

FIVE STEPS FOR COACHING

by Beth Armknecht Miller



Taking time to coach an employee today will develop their talent, and free you up for higher valued responsibilities in the future.”

1. Identify a Coachable Moment

A coachable moment is one where the employee can learn and develop through the coaching process. A sample list of common opportunities to provide “just in time” coaching include:

- Verbal and Written Communications
- Managing emotions
- Responding to accountability
- Decision making-quick or slow
- Managing Change
- Teamwork
- Empathy
- Presentation Skills
- Listening Skills

Once you have observed and identified an opportunity to coach, start by asking the question “May I share an observation with you?” or something similar. This opening question asks permission of the employee and prepares him or her for feedback. If the response is no, then ask when you can share your observation.

2. Ask Questions

After you have shared the observation with your team member. Then you can follow on with open-ended questions. The purpose for these questions is to gain greater

Five Steps for Coaching in the Moment



understanding of the underlying causes of what you observed, and get the employee to understand the impact of the behavior on others and/or the organization.

Sample questions:

- What factors are causing you to (not make this decision) or (not address a performance issue with your direct report)?
- What data do you have to support these factors?
- How do you think your (outburst) or (interruptions) impact others on the team?

3. Actively Listen

This is often the hardest step in the process for managers; actively listening. What does it mean to actively listen? It means eliminating the self-talk that may be churning in your head such as your expectations to a question's answer. You should be listening for content and context, so you can understand the other person's point of view. It also means being open to new perspectives and ideas. Make sure that after you receive an answer that you completely understand the response by asking for clarification and paraphrasing back to the person what you heard, such as:

"So what I understand is..." "Is this correct?"

"So what I heard was..."

4. Guide Employee to Solution

Once the employee agrees that his behavior is impacting others in a negative way and you fully understand the factors that led to the behavior, it is now time for the employee to create a plan for resolution.

The goal in this step is to help the employee uncover options to resolve the situation, analyze the options, and commit to a specific course of action. This process creates ownership of the solution with the employee. Many leaders find this very difficult

because they are used to providing the solution, and it is quicker. Also, they believe that providing solutions is what they are paid to do.

5. Gain Commitment

The final step is getting the employee to make a commitment to the plan by identifying the first step that needs to be taken and the time in which it will be completed. As a leader, it is your responsibility to keep the employee accountable, so a check-in time must be scheduled to make sure progress is taking place at an appropriate pace.

The plan should also be reviewed during your next monthly 1-1 meeting with the employee.

When practiced daily, these steps become second nature and take little time from your day. And in return, the people you coach will gain the necessary skills to work through many of their problems on their own providing you with additional time to take on greater responsibilities.

*Adapted from *The Coaching Manager* by Hunt and Weintraub.

Beth Armknecht Miller's passion for learning, and dedication to helping others, are strands woven throughout her distinguished career, which continue to guide her work with Executive Velocity, a top talent and leadership development advisory firm.

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Beth Armknecht Miller



<http://executive-velocity.com>



beth.miller@executive-velocity.com



678.579.9191

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Beth A Miller
beth.miller@executive-velocity.com

