must practice is active listening. Fully deploy listening skills with an open mind in order to ask more effective questions of the coachee, and get to the heart of an issue to assist them in finding a solution.

Adapted from <http://www.growingcoaches.com/10-tips-for-effective-coaching>

## **10. Keep growing and developing.**

The rate of change in the world today means that every year, more and more of what we've previously learned becomes obsolete. Keep up-to-date with the latest research and development in the field. Attend coaching conferences, watch webcasts, subscribe to literature and web feeds.

**Chuck A. Reynolds is a Principal and Chief Performance Officer with Excel Group Development** a Performance Solutions firm that assists organizations in enhancing management and team effectiveness.

*© Rights Reserved but extended to others upon email request. Feel free to forward this article to as many colleagues or associates as you wish.*

Adapted from <http://www.growingcoaches.com/10-tips-for-effective-coaching>