



Coaching For Impact

The Learning Key® Approach

One-on-one coaching is an essential tool for managers in developing their employees. Coaching can be very effective to develop personal growth, business agility, and enhanced communication, and leadership skills, all of which contribute to a company's bottom line and increases productivity and motivation.

In planned feedback sessions or on-the-spot coaching opportunities, the most successful coaching conversations include these steps:

1. Plan before meeting with the employee.

Even in informal coaching situations, think about what and how you will hold the discussion before you begin. Consider the physical setting and your expectations for the meeting.

2. Focus on observations and objectives.

Discuss the specific behaviors you observed and the outcomes of those behaviors, being careful not to generalize, personalize, or jump to conclusions. Saying "On these two occasions your deadlines were not met" is better than "You don't work fast enough". This is just as important with positive feedback, where saying "This idea for the project saved us a week's worth of time" tells a person more than "Good Job!"

3. Use a collaborative approach.

An effective coach creates a setting in which s/he and the employee explore options together. The most critical coaching skill, asking insightful questions, helps this process. The goal of these questions is to have the employee generate several possible ideas and solutions, and, in the case of performance issues, uncover possible causes.

4. Evaluate solutions with the employee.

Ask more questions about the employee's solutions. "How to" kinds of questions help enhance the solution. Questions like "How would that accomplish your goal?" or "How do you see that being done?" or "Do you see any disadvantages to that approach?" lead the employee to an appropriate solution and identify possible obstacles.

5. Reach agreement on actions and timing.

You or the employee should summarize the specific, agreed upon actions and timeframes. After the coaching session, make informal or formal written notes of those agreed-to actions.

6. Follow up.

One of the agreed-to actions should be to hold a follow up meeting, with a specific time and date. Holding the meeting and following the same steps, citing observations, asking for employee input, and collaborating on obstacles encountered, puts you on the road to coaching success.

For more information, contact us at 215-493-9641 or www.thelearningkey.com.