



Topics:

- What is successful coaching?.
- Heads up. Pre-training checklist.
- Too busy to train.
- Checklist for training/coaching.
- Delegation, not abdication.
- I think, therefore I am.
- What you contemplate, you create.
- Building self-esteem.
- Time waits for no one.



What is successful coaching?

Happy is he who has been able to learn the causes of things.

Virgil, 70-19 B.C., Roman Poet, *Georgics*

A swimming coach when training his or her budding Olympians tells them what to do, shows them how to do it, works on their technique and their attitude and gets them to practice their skills. They set performance goals and then they encourage, reinforce, cajole, induce and support their swimmers as they attempt to improve their performance.

They monitor progress, evaluate performance, provide feedback, follow-up on things requiring more practice and follow through to ensure that they are done.

Coaches work on improving technical competence and mental attitude. They set the context for the programme, they give the swimmers information and knowledge, they develop their perspectives about themselves, the strategy and their performance. And they help them interpret all this information and knowledge so that it enhances their performance.

This is what coaching and training are all about. And guess what - it works. We produce champion swimmers. No one disputes that these training methods produce results. This coaching methodology is accepted practice in all sports all over the world.

And while the conditions and motivations are different, a manager can apply all the above in coaching in the workplace. Yeah, yeah. So you know all this, but do you do it? It costs precious time to train and coach that you don't have because you are too busy dealing with the consequences of ineffectual training or coaching in the first place.

It is no surprise that the industry leaders, the organisations really doing best practice, the ones where people want to join and stay have made the hard decision to suffer short term pain for long term gain. They have bitten the bullet and have supported managers who spend more of their time in a coaching role.

Organisations spend billions of dollars each year developing their staff to meet today's demands and the challenge offered by the future. Coaching can represent a cost effective means of ensuring that the team is properly equipped to achieve the goals of the organisation. It also represents an investment by the organisation in the individual to ensure a lack of competence does not contribute to frustration in the job. And it is way better to err on the side of over coaching rather than under coaching.

Advantages of Coaching Your Team

1. You gain a better awareness of your people. By working closely with them in a coaching environment, you can better understand their needs and wants, their perspectives, their context.
2. Coaching is a public relations exercise. It demonstrates a cultural value through action. Through coaching, people develop confidence and security which produces cooperation, trust and respect.



3. Your own career is progressed. As people respond to the coaching it not only improves output but makes people aware of your capacity to lead and “make things happen”. All good leaders surround themselves with highly competent and well developed people.
4. Effective coaching produces a time saving and therefore allows you to devote your own time to other things as the competency of your team grows. Sure, it costs time in the short term but it will pay off in the longer term. All desired outcomes cost time and effort.
5. Coaching promotes health and well-being among the work group by not only providing a discussion forum but by also developing closer team bonds. People can see that there are other dimensions to their colleagues that they may have missed before.



Heads up. Pre-training checklist.

A man has no ears for that which experience has given him no access.

George Wilhelm Nietzsche, 1844-1900, German philosopher, *Ecce Homo*

If you make an honest mistake, the company will be very forgiving. Treat it as a training expense and learn from it.

Konosuke Matsushita, Founder, Matsushita Electric Co., *Cherry Blossoms and Robotics* (Young President's Organisation, 1983)

Check your job description. Is there a statement describing your role as a coach/trainer to develop the competence of your people? No. Well put one in. As number one priority. Gasp. OK. Well write it in invisible ink. Just as long as it is at the forefront of your mind. Or ask yourself this question. How much of your time each week do you spend on coaching, training and we'll include mentoring? (They all have the same ultimate objective – development and improved performance). One hour? Two hours? Four hours? For many of you the honest answer will be zip.

Hang on. I lead a high performance team. Totally competent. Totally able. Totally motivated. We have no problems. Great. Congratulations. Give me a call. We can use you and your team as role models in our next book. For the rest of you, read on.

Pre-Training Check-list

1. **Learn what your people already know:** It is dangerous to make assumptions about what people do or don't know. By finding out what they already know, you will make the training more interesting and avoid misunderstandings. Ask them to tell you or show you what they know about the process or task. Then focus your training on the gaps in their performance.

2. **Illustrate or Demonstrate:** The talking head approach to training went out with the ark, or should have. Training to be effective is interactive and participative. By illustrating, demonstrating and involving through skills practice and immediate feedback, you bring training alive. Use show and tell – with most emphasis on show.

3. **Encourage and Ask Questions:** Two way communications ensures that your message is received and understood. By actively encouraging them to ask questions you gain that all important feedback necessary to assess their level of understanding. Prepare your own questions in advance. Give them 2 to 3 minutes toward the end of the training session to reflect on questions to ask you. Asking, "any questions?" is next to useless.

4. **Provide the Big Picture:** By allowing people to see things in context, you ensure they have the key links necessary to stitch separate pieces of information into a meaningful pattern. The time you invest in providing this "Big Picture" will be repaid when they understand what the outcome needs to be. Morale is also positively affected in that they take a greater interest and therefore increase their job satisfaction.

5. **Follow-up to All Training is Vital:** All too often we allow people to see training as an event and not as a journey. Coaching will form a key strategy in assessing individual competence, but it should not be the only follow-up. There is benefit in reviewing the training once people have had an opportunity of applying the skills back on the job, so that the individual as well as you obtain feedback as to their progress. Clarify what is expected of people and set up a series of short meetings to review application and progress.



Too busy to train?

The expense isn't what it costs to train employees. It's what it costs not to train them.

Philip Wilber, President, Drug Emporium, Inc. *Inc. Magazine*, December 1987

I'm too busy to spend time developing people. Anyway, it's best to learn by experience. Is it? Yes, provided what people learn is what we want them to learn. Unfortunately, there are a lot of people who learn nothing through experience. That's where a good coach comes in. Yes, it will cost you time, but as you are sick of me saying – no pain, no gain. It's short term pain, for long term gain.

Guidelines for Successful On-the-job Training

- Be completely and thoroughly prepared. Believe that there is a direct correlation between the amount of time that you put into preparation and the quality of your training. As a bare minimum, allocate a ratio of 1:1 preparation time to training time.
- Be enthusiastic - it's catching. Check your own level of enthusiasm for the task/process.
- Be as relaxed as possible. This will help them to relax as well. Be aware of any inner tension you may be experiencing which will show through your tone or facial expression.
- Express confidence in them.
- Avoid telling and showing too quickly. Check their level of comprehension after each key step. Get them to show/tell you what they have learnt. Move at their pace.
- Avoid stretching them too far beyond their current level of competence.
- Avoid covering too much at once. Too much input interferes with learning.
- Remember that any feelings of incompetence which you help to generate will lead to lowered self-esteem. This will interfere with learning and performance on the job. Give them permission to make mistakes.
- Remember that all learners are different. What you say and what they interpret may be very different.
- Encouragement and praise reinforce learning, so look for opportunities to use them.
- Encourage questions and answer them enthusiastically. Accept that any questions (no matter how dumb to you) are good questions.
- Use active listening techniques.
- Ensure that your body language is sending the message that you want them to "hear". Think - how am I looking and sounding to them?
- Don't be afraid to admit ignorance, but make sure that you get an answer as soon as possible.
- Don't be side-tracked from your main purpose. Digressions may be interesting for you, but they will be confusing for them.
- Work at making your training as pleasant as possible for all concerned.

Develop People



Follow up actions

No matter how well you present a training session, your efforts have been wasted if they do not result in development through improved job performance and results.

You have to be a transfer agent as well as a trainer.

The role of a transfer agent is to help individuals apply what they have learned in the “real world”.

Every step in the training process should be developed with an eye to what they have to do on the job.

Following training, implement specific activities aimed at helping them to put it together. Discuss appropriate follow up activities with them. Agree what you will both do and when.

These include:

- giving opportunities for immediate use of the skills
- extension activities
- provision of job aids to support performance
- showing interest in the person’s on-the-job performance
- providing positive reinforcement
- acknowledging right efforts as much as right results

Some of these activities may involve a temporary re-arrangement of routine for you and other members of your team.

Some of these activities may require the active support of other members of your team. Negotiate with others and motivate them to assist.

Apply some creative thinking when developing the appropriate follow up activities to enhance the transfer of learning.



Checklist for training/coaching

Do nothing you don't understand.

Pythagoras, c. 500 B.C., Greek philosopher and mathematician.

Use this checklist before, during and after conducting a training/coaching session to help you prepare, execute and evaluate.

1. Motivate and Orientate the Person

- Explain the context and purpose of the job/task/process.
- Explain what you will be doing in this training session and how it relates to the job - define the learning objectives - present them visually - allow the person time to absorb them.
- Encourage them to ask questions throughout.

2. Present Necessary Information Clearly, Orderly and Completely

- Break the task/ process down into key steps and key activities for each step. Highlight critical activities or safety aspects.
- Always use show and tell with more emphasis on show.
- Provide information in manageable chunks - in a logical, connected sequence
- Use visual/physical aids.
- Use practical situations to illustrate information.
- Avoid or explain jargon which may be unfamiliar.
- Look for signs of comprehension/lack of comprehension or that they are distracted or switched off.
- Check for understanding - ask them to demonstrate or summarise the key points once or twice during the session

3. Demonstrate where Necessary

- Go slowly - at their pace.
- Demonstrate one skill at a time.
- Make sure he/she can see.
- Explain what you are doing as you do it.
- Repeat the demonstration if necessary.

4. Provide the Opportunity for Step By Step Practice

- Move at the trainee's pace.
- Give them time to work things out for themselves.
- Let mistakes happen only if the consequences are minimal.
- When you see a significant mistake about to happen, ask the trainee to think again.



5. Give Feedback

- Specify what has been done well and what needs to be improved.
- Focus on the performance, not the person. Always give the good news first - here's what you did well ... here's what you can improve on....
- Be encouraging and supportive - express confidence.
- Involve them in looking for solutions.

6. Set Follow Up Activities

- Ensure that the tasks are relevant and worthwhile.
- Avoid giving too much help as this may encourage dependence. It is better to help them to find solutions than to give solutions.

7. Show Interest In On-The-Job Performance

- Check initially to ensure that the skills are being used correctly. Incorrect use of skills may become a habit which is hard to break.
- Your interest demonstrates how important you believe the job and the trainee to be. Explain that you are there to support not condemn.

8. Provide Encouragement and Support Throughout

- Show your interest and willingness to help.
- Provide as much as the individual needs.
- Always express confidence.

9. Evaluate the Effectiveness of Your Training

- Compare what is with what should be.
- Determine how you will bridge any gaps.
- The training task is not complete until the learning objectives have been achieved - use them as a final check.
- Identify the ways you could improve your training performance.



Delegation not abdication

Experience is the child of Thought, and Thought is the child of Action.

Benjamin Disraeli, 1804-1881, English Prime Minister and novelist, *Vivian Grey*

I never had a boss that tried to sit on me, and I think that's essential. If you expect people to develop, you have to give them the responsibility, you have to tell them what their objectives are and you have to let them do it.

David M Rodman Chairman, U.S. Steel, Sky, June 1, 1984.

Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and to let him know that you trust him.

Booker T. Washington

Are you constantly running out of time - failing to meet your deadlines? Maybe you are ineffective at managing yourself or maybe you need to develop your people to take more responsibility and accountability.

Delegation is a process to develop the competence of your people. Delegation does not mean dumping routine, boring and unpleasant tasks on your people. It is an action designed to give people an opportunity to develop and acquire new skills and to push authority and decision making down to lower levels in the organisation.

Beware - not all staff want more responsibility and authority. However, when handled properly, most people respond well to added responsibility. You need to assess the skill and will of your staff prior to delegating. Remember that ultimate accountability always rests with you.

The prerequisites for effective delegation are:

- A willingness to trust staff and to accept the risks involved.
- A willingness to relinquish some power and control.
- A degree of commitment, motivation and capability on the part of staff.
- A belief that part of a manager's job is to develop the competence and commitment of staff.

Why delegate?

- Does the output (quality and quantity) of your staff lessen in your absence? Do your staff constantly refer problems to you? Do you have enough time to concentrate on your highest priorities? Are decisions made at the lowest level at which they can effectively be made? Are you developing the full potential of your staff?
- Do you spend too much time putting out fires, dealing with crises demanding your personal attention, and coping with the irritating details of day-to-day problems which keep you from working on the major issues?

Guidelines for delegation:

- Assess the skill and will level of the individual concerned before you decide to delegate.
- Explain why you have chosen this person for this task or project.



- Describe the task or project.
- Describe the required outcomes and the consequences on all stakeholders, not how to do the task.
- Clarify required quality and safety standards.
- Discuss why the task or project is important.
- Specify the person's level of authority.
- Discuss the nature of the support and resources you will provide.
- Discuss a time frame.
- Clarify how progress is to be monitored and the end result checked.
- Ask them to summarise the points of your discussion.
- Indicate trust by letting them get on with the job - without interference from you.





I think, therefore I am

Building self-confidence in others is a huge part of leadership.

Jack Welch, CEO, General Electric

Some of your people may suffer from low self-esteem or life/work events may take a toll on their level of self-esteem. Attempts to assist their development may miss the mark because they are consumed by their own low evaluation of their worth. It might help their and, possibly, your development by having a closer look at the concept of self-esteem and how it affects behaviour.

Our behaviour is determined by our self-concept – by a blueprint or mental picture that we maintain of our strengths, our weaknesses, our awareness of the assets and liabilities of our personality. Our self-concept comes into play when we predict whether our performance will succeed or fail. It influences our hopes, aspirations, moods and actions.

Self-esteem is defined as: “The evaluation that an individual makes and customarily maintains in regard to him or herself. It is a personal judgement of one’s worthiness as a person, indicating the extent to which he or she believes him or herself to be capable, significant and successful”. Generally the path to self-confidence is built on self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-esteem.

People who lack self-confidence tend to respond either non-assertively or aggressively in many situations.

We all acquire our self-concept in much the same way – from what other people tell us about ourselves and from our observations of our behaviour and its consequences. As we grow up, our parents, teachers and other adults gradually impart by instruction and example the values, norms and rules of conduct of their culture. The norms tell us what behaviours are considered appropriate.

Our fears and phobias and life-coping mechanisms are mainly learned from these sources with parents, if they have been in attendance, usually the prime source of our development. Of course, some of us rebel from the model of our parents, but the seeds of similar behavioural traits are sown.

Negative Self-Concept

Our self-concept is wrapped up in a set of descriptions and images – of good success scenes or bad failure scenes that we have experienced. It is also carried in a set of personality trait labels we use to tell ourselves and others what we are really like. Our self-evaluations are important because they influence most areas of our behaviour, defining the limits of what we will attempt. We will avoid an activity if our self-concept predicts we will perform so badly as to humiliate yourself.

If you could listen in to their self-talk, you would hear non-assertive or aggressive people saying all kinds of negative affirmations to themselves. They selectively remember some criticism of themselves, exaggerate it to monstrous proportions and repeat it over and over like a chant.

The fact is that people are often their own worst downers. We say to ourselves, “I am irrational, emotional, stupid, dull, ugly, shy, fat, cold, submissive, a failure and over the hill, ineffectual, insignificant, overbearing, bitchy, childish, a bully, a miserable mother or father, a lousy speaker ...”.



We all have our own lists. People can be terribly brutal on themselves. Out of the whole animal kingdom, only humans are endowed with this capacity to make themselves miserable. How many times have you thought that your dog or cat is in a bad mood? (If you have, it is more than likely a case of you projecting your mood on to your dog). How does the suicide rate amongst animals compare with that of human beings?

The toll of a negative self-concept is that it limits what we are willing to try, forestalling opportunities for growth, development and enjoyment. Doomsday prophecies about our social failures tend to be self-fulfilling. Negative self-talk and images continually inhibit people.

As a manager you can help a person with low self-esteem develop by reinforcing how they act effectively and by amplifying what is good about them to counter the negative messages they will be continually giving themselves.





What you contemplate, you create

Life is easier to take than you'd think; all that is necessary is to accept the impossible, do without the indispensable and bear the intolerable.

Kathleen Norris, 1880-1966, American writer.

A major blockage in developing your people to achieve their potential may be their own mindsets.

For many of us, the cause of moments of insecurity, anxiety, vulnerability, temporary depression, avoidance of risk, and inability to change, stress and generally just feeling down are the demons in our own mind. No other living organism worries itself to illness and death as we humans do. We have a great capacity to cause ourselves needless stress.

How many times have you had the experience of thinking to yourself after the event, "I did it again. I got all worked up over nothing." If not yourself, you will have heard someone say, "90 per cent of what we worry about never happens."

These 'demons' can be our thoughts that we allow our mind to entertain about ourselves and whatever situations that we deal with day in and day out.

If one of your people appears to worry needlessly over trifles, ask them to try this exercise to develop their ability to deal with the myriad of life problems that we all have to deal with from time to time. (If you think that the problem is caused by some serious malfunction, always seek professional advice).

Ask them to write down a brief description of the issue or problem that's bugging them.

Now write a random list of all the many thoughts that pop into their mind from time to time about that issue or problem. Describe all the different ways that they have thought about the issue or are thinking about the issue. This step is not as easy as it sounds. If they find this difficult, just brainstorm things related to the issue whether they think them or not. It works better if they write bullet points, not long sentences.

Now ask them to review their list and allocate the letters (A) for thoughts about the issue which are positive, useful, functional or freeing and (B) for thoughts that are negative, useless, dysfunctional or limiting.

Get them to ask these questions of the (B) items. It may also pay to ask them of the (A) items.



Challenging useless or self-limiting thoughts

- Where has that way of thinking come from?
- Why do I have to hold that view?
- How useful is that thought/mindset?
- How relevant or valid is that belief?
- How much inner stress do these thoughts cause?
- Is this belief based on fact or opinion or assumption?
- What is the evidence to support the belief?
- Is this belief based on a one-off event?
- What meanings am I attaching to events? What other meanings could apply?
- What's to stop me from changing my belief or mindset?
- What other beliefs could also be true?
- What stops me from letting go?
- Do I actually prefer to have negative thoughts?
- Does this belief really help me achieve something positive?
- Why do I give this thought so much credence?
- What is a more useful or freeing way to think about the issue?
- What are other points of view which could also apply?
- Why do I do this to myself? What are the pay-offs for thinking this way?
- How do others think about this issue?
- Am I giving energy to something that has not even happened yet or may not even happen? How is this worry actually helping me? Am I doing anything about it?
- What is the learning for me to gain from how I am thinking about this situation?
- Are the other people involved stressing out about this as much as I am? Why not?
- Who owns these thoughts – me or someone else?

Discuss

Often you will find that just by doing this exercise, you will feel better about yourself and the demons will be exorcised – for now. Don't get down when they come back again. Just keep fighting them with the same type of challenges as you retrain your mind to focus on useful ways of looking at things. It does take vigilance and practice.

If you are still in a serious downer, see a professional who is trained to help you work through your demons. Don't feel that you are a failure by doing this. Everybody has their own demons.

Develop People



It is very difficult for you to make changes to your own system of thinking when you are operating with that very same system of thinking. You need somebody outside your system to help you see where your thinking is not serving you well and to help you make the adjustments to your thinking.



Time waits for no one

Thank God for the last minute. Otherwise nothing would ever get done.

Anonymous

Developing your people's skills in using their time effectively is a good use of your time. Use this article to guide a discussion with those people who need to use their time better.

Forget 'time management'. It's a misnomer. You can't manage time. You can only use it or abuse it. There are always 24 hours, 7 days. It's a constant. We are talking about how well you manage yourself and how well you manage the competing demands on your time which are mostly created by others. Books on time management tend to complicate the issue. Let's keep it simple.

There are two key tools to use when it comes to optimising how you use your time (A clock or sun dial is taken for granted):

- A diary – electronic or otherwise.
- A journal – electronic or otherwise.

And there are two key concepts to apply:

- Priorities.
- Focus.

Diaries - I prefer a week to an opening because in a glance I can see how the week is panning out. Use your diary to record meetings, appointments, training activities, business trips, planning times and preparation times. Use highlights to signal critical activities.

Journal - Obtain a journal with a distinctive colour cover so that it stands out from other materials around your workstation or use your tablet. Use this to record your daily 'to do' list. Denote the activities on your list A, B or C. A items are your highest priority. B your next highest after A items and C your next highest after B items.

Take the journal/tablet with you everywhere. Write the date at the top of the page or at the start of a new section if you have, say, half a page left. When your notes are finished for that day, draw a line across the page to denote the end of that day.

Record the key points of conversations or discussions at meetings or ideas worth recording, etc. Only record information that will be useful later on. Use a bullet point format. Also record things that you will do as a result of this meeting or conversation. Highlight these activities or write your initials alongside the items and circle your initials so that these items stand out. Record things that others agree to do as well.

Apart from the date and time, record who is present at the meeting and the subject of the meeting.

As you finish activities on your 'to do' list and as you do the other things you have agreed to do as a result of meetings or conversations or ideas, cross them out or put a bold tick alongside them. Regularly review the pages of your journal/tablet and carry forward any yet to be completed tasks which are still relevant. When all the items on a page have been actioned, draw a line diagonally through the page to indicate that this page is finished.

Develop People



Use your journal/tablet where you would have used pads of paper or loose paper except for longer writing. Use your journal/tablet to record thoughts and musings. Highlight people's names, phone, and e-mail numbers.

Refer to your journal/tablet daily and review it daily.

Priorities - Regularly set, check and agree your monthly priorities with your manager. Then clarify your weekly and daily priorities in this context. Be very clear what your priorities are on a daily basis so you are better placed to negotiate changing priorities with others who will place demands on your time. Frequently ask yourself the question, "what is the best use of my time right now?" Evaluate everything that happens during the day in the context of your priorities for that day.

Focus - Stay focussed on your priorities for the day. Practise self-discipline. Watch for impulsive behaviour and challenge yourself, "do I really have to do that right now or could I make a note in my journal/tablet and do it at a better time?"

