

Coaching Skills for Leaders

The old command and control style of leadership isn't working like it used to; collaboration and relationships are the new currency. Coaching has become one of the new 'buzz words' of the new millennium and is quickly taking shape as one of the new leadership and management 'technologies.'

Many organizations, researchers and leaders have identified coaching as a critical leadership and management competency. In addition, employees are asking more and more for coaching. So, how do you, as a manager and leader, stay on the forefront of these new technologies. How does an 'old dog' learn some new tricks? Why and how do you need to include coaching as a part of 'tool box?'

First let's make sure we're all on the same page as to what coaching is. Coaching is a professional discipline and skill set, which incorporates literally hundreds of specialized skills, principles, concepts, practices and nuggets of wisdom. The overall purpose of coaching, in the workplace, is to enhance performance, action, creativity, momentum and transformation. Additionally, coaching is:

- The process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and development opportunities they need to be effective in their commitment to themselves, the company, and their work.

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- An employee/client-driven alliance that is focused on what that individual needs to become their "best self" and to contribute their "best fit" and talents.
- A process that promotes shifts in thinking and behavior.

Why Use Coaching in the Workplace?

Successful organizations like First Horizon, FedEx, Hnedak Bobo and others have recognized that managers must be able to coach their employees and each other, and have included coaching in their management/leadership development. Coaching has been identified by these organizations as a critical leadership and management competency.

Coaching skills build and enhance team and work group performance, motivate sales production, improve management and leadership, and promote diversity awareness and the leveraging of talent.

Climate of Change: Coaching promotes creativity, breakthrough performance and resilience, giving individuals an effective way to flow and operate within an environment of continuous change. By enabling behavioral shifts, coaching allows projects and people to move forward immediately and with less effort. Change in business today is often not linear, and requires quick shifts into entirely new models. True coaching supports people in quick shifts needed to meet changing business demands.

Employee Retention: Coaching supports employee's professional development and satisfaction, which keeps valued employees in the company. Today's culture is one where employees



are in charge of their own career. By helping them develop and grow, you will encourage them to use their newfound talents to give back to your company. Successful coaching adds value to employees, who then add value to their organizations by giving their best. Employees want to be happy, productive and innovative, and coaching creates the environment where this can happen. Coaching also supports diversity by recognizing every employee's uniqueness. Research and experience shows that employees perform better when positively coached, rather than being constantly evaluated. Researchers have also seen that people with more positive attitudes are more likely to succeed in their jobs and careers. Coaching fosters more positive employee attitude as a key component of development, and enhances positive attitude through positive support. Employees who are coached to perform rather than managed to perform are more committed to and invested in the outcomes of their work and achievement of organizational goals.

Maximize Training: Successful organizations have also discovered that on-going training of the workforce is necessary to remain competitive. However, without coaching, training loses its effectiveness rapidly, and often fails to achieve the lasting behavioral changes needed. Coaching provides not only a context for feedback, but also a process to support changed behavior. While training is an "event", coaching is a process, which is a valuable next step to training to insure that the new knowledge actually gets put into place.

How Do Managers Coach in the Workplace?

Firstly, successful managers and leaders today are developing coaching skills in order to support and enhance employee performance and development. Secondly, managers with coaching skills also "peer coach" each other, as a key way to provide each other with support and guidance in challenging environments. Finally, managers in a 360° feedback situation may "coach up" by coaching their superiors to enhance their own ability to lead and manage.

How do Managers and Leaders Develop Effective Coaching Skills and Competencies?

Managers and leaders develop their competency in coaching by:

1. increasing their awareness of coaching and its benefits, and "buying in" to the concept and process;
2. educating themselves on coaching concepts and tools;
3. identifying their own coaching style and skill level, and learning to identify others' preferences for being coached;
4. practicing coaching using the best coaching tools and their own strengths; and continuously improving and installing their coaching competency through feedback and on-going coaching.

The best workplace coaches are those who understand and develop their own coaching style, rather than following a cookie cutter approach, who know how to "flex" their style to coach others, and who can use the coaching process and concepts effectively through understanding and skill development.

The argument for developing coaching skills is becoming clearer and clearer in today's organizations. Those that become good coaches will likely progress up the corporate ladder more quickly than those that don't. Are you willing to sit by and continue model the same leadership practices of the past or are you ready to take a step towards improving your performance and those that work with you?

If 2015 is your time, check out Harmony's program, The Coaching Clinic®. In the Coaching Clinic®, you will develop 4 primary coaching skills, and learn how to apply them to our proven 5-step coaching process. Our October 6 & 7 session at the Fogelman Conference Center in Memphis, TN is open to the public. Discounts are available for registrations prior to 9/11/15 and class size is limited so visit our website at www.harmonycc.net/coachingclinic.asp today.

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“Leaders become great not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others.”
 ~ John Maxwell



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Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are being offered to the public by Harmony Coaching & Consulting. Click on the associated link for more information on the program or to register.

Course Title	Date(s)	Time	For More Information/Registration
SHRM Learning System® is the preparation course for the HR Certification Exam <i>(Every other Saturday)</i>	September 26 – December 5, 2015	8:30AM – 4:30PM	http://www.cbu.edu/shrm
The Coaching Clinic® is a two-day workshop for executives, managers and leaders to experience and learn coaching skills and competencies.	October 6 & 7	8:30AM – 5:00PM	www.harmonycc.net/coaching-clinic.php

