



To Do

Pocket Resource:

# Coaching Tips



By

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## Table of Contents

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 2 - What is Coaching?

Chapter 3 - Coach According to Style

Chapter 4 - Communication

Chapter 5 - Coaching for Performance

Chapter 6 - Powerful Questions

Chapter 7- Final Words

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# *Introduction*

## **Don't Just Manage- Coach!**

Managers wear many hats, unfortunately the coaching hat is often the one overlooked. There are huge differences between managing, coaching, mentoring, and counseling.

A good manager/ coach can develop the untapped potential of their employees. Good coaching can unlock the hidden asset in the workplace which motivates each team member to reach new heights and achieve higher performance.

After twenty years of experience as a corporate trainer, university educator, manager at a Fortune 500 company, and business coach, I'm totally convinced that it is impossible to coach and develop teams and employees without highly developed coaching skills. The good news is that these skills can be mastered by anyone.

At **Breaking-Boundaries International, Inc.** we work with individuals and organizations in unlocking and revealing the hidden potential within team members. We encourage and challenge people to put goals into action so individually or as a team they can reach the **Next Level of Success.**

The purpose of this mini-booklet is to serve as a quick coaching reference guide. Good managers who know how to coach make excellent leaders. They are able to create the right motivational environment that inspires their people.

This mini-booklet will provide the tools and techniques necessary to excel as a manager/ coach. This information is a condensed version of our coaching workshops and coaching clinics. The booklet is designed to provide a quick resource and guide for the manager/ coach, trainer, HR professional or business coach.

This booklet is available in both an on-line version and a pocket soft cover version. To order additional Pocket Resource: Coaching books or to order any of our other titles please go to:  
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## *Chapter 2:* *What is Coaching*

### **Quiz: Putting Your Coaching Skills To The Test**

1. You just observed a team meeting conducted by one of your project managers who reports to you. In your opinion the meeting was a waste of time. Very little was accomplished and meeting goals were not completed.

**Do you:**

- A) Linger after the meeting and tell your employee, "you ran a terrible meeting!" Come see me so I can help you be more effective in running meetings.
- B) After the meeting approach the employee and use questions to guide him/ her in identifying ways to increase participant participation.
- C) Make a point to approach the employee after the meeting and highlight those aspects of the meeting that were handled correctly.

2. One of your high performing employees has been 15- 20 minutes late in arriving to work for the past several weeks. In the past two weeks he has been complaining of stomach problems and headaches. You've noticed that is making a number of personal phone calls on company time and seems irritable with other team members. Yesterday, someone from another department complained about this employee being rude.

**Do You:**

- A) Remain silent- the violations aren't major and he will get over whatever is bothering him.
- B) Call the employee into your office and warn him of possible disciplinary action if he doesn't improve.
- C) Casually take the employee aside and informally ask questions concerning possible work related problems, however, also clearly restating your expectations concerning promptness, personal phone calls, and expected conduct.

3. You have a very valuable employee in your department. However this employee is accused of “hitting-on” employees in other departments. You have not seen any inappropriate behavior on the job, however you received two complaints this week from employees in other departments about unwanted advances.

**Do You:**

- A) Harassment is serious so you arrange a meeting with HR and instruct the employee to stop the behavior immediately.
- B) Informally go up to the employee and tell him to cool it for awhile, that people are misunderstanding his good intentions.
- C) Arrange a meeting with the employee and communicate the situation in a direct, specific manner. Ask the employee what behaviors he needs to change.

4. Your employee is very disorganized. Yesterday you observed the employee shuffling papers- frantically looking for information-while keeping a customer on hold. The employee became curt with the customer while trying to find the “right” information. You felt embarrassed for the customer.

### **Do You:**

- A) Set a time to discuss the situation with the employee to address the situation and the outcomes.
- B) Tell the employee that he's sloppy and to shape up and become more organized.
- C) Take a picture of the employee's messy work area so you can confront him at the formal performance review meeting next month.

### **How did you do?**

The appropriateness of the following answers depends on the individual employee and the situation. The responses should be taken as general guidelines.

Question 1: While you might have liked to tell the employee exactly what you were thinking, the most appropriate response is both (B and C). The combination of praising what worked well and constructive feedback will help the employee solve future problems.

Question 2: This is a difficult question. Without asking the employee questions you don't know if you are facing a serious job burnout problem or if the employee just needs to be reminded of policies and work expectations.

Dealing with the issues in a direct, non-threatening way is the best approach. Therefore (C) is the best answer.

Question 3: The best response is (C). Workplace harassment is a serious issue, while there is no need to call HR into the conversation at this time- the conversation will need to be documented. Discussing the situation in a direct specific manner is the best course of action. Conclude the meeting by asking the employee what behaviors he/she needs to change. Finally, set clear expectations in working with others and ground rules around appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Question 4: If you selected (A) pat yourself on the back. In a customer service driven world good customer service can't wait until a formal performance review meeting. The employee needs to put clear steps into place in serving the customer.

Just what is the role of a coach? Lets explore the definition of coaching, performance coaching, counseling, performance appraisal, and performance feedback. The skills sets needed to be a good business coach will also be discussed in this chapter.

There is a fine line that separates the interrelated process of coaching, counseling, providing feedback, performance appraisals, and managing. While there is some overlap each function serves an important distinct purpose.

### **Coaching**

At this time there is no widely accepted definition for coaching. The following definition for corporate coaching serves as a general guideline.

Coaching is a relationship between a coach and a willing individual. Together they create an environment of respect, safety, challenge and accountability. This motivates the coach and coachee to be his/ her absolute best and achieve extraordinary results in performance and in life.

In the above definition did any word stand out? How about willing individual. This is a key concept if you are going to coach another person. The coachee must be a willing individual in a coaching exchange. If the individual is not “willing” coaching him/her is not possible.

The coachee must be willing to move forward, and “willing” to be stretched to the next level. In the coaching experience a partnership is created between both the coach and the coachee. Pure coaching is non-directive in its approach. The coach asks questions forcing the coachee to do the work and solve the problems. This nondirective approach is generally more powerful than the direct approach.

### **Performance Coaching**

Performance coaching is a directive process that is used by managers when giving instruction, or educating an employee requiring development in an area. Performance coaching works best if the coachee is open and willing to the advice being offered.

### **Counseling**

Counseling is a supportive process used to identify problems that interfere with an employee’s job performance. Sometimes the manager utilizes managerial efforts to help the employee in solving these problems. To be successful in this approach there needs to be an established foundation of trust.

### **Performance Appraisal**

This is a formal organizational process for evaluating an employee’s job performance. This includes a formal written report and appraisal.

If the manager has shown due diligence in meeting with employees on a regular basis the formal review is nothing more than another meeting.

### **Performance Feedback**

Feedback sessions can be conducted both formally and informally. The goal of the feedback session is to create value for the employee in an attempt to improve performance. This includes both performance strengths and weaknesses.

## **Getting Started: Your Role As A Coach**

### **Coaching Ground Rules:**

1. Fundamental to coaching effectively is the ability to build a **foundation of trust**. If you expect your employees to respond to your feedback, and to be considered credible you must demonstrate dedication to your people.

- Honesty: let employees know where they stand and where you stand on issues.
- Admit mistakes and share some of your organizational problems with your team.
- Empower employees: trust them to take on difficult assignments.
- Lead by example

**2. Clear Communication.** Set clear goals and expectations. Help employees to understand their job descriptions and what is expected from them. Goals are key to success and good coaches empower their employees with the right tools to achieve defined goals.

- Be specific rather than general. In both positive and constructive feedback using specific examples aids an employee. For example saying “your not a team player” is not as useful as ” in the meeting this morning, when you didn’t acknowledge you were listening to anyone’s ideas, I felt forced to accept yours.”
- Provide both positive and constructive feedback. A common mistake is to only communicate negative actions. People want to be recognized for their positive actions and accomplishments. Feedback also needs to be well timed.
- Be descriptive rather than judgmental. Using language that is evaluative increases defensiveness and decreases the ability for the employee to listen.
- Give feedback on behaviors the employee can control. Ask employees what type of coaching would help them.

- Discussing expectations together with the employee reduces the need for future confrontation. Confirm with the employee on the time line of specific assignments and what the end product will look like.
- Plan for success and communicate the vision to your employees.

### **3. Motivator and Morale Builder.**

Creating a positive environment is the responsibility of every coach. Motivation comes from within, however employee motivation can increase or decrease based upon the working environment.

- Lead by example every day.
- Good coaches are able to let go of control and delegate responsibilities.
- Communicate respect with all employees.
- Sponsor. A good coach is a also a positive and enthusiastic sponsor so others can showcase their contributions.
- Concentrate on establishing a positive attitude. Provide praise often and make employees feel valued.
- Share the fame and the blame. You must be willing to share credit for victories with your team, including any tangible rewards.

**4. Listen.** A good coach listens to what the employee is telling them. A good coach avoids the tendency to over-talk.

- Be alert to body language and non-verbal messages. Is the employee unusually silent or exhibiting avoidance. Express your concern to non-verbal messages.
- Listen for an explanation behind the verbal reaction. Often the verbal response masks the underlying problem. If you have an employee with a performance problem make an effort to find the real cause of the problem. Two good questions to ask are:
  - Ask what is creating the problem?
  - What resources are needed?
- The secret to good active listening is the ability to use solid listening skills. These five skills include:
  - Clarification. The ability to clarify the feelings you have just heard, to get more details and to check assumptions
  - Encouragement. The ability to keep the speaker talking.

- Perception Checking. Identify any misunderstandings. Check for accuracy and let the sender of the message know that you understand.

- Feelings Check. Identify the feelings that you just sensed in the employee's message. To demonstrate that you are attentive to the feelings that were just expressed.

- Summarize. The ability to pull ideas together, to review progress, and sum up what was discussed.

**5. Ask Powerful Questions.** A good coach needs to be able to ask questions that will guide the employee. Through the use of both open-ended and closed ended questions a coach can help a coachee determine their blocks to success, what resources are needed to break through the barriers, and how to reach specific goals. Asking powerful questions will be covered more in depth later in this resource guide.

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## ***Chapter 3:*** ***Coach According*** ***to Style***

An effective coach is able to adapt to the communication style of the coachee. In sports, history, and politics we have seen successful coaches and leaders that have exhibited the four basic communication styles. Each style can be effective and in the extreme each can be ineffective. The ability to be flexible in your coaching style will make you an effective manager/ coach.

More than two thousand years ago, Hippocrates, known as the founder of modern medicine identified the four basic temperaments. Today personality analysis is rooted in his theories.

The DiSC ® System, from Inscape Publishing identifies the major communication and/ or behavior styles. We have experienced wonderful results in using this system over the years. The ideas that follow are adapted from Inscape Publishing's DiSC Model ® and the Personal Profile System ®. We strongly endorse both.

### **The Dominance Style (High D)**

The “D” style is direct, they talk fast, want the bottom line, have definite opinions, willing to take risks, want immediate results, and enjoy challenges. They like to win and will work hard to get the results they want. This style likes a fast pace, new activities, change, variety, and uses a direct approach to solve problems. People with this style are confident leaders and believe in pragmatic principles: if it doesn't work get rid of it.

Some public figures who have demonstrated this style include: Great Britain's former prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, Lee Iacocca, Dan Rather, Ross Perot, and Mike Ditka.

#### **Strengths**

#### **Weaknesses**

Born Leader	Bossy
Excels in emergencies	Intolerant
Goal Oriented	Over Demanding
Motivational	Workaholic
Logical Thinker	Impatient
Confident	Rude/ Tactless

Their motto is:

**Just do it- my way- now.**

### **The Influence Style (High i)**

This style likes to interact with people, they are animated, enthusiastic, and like to express their thoughts and feelings. This flamboyant, outgoing style also wants results like the dominance style however they also care about people. They are more people focused rather than task focused like the “High D.” The influence style are excellent communicators who always try to make a good first impression and will chat with you about anything.

Some public figures include: Presidents Ronald Regan, and Bill Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, and basketball coach Pat Riley.

#### **Strengths**

#### **Weaknesses**

Magnetic Personality	Exaggerates
Storyteller	Compulsive talker
Entertaining	Undisciplined
Friendly	Immature
Creative & Colorful	Interrupts
Enthusiastic	Disorganized

Their Motto is:

**People make work fun- let's have fun**

### **The Steadiness Style ( High S)**

This style is very accepting of others. They like cooperation, harmony, peaceful environments, and are good at calming others. They like security, being part of a team, and stability. They are not risk takers and dislike change- especially abrupt change. High “S” styles are patient, loyal, and are wonderful listeners. They have a predictable manner and are known as peacemakers. They have a low-key sense of humor and a dry wit.

Some public figures that demonstrate this style are Presidents George Bush Sr, and Gerald Ford, Will Rogers, Jack Benny, Jack Nicklaus, Michael Jordan and Cal Ripken Jr.

#### **Strengths**

#### **Weaknesses**

Cooperative	Indecisive
Patient	Procrastinating
Well Balanced	Passive
Team Oriented	Sarcastic
Steady & easygoing	Too accommodating
Mediator & good listener	Fearful & worried

Their Motto is: **Don't rock the boat**

### **The Conscientious Style (High C)**

The “C” style is cautious, likes details and demands quality. They like to work under known conditions, and like to follow written standards and procedures. This style is neat and orderly, they value accuracy, and are tactful and diplomatic. They have a perfectionist nature and have an analytical view of the world therefore they analyze situations and problems utilizing high standard measures for themselves and others

Public figures who have demonstrated this style include: Presidents Richard Nixon, and Jimmy Carter; Vice Presidents Al Gore and Walter Mondale, Alan Greenspan, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Phil Jackson, and Wayne Gretzky.

#### **Strengths**

#### **Weaknesses**

Artistic & Musical	Too Perfectionistic
Schedule Oriented	Moody
Keeps emotions in check	Suspicious
Long Range Goals	Inflexible
Serious and Analytical	Pessimistic
Likes Charts and Graphs	Slow to Action

Their Motto is: **Do it right the first time**

### **Learn to coach according to style.**

In coaching a “D” show them the simplest and quickest way to be productive. Be firm, and direct. Clearly define the limits of their authority.

With an “I” use fast paced enthusiastic descriptions. Avoid overwhelming details, and request specific feedback to check on their understanding of “how to” ... Use public praise and provide opportunities for them to interact with others.

When coaching an “S” use a step-by-step plan for development. Provide one-on-one “hands-on instruction” and regular informal feedback on improvements. Use warm and sincere statements complimenting their efforts.

When Coaching a “C” provide specific, factual statements of what level of performance is required. Use accurate, specific statements, and check for understanding and acceptance of information. Provide them time to process the information, practice the skills and set a time limit for practicing.

To get a **free** white paper on the styles e-mail me at [deanne@pocketresource.com](mailto:deanne@pocketresource.com). Put “styles paper” in the subject line.

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## *Chapter 4:*

# *Communication*

An effective coach is also an excellent communicator. A coach needs to be able to: guide and motivate the coachee; create a shared vision; set team goals; and communicate expectations.

Listening is one of the key skills for a coach. Without solid listening skills it will be almost impossible to motivate your team. The skills of listening were covered in chapter two, at this juncture lets address some of the techniques.

### Listening Goal

### Technique

#### **Encouragement**

To keep the coachee talking. To acknowledge that you are listening.

1. Stay neutral and show interest
2. Use phrases such as: "Keep going" and "Tell me more."
3. Use verbal head nods: say "uh-huh, mm-humm, really, or I see," to indicate that you are listening

### **Listening Goal**

### **Technique**

#### **Clarification**

To get more detail, check assumptions, or to gain a deeper understanding of the issue or problem.

Try these phrases

1. Will you clarify for me what you mean by.....
2. What specifically do you mean when you say.....

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#### **Perception Checking**

To identify breakdowns or misunderstandings. Also used to check for the listeners level of accuracy and to let the sender know you understand.

Paraphrasing is the key technique. Here are some helpful phrases:

1. What I've heard so far is.....
2. So I understand you to mean....
3. Let me tell you what I am understanding...

With this you also need to offer an original example. You might want to use a phrase like:

1. Would an example of that be.....
2. Something similar happened to me, it made me feel \_\_\_\_\_, just as you described.

**Listening Goal**

**Technique**

**Check Feelings**

This helps to reduce the anxiety that sometimes occurs. Also helps to reduce negative feelings. Lets the speaker know the listener is attentive and you can identify with what is being felt.

Try these phrases to get your started:

1. It seems to me that you feel.....
2. It sounds like you are\_\_\_\_\_ ( fill in with the emotion you are hearing i.e.: angry, frustrated, anxious, etc)

**Summarize**

To pull all the information and ideas together. This is a review of what was talked about during the coaching session.

Try these phrases to get you started:

1. Ok, so far we have covered the following....
2. These seem to be the key ideas we discussed .....

End with:  
....did I miss anything?  
....was there anything else?

Strong communication skills are required to motivate your team. Gone are the years of “I’m the boss- so it’s my way or the highway.” As the manager / coach it’s important for us to realize that what motivates one person may be a demotivator to another. Within every job are two sets of goals. The first set is corporate driven. The second set is employee driven. Managers often overlook the second set of goals. An employees performance is often linked to their personal goals. Therefore it is important to learn your employee’s personal goals.

Just as it was important to tailor your coaching style to each employee the same is true of your communication style in motivating your employees.

### **Motivating the Dominance Style**

If you’ll recall the Dominance style likes to control their environment, they enjoy challenges, making decisions, and solving problems. They thrive on power, and prestige. To motivate this employee you need to be clear and to the point. You must provide clear choices that give them the opportunity to make decisions. Accept their need for variety and change and provide new challenges and opportunities. They need to see how helping you get results helps them in achieving their personal success .

### **Motivating the Influence Style**

People with this style try to shape their environment by influencing those around them. They enjoy being involved with other people and getting public recognition. They dislike details and working alone. This style has natural strong communication and interpersonal skills. You can take advantage of these natural skills by having them be a liaison with other departments and working in teams or groups. They will be a great promoter of new ideas and create excitement for company social functions. With this style be prepared to give lots of your time and many compliments. Ask them questions on how things are going on and off the job. You need to tie your corporate objectives to their personal dreams and goals.

### **Motivating the Steadiness Style**

The steadiness style focuses on cooperation with others in carrying out a task. They tend to be loyal and patient and dislike sudden change. They work well in groups and often act as the harmonizer within the group. During times of sudden change that they view as high risk, they can become stubborn, and resistant to the change. This group seldom boasts about themselves and is quick to praise the efforts others. It is important to praise the contributions of the "S" in front of the group.

The Steadiness style employee will be your most loyal employee if you remember to acknowledge their efforts in helping others, and provide opportunities for them to work with others in a cooperative effort. Remember to provide a specific step-by-step plan in changing times.

### **Motivating the Conscientious Style**

People of this style appreciate the opportunity for through planning of a project. They are keen critical thinkers and a stickler for details. They thrive on analysis and procedures. If your department has processes or procedures to write they will be in their glory. They love the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise using lots of details. When they are de-motivated they become cynical and overly critical of the work and others. They react favorably to specific feedback, and scheduled meetings. Your conversations with them may take some time because they will want details and will most likely have several questions. They will also want to verify the quality and reliability of the information you give them. The high “C” likes to be complimented on the quality of their work and their logical approach to the solution of a problem.

If you would like to take a **free** DiSC assessment e-mail me at [Deanne@pocketresource.com](mailto:Deanne@pocketresource.com).

One of the keys to being an effective manager/ coach is the ability to set clear realistic goals for yourself and your team and then to communicate those goals and expectations. When you are **ineffective** in communicating those goals to your employees you can expect poor performance from others! Yes, you read that correctly, poor performance from others often begins with YOU!

Don't assume your employees understand your goals- 90% of good project management is communication. Here are some useful tips:

1. Write down your goals. State your goals using positive language.
2. Be specific in your goal statement. Include answers to: who, what, when, where, how, how much, and how long.
3. Goals need to be realistic – are they achievable? An unrealistic goal will demotivate the team.
4. Set time lines, deadlines, and milestone markers to mark progress and to provide a map.
5. If the goal is large- set smaller sub-goals as achievement markers.

6. Chart what specific activities need to be completed so your team can complete each goal.
7. Prioritize your goals
8. As goal markers are reached don't forget to reward yourself and your team.

Communicate often.

Here is a list of some possible problems and their causes.

### Problem

### Possible Cause

Team is unclear why they should do it

Poor communication

Team doesn't know what is expected

Poor communication

Team thinks they are doing what you want- but they are not.

Poor communication  
Lack of good feedback

Team is faced with obstacles beyond their control

Lack of proper resources

Something else has taken priority

Poor time management skills

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## *Chapter 5:*

# *Coaching for Performance*

All employees need a good coach. As a coach/ manager one of your roles is to motivate your employees to work hard, perform at high levels, and enjoy working too. Once in a while we have the exceptional employee who outshines everyone else, and then we have the problem employees who doesn't pull their share of the load. All of your employees need guidance and coaching from you.

Communication is key to the success of your department, to the organization, and your ability to be a good coach. When coaching employees the focus of that communication process is on them. Your ability to motivate and inspire employees is critical to your success as a manager.

This chapter includes two coaching models/ processes. One model is for the general coaching session the other is for the performance improvement coaching discussion.

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## General Model

Coaching employees is a process of open communication and feedback between you and your employees. This channel can be time consuming, however the reward can be great. While there are very few really exceptional employees, there are many above-average performers. Your ability to inspire your employees can raise the performance bar significantly. The model below is the general coaching model/process.



### **General Coaching Model**

**Step One:** Coach and coachee review the previous session. Was there anything that should be noted, added or clarified from the previous session.

**Step Two:** Discuss the action items from the previous session. What worked, what didn't work. If there are any action items that were not completed are they still relevant to the goal?

**Step Three:** Was there a take away from any of the action steps? What insight was gained?

**Step Four:** Identify any problems in the action steps. This is also the time to identify the resources needed to solve the problems. Do any of the former action items need to be modified, changed or deleted?

**Step Five:** Set an agenda for the current meeting. What are the specific goals for this session? By the end of session what needs to be accomplished?

**Step Six:** Identify new action plans and the steps to be completed before the next meeting.

Using the General Model:

### **The I want a promotion employee:**

Very early on as a manager, I learned that employees would approach me with desires for new position within the company or seeking a promotion. I soon learned these employees didn't want to do the necessary work or obtain the experience in acquiring the skills needed for that new position. They would expect me to "make a call" and arrange for their next promotion or position. They expected me to be responsible for their career.

I learned that coaching them worked very well. Using the general coaching model to coach the employee around his/ her new desired career goals I helped the employee realize they were responsible for their career.

### **Year-end Performance Review**

This model works well for the end of year performance review. As part of that review employees had to identify their goals and career plans. The coaching model provided me with an excellent tool for those and future discussions. You will find the coaching model very helpful.

### **Motivating the Team**

This model works equally well for monthly or bi-monthly feedback sessions. The model succeeds in addressing projects, project status, next steps, and problem solving issues. It also offers employees the opportunity to keep the manager informed if they require additional resources for their projects. By following this model employees will feel supported and motivated.

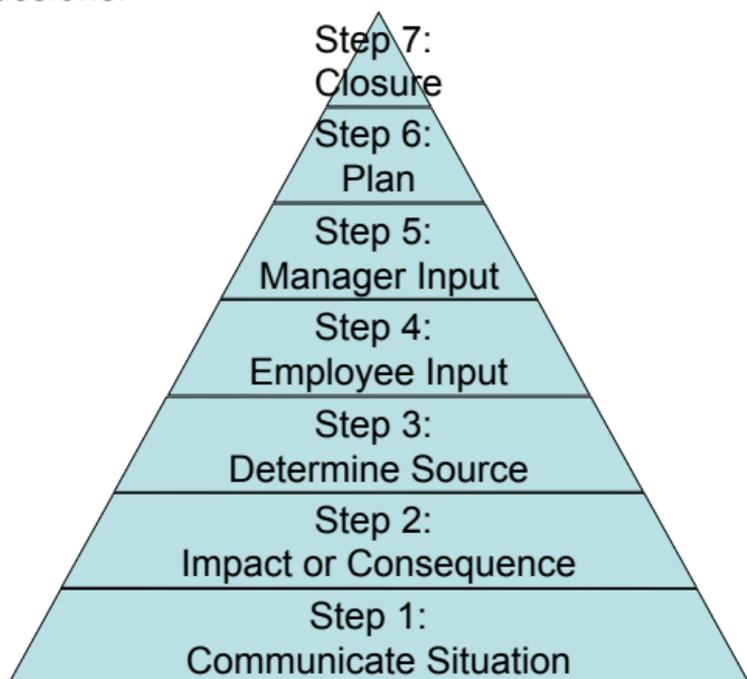
In a football or basketball game does the coach go out and perform on the field and participate in the game? Of course not. The coach prepares the team, gives direction, helps trouble shoot problems, and gives recognition for doing good work or making a good play. The same is true with a work team. The manager needs to guide, help trouble shoot and give recognition-OFTEN. Don't limit the recognition to once a year events- recognition should be frequent- and immediate. Treat the team like professionals. Acknowledgement needs to be given regularly for EVERY contribution that helps the organization, department, or team.

Don't forget to document the coaching session.

## Performance Improvement Coaching Model

Managers are often frustrated with employees whose job performance is unsatisfactory. The performance improvement conversation is seldom pleasant. Often managers are uncomfortable on how to approach corrective action in the coaching process.

This problem solving model is intended for those difficult performance improvement discussions.



**Step One:** Communicate clearly the situation. It is critical that the manager focus on the performance issue (s) , and **not** the employee. The manager must be very careful in his/her choice of words. For example: Instead of saying, “you keep customers on hold too long.” Say, “I am very concerned. The call center report shows that on ten occasions this past week your hold time exceeded the allowed phone hold time.” Show the employee the report to back up claims. Please note the conversation did not start with the “YOU.....” it started with the performance issue or action first.

**Step Two:** Identifying the impact or consequence. Often employees don't realize the impact of their poor performance issue on the company or department. Give specific reasons **WHY**.....is a performance issue.

**Step Three:** What is the source of issue? Discuss the reason for the performance issue. Is the poor performance a lack of training, unclear policies, poor communication, management or an organizational issue? Word of caution: Often employees will state that the problem is a “training issue” when that is not the case. This is a very important step to think about **PRIOR** to having the conversation with the employee.

**Step Four:** Suggestion from employee. I am always amazed at how many times employees come up with great suggestions for improving their poor performance issues. If continued improvement is the goal, the employee must “buy in” on how to fix their performance problem. If the employee comes up with the solution the buy in is easier. Try to have the employee come up with several ideas, and then have them select the best one for them to implement.

**Step Five:** Manager suggestions. In this step the manager suggests some ideas on how the employee might improve this performance issue. There have been times when the employee will brainstorm some additional ideas or modify ideas from the previous step.

**Step Six:** Develop Action Plan. It is time for the employee to select which idea they will use to improve the performance issue. Include details in the action plan (who will do what by when.) Write the action plan down. Also set a follow up date and time. Avoid a misunderstanding- before moving on to the next step have the employee tell you (verbalize specifics) what they are going to do. Write it down! Then read back what the employee told you. Agree on what was written before the employee leaves the office.

**Step Seven:** Closure. It is very important that the employee feels they can succeed in improving their performance. Express confidence in a positive tone to the employee. The employee needs to feel that you value him/her and they will be successful. Avoid threatening language. A threat communicates that you have little confidence in the employee's willingness to change. If the employee believes the effort is a waste of time the performance issue will not improve.

**Step Eight?** Take Notice. This really isn't a step however, employees want recognition of their improved performance. Use praise to grease the wheel. Don't take good performance for granted. Say thanks- I appreciate....A simple I've noticed that you are trying or improving is a wonderful reward.

**Follow up Meeting:** in the follow up meeting acknowledge employee successes. don't forget to tell the employee what they did correctly.

A great manager is judged by how he/she leads and motivates others and the ability to nurture employees into a high performing team.

## Specific Tips and Techniques:

Before having the performance conversation you need to determine the following:

1. Is the performance problem due to lack of training or skills?
2. Is the performance problem caused by organizational issues such as rewards or punishments? For example: A call center allowed time off the phones for Call Center Reps (CSR's) to watch training videos if their hold time was too long. The CSR's saw this as a reward- because they got a break and were allowed off the phones. Another example: An employee was asked to give a controversial report to the company Vice President (VP) in charge of operations. The employee procrastinated in writing the report because she knew there would be negative consequences. An effective manager/ coach would have a conversation with the employee on the issue and help brainstorm strategies in dealing with the VP and the controversial information.

3. Is the problem significant? Is the problem worth management's time and effort?
4. Is the problem work related? If it is not work related or affects an employees' performance at work – don't get involved.
5. Does the employee realize his/ her performance is unsatisfactory?
6. **RESPECT.** Coaching is only an effective tool when employees feel your respect. Communicate. When a manager does not communicate with employees this disregard of needed communication the interpretation is disrespect.
7. **Praise:** Treat each employee as a valued player on your team. Employees need to know how their efforts contribute to the big picture.
8. Don't over-control. Over-controlling managers suffocate employees, motivation, and performance.
9. Don't play favorites. Playing favorites is a great way to destroy the rest of your team.
10. Emotional Check. Anticipate an employee's reaction – remain neutral and clam. Don't become defensive.
11. Keep criticism in check. Use the sandwich technique –balance criticism in-between two positive feedback comments.
12. **LISTEN** to your employees.

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## *Chapter 6:*

### *Powerful Questions*

The most important application in the coaches tool box is the ability to ask good questions. One good question is worth a whole paragraph of sentences. In this chapter is a list of some of the powerful questions coaches can use with their coachee's. This is not a definitive list. However the purpose is to help each coach develop their own list of coaching questions.

This form of communication is often referred to as the Socratic Approach. Use questions to help manage the issues and guide employees in coming up with solutions on their own.

Here are some examples of powerful questions:

- What resources do you need?
- What are the necessary tasks for this project?
- At what point in the project plan do each of the tasks need to be completed?

- What are the advantages / disadvantages to that solution?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What can I do to help you correct this problem?
- What could you do differently next time to avoid getting so ..... (angry, frustrated, etc. ) ?
- What were you trying to do?
- What made you select that course of action?
- What were you hoping to accomplish?
- What would you do differently next time?
- If you were coaching someone, what would you suggest he do?
- What accomplishments so far are pleases you the most?
- What is hindering you from having success on that project at this time?

- Are there any obstacles that stand in the way of completing the project on time?
- What could you do more of, better, or differently to improve success on that project?
- Of all the things you do on a regular basis what 2 or 3 things do you think contribute the most to the team?
- What key things need to happen to achieve your goal on this project?
- What results do you want on this project?
- What will be the benefits to you if you can meet the performance objective?
- What will this project look like when it is complete?

### **Some Questions Around Goals**

- What is the ideal outcome?
- What do you want to achieve?
- What would you need to do to solve the problem?
- What else will achieving\_\_\_\_\_do for you?
- How are you going to accomplish this goal?

### **Some Questions Concerning Barriers**

- What are your options?
- What is wrong with the way you have been approaching this problem?
- What could prevent you from achieving this goal?
- What obstacles do you envision?

### **Questions Around Gaining Commitment**

- How committed are you to achieving this goal?
- How committed are you to solving this problem?
- What are your next steps?
- Why don't you summarize for me what you have agreed to do?
- How should we "follow up" in going forward?
- When do you want to get together again?

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## *Final Words*

Coaching others is an unnatural process for many people. We are used to telling mode rather than an asking approach. Also as a manager one of the most difficult aspects of the job is the balance between using a directive or a non-directive approach with our employees.

Overall you will be more effective as a manager/ coach if you can utilize positive communication with your employees. Also you need to be able to determine when its appropriate to be non-directive and when you have to be more directive. Be open with your employees. Give them the big picture. Help your employees understand when forces beyond your control force you to put demands on their performance. You will find that when your employees understand the “why” or reason behind a change or challenge they will rise up and help you conquer that challenge.

Remember the two key words in being an effective manager/ coach:

**Listen & Communicate**

# About the Author

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Deanne DeMarco is a highly sought after top-rated coach, trainer and speaker. She has won numerous national and international public speaking and professional awards. Deanne has coached award-winning speakers, and notable television, film, and stage personalities.

As an organizational manager, coach and trainer, Deanne has worked with managers and quality teams on communication issues, presentation skills, coaching skills and coach training. She has designed interventions for performance improvement, facilitated decision-making teams, and mediated conflict issues. Deanne's Coaching Clinic was recognized by **Training Magazine** as an outstanding training initiative.

Her multicultural training and research extends across 28 countries and 52 cultures. She was a conflict mediator during the first Gulf War Crisis.

Deanne is the author of several workbooks, and Train-the-Trainer facilitator guides on the topics of presentation skills, coaching, communication, and performance improvement. She has written two college level workbooks on Presentation Skills, and Small Groups Dynamics.



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