

LEADERSHIP UPDATE:

HOW TO COACH EMPLOYEES FROM AVERAGE PERFORMANCE TO ALL-STAR STATUS

Do you manage or supervise others? Are you expected to be a problem-solver in your organization? Do you depend on the efforts of others to get tasks completed? Are you a parent?

If so, coaching skills could help you get more out of the people around you, by helping them focus on expectations and their individual contributions to the entire team. If a parent, I'm sure you'd like a few extra tips to get Junior to clean up his room!

When we think of coaching, a football field or basketball court may come to mind. But, do you have to be a sports junkie to be a great coach? Of course not!

In business, a great coach is simply one who inspires others to reach higher. To give encouragement and direction daily, weekly or however often it is needed. While there are several different definitions of coaching, this is my favorite one. In addition, some texts may indicate you should coach others regardless of their performance level. However, I tend to believe coaching is best used to help average performers get to above-average. Above average "go-getters" and below average performers require other approaches.

There are 3 steps to consider when beginning the process of coaching:

1. Get on the same page.

It is difficult to encourage others to achieve at top levels if we do not first clarify our expectations. Help employees understand the most important of the company's policies and procedures. Do they truly comprehend the extent of their duties? Do they know how to prioritize their work? Do you let them know regularly what projects are urgent and important, or expect them to read your mind? What rules are flexible, and which ones are firm? If you are a great coach, you will be flexible where you can be, and firm when you need to be.

2. Acknowledge their contribution or commitment.

Giving genuine praise can win others over to your viewpoint when it is your job to get things done through others. Even if you know the employee could give an extra effort at times, think about times he or she has gone above and beyond the call of duty, or at least got involved in a team project. Let them know you noticed and appreciate the added interest or excitement on their part.

3. Help them discover what inspires them.

Many people never sit down and spend quiet time thinking about their values, priorities and goals. If they never take that step, they may never realize their purpose or passion. By spending time with them to help them through this process, you are illustrating you care about their growth and development. If they are comfortable talking about goals personally, as well as professionally, let them. Discussions about motivation often cover both aspects of our lives, so dive in!