

The Manager as The Coach.

Management is an aspiration for many people. Yet, only those who have actually managed people know the depth and variety of what people management can entail. Developing each individual in your team is both a challenging responsibility and an enormous privilege, and expert coaching can help establish brilliant careers. So how, as a manager, do you develop your coaching expertise?

Coaching your team involves uncovering the individual potential of each personality, leading to personal and professional development which allows each individual to fulfil their potential. Put simply, effective coaching involves facilitating a shift in thinking and behaviour, in order for the person being coached to reach a new level of success and achievement.

So, what makes a great coach?

The following ten steps are fundamental to fostering greater effectiveness in your team members and uncovering their individual potential.

1. Create trust.

Trust is essential to the coaching relationship. When you coach a direct report, they must feel the coaching is about them, and not about achieving a specific business outcome.

2. Be impartial.

Each coaching session must be approached with an open mind. Avoid assumptions based on what you believe to be true. Wipe the slate clean before each session, and be prepared to listen unconditionally.

3. Seek to understand.

What is the current situation for this person, from their perspective? What are the challenges and potential growth areas? Move your understanding from “face value” level.

4. Effectively question.

A successful coach delves deep and challenges thinking. Your questioning needs to lead to self discovery for the person you are coaching. Importantly, you cannot tell them where they need to grow. Skilled questioning will allow the person to uncover their own growth

area, and if they do, they will have more ownership of it.

5. Connect personal values to engagement.

Engagement comes from understanding the significance that reaching that goal will bring to the person's life. What is the benefit of achieving it? Which of their values does it support? Making these connections will allow a person to harness the commitment required to achieve the goal at hand.

6. Encourage independence.

Coaching is not about giving the answers or guiding people to do what you would do. People must find their own solutions to identify the best way forward for them. It takes self restraint and practice not to jump in and tell the person being coached which path you would take. A good coach aims for independence, empowerment and personal accountability.

7. Encourage the use of strengths.

It is common to try to develop weaknesses. Yet, we have all reached our current level of success due to our strengths. It is well proven that a focus on identifying, utilising and maximising strengths leads to greater fulfilment and success.

8. Generate ownership.

Provide feedback in a manner that generates ownership for your employee. If they have created a report that does not meet the requirements, ask them what they think of it. Ask what the purpose of the report was? Does this draft achieve that purpose? What else might be included? What could be removed? This allows the employee to provide their own detailed, non judgemental description of what is required.

9. Celebrate success.

As a manager and a coach, identifying and rewarding the specific behaviour that leads to a good outcome reinforces that behaviour for all team members. Reward can be monetary, an award, or simply a thank you.

10. Leave your war stories at home.

Coaching is all about the person being coached, not about you. Although the occasional anecdote can be shared, for the most part, the person being coached should be doing most of the talking. As the coach, your role is to create an open environment and ask the right questions.

Coaching is about self discovery and self development leading to greater autonomy, accountability, commitment and ultimately, success. Facilitating each team members ability to set the right goals and implement an effective plan, while overcoming obstacles, should be the focus of each coaching opportunity. Being a people manager comes with the opportunity to make a vast difference to yourself, your individual team members and your organisation. Making the most of this opportunity sets you apart as an impressive manager and worthy leader. 💡

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