



Coaching, Mentoring, and Management

Lesson 3: 2 Coaching Principles That All Managers Should Consider

The Big Idea:

“To create a high-performance team, we must replace typical management activities like supervising, checking, monitoring, and controlling with new behaviors like coaching and communicating.”

Ray Smith, the CEO of Bell-Atlantic

Recent leadership research has reported that leaders who have shifted from traditional managerial practices to coaching methods are getting better results from their teams. Coaching was once considered as a tool to assist troubled staffers but now according to a report by CNN, has become “part of the standard leadership development training for elite executives and talented up-and-comings at prominent companies and organizations... These companies are discreetly giving their best prospects what star athletes have long had: a trusted adviser to help reach their goals.” Leaders across all sectors of business are recognizing the positive effects coaching has on developing the talent in their organizations.

This lesson will discuss two coaching practices that all leaders, managers, supervisors and those who work with teams can use to help develop their teams: questions and listening.

A Question to Consider:

What are some effective strategies to assist you in shifting from traditional managerial practices to coaching methods ?

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PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!



Asking Questions:

Batista says, “The emphasis on asking questions is noteworthy when we consider that conventional leadership roles typically position the leader as the expert, someone who provides answers and whose domain knowledge is one of the foundations of his/her authority. In contrast, when a leader acts as a coach, he/she needs to adopt a different mind-set and add value in different ways.” The reality is that many of your employees are knowledge workers meaning he/she has a knowledge base that you may not have as the manager.

Asking purposeful questions are essential to the talent development process and the overall coaching experience. Coaching guru Tony Stoltzfus said, “Questions are the bread and butter tools of a coach. They are the main tools a coach uses to focus a conversation, foster exploration, push the client to dig deeper and to reach higher, and ensure commitment. Much of what a coach says in a coaching conversation is in the form of questions.” It can be challenging for leaders to ask questions because leaders are used to telling people what they think or what to do. That stems perhaps from many leaders approaching people and things from a problem-solving mentality.

Active Listening:

Listening is the heart of communication and real communication occurs when we listen with and for understanding. It is critical to point out that there is a difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is the act of perceiving sound. It is involuntary and only means that your ear has received sound. Listening goes beyond receiving sound to making sense or interpreting what you heard. Therefore, being an active listener as a leader coach will ensure that you are properly interpreting what people are expressing to you. Active listening allows you to pay full attention to the coachee apart from distractions. You work intentionally not to interrupt them while they are speaking and you pay attention not only to the words being spoken but to the non-verbal communication such as posture, body language, tone of voice, and gestures. A tool to assist in active listening is suspending your judgement. Suspending judgement means to push the pause button on making assessments, forming opinions or jumping to conclusions about what is being said while it is being said to

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A Thought to Ponder:

John Russell, managing director of Harley-Davidson Europe states, “I never cease to be amazed at the power of the coaching process to draw out the skills or talent that was previously hidden within an individual, and which invariably finds a way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable.”

A Thought: What methods do you use to help your staff discover hidden skills and talents?

What Difference Would It Make:

Working Definition for Leader Coach

Ed Batista, executive coach and instructor at Stanford Business School, provides a great definition of coaching for managers in the Harvard Business Review: “A more specific definition [of coaching] that applies to you as a leader and manager is ‘a style of management primarily characterized by asking employees questions in order to help them fulfill their immediate responsibilities more effectively and

Suggested Resource:

Harvard Business Review Guide to Coaching Employees

By HBR

<https://www.amazon.com/HBR-Guide-Coaching-Employees/dp/1625275331>

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