

Seven Steps to Coaching Your Employees to Success

Many employers sit their workers down once a year for a review. At that time, the employee finds out what they've been doing right or if there are areas in need of improvement. But what happens the other 364 days of the year?

Coaching is a different approach to developing employees' potential. With coaching, you provide your staff the opportunity to grow and achieve optimal performance through consistent feedback, counseling and mentoring. Rather than relying solely on a review schedule, you can support employees along the path to meeting their goals. Done in the right way, coaching is perceived as a roadmap for success and a benefit. Done incorrectly and employees may feel berated, unappreciated, even punished.

These seven steps, when followed, can help create a positive environment for providing feedback.

Step 1: Build a Relationship of Mutual Trust

The foundation of any coaching relationship is rooted in the manager's day-to-day relationship with the employee. Without some degree of trust, conducting an effective coaching meeting is impossible.

Step 2: Open the Meeting

In opening a coaching meeting, it's important for the manager to clarify, in a nonevaluative, nonaccusatory way, the specific reason the meeting was arranged. The key to this step is to restate -- in a friendly, nonjudgmental manner -- the meeting purpose that was first set when the appointment was scheduled.

Step 3: Get Agreement

Probably the most critical step in the coaching meeting process is getting the employee to agree verbally that a performance issue exists. Overlooking or avoiding the performance issue because you assume the employee understands its significance is a typical mistake of managers. To persuade an employee a performance issue exists, a manager must be able to define the nature of the issue and get the employee to recognize the consequences of not changing his or her behavior. To do this, you must specify the behavior and clarify the consequences.

The skill of specifying the behavior consists of three parts.

1. Cite specific examples of the performance issue.
2. Clarify your performance expectations in the situation.
3. Asks the employee for agreement on the issue.

The skill of clarifying consequences consists of two parts. You should:

1. Probe to get the employee to articulate his or her understanding of the consequences associated with the performance issue.
2. Ask the employee for agreement on the issue.

Step 4: Explore Alternatives

Next, explore ways the issue can be improved or corrected by encouraging the employee to identify alternative solutions. Avoid jumping in with your own alternatives, unless the employee is unable to think of any. Push for specific alternatives and not generalizations. Your goal in this step is not to choose an alternative, which is the next step, but to maximize the number of choices for the employee to consider and to discuss their advantages and disadvantages.

This requires the skill of reacting and expanding. You should acknowledge the employee's suggestion, discuss the benefits and drawbacks of the suggestion, ask for and offer additional suggestions, and ask the employee to explain how to resolve the issue under discussion.

Step 5: Get a Commitment to Act

The next step is to help the employee choose an alternative. Don't make the choice for the employee. To accomplish this step, the manager must be sure to get a verbal commitment from the employee regarding what action will be taken and when it will be taken. Be sure to support the employee's choice and offer praise.

Step 6: Handle Excuses

Employee excuses may occur at any point during the coaching meeting. To handle excuses, rephrase the point by taking a comment or statement that was perceived by the employee to be blaming or accusatory and recast it as an encouragement for the employee to examine his or her behavior. Respond empathically to show support for the employee's situation and communicate an understanding of both the content and feeling of the employee's comment.

Step 7: Provide Feedback

Effective coaches understand the value and importance of giving continual performance feedback to their people, both positive and corrective.

There are a few critical things to remember when giving feedback to others. Feedback should:

- **Be timely.** It should occur as soon as practical after the interaction, completion of the deliverable, or observation is made.
- **Be specific.** Statements like "You did a great job" or "You didn't take care of the clients' concerns very well" are too vague and don't give enough insight into the behavior you would like to see repeated or changed.
- **Focus on the "what," not the "why."** Avoid making the feedback seem as if it is a judgment. Begin with "I have observed..." or "I have seen..." and then refer to the behavior. Focus on behavior and not the person. Describe what you heard and saw and how those behaviors impact the team, client, etc.

- **Use a sincere tone of voice.** Avoid a tone that exhibits anger, frustration, disappointment or sarcasm.

Positive feedback strengthens performance. People will naturally go the extra mile when they feel recognized and appreciated. When corrective feedback is handled poorly, it will be a significant source of friction and conflict. When it is handled well, people will experience the positive effects and performance is strengthened.

By: [Katherine Graham-Leviss](#)

This article was originally posted at: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/220133>

Visit [Bishop House's Leadwell Knowledge Base](#) for more resources on the topics that matter most to leaders



Bishop House Leadwell Knowledge Base

<p> New Leader</p> <p>Whether you just got promoted and don't know where to begin, or you have been in a leadership role for a while, these resources will provide you with valuable insight into the fundamentals of leadership.</p>	<p> Managing Change</p> <p>Managing change can be challenging. Look here for ideas on how you can manage yourself through change and strategies for leading your team through change.</p>	<p> Effective Communication</p> <p>Effective communication skills are essential to effective leadership. Click here to explore how to better communicate with employees, peers and others.</p>	<p> Managing Up</p> <p>How to manage up when your boss has you down. Look here for strategies for dealing with your boss.</p>
<p> Your Development</p> <p>Look here for ideas on how to develop as a leader and to continue to grow in your leadership knowledge.</p>	<p> Managing Performance</p> <p>Explore content about being a coach to your employees, guiding them to success, managing poor performers, motivating good performers and more.</p>	<p> Productivity</p> <p>Insights and tips on how to be more productive as a manager. Learn how to effectively and efficiently manage time, emails, meetings and other aspects of your role as a leader.</p>	<p> Building My Team</p> <p>Resources for learning how to build a cohesive team as well as strategies for where to start when it is anything but.</p>