



MANAGER AS COACH

Managers are responsible for making sure that individuals within their teams have the tools and skills required to reach their full potential. The improvement and development of the skills of team members benefits the team as a whole. Managers may be called on to tutor individuals who are facing personal and professional challenges. In essence, the manager is called on to support and coach team members to facilitate their growth and development.

Business leader and renowned author John Maxwell defines a coach as: "Someone who can come alongside of you and can correct you without criticising you in a way that is negative in your life. Come alongside and share together, teach, listen and lead."

Manager as coach

Executive and business coach Margaret Drake says coaching is a collaborative relationship designed to facilitate higher level performance in an individual and thus the team. "Coaching is goal-oriented and the focus is to draw upon the resources, behaviours, skills and potential of the individual and team to help them create solutions for themselves," explains Drake.

"Coaching is not directive, it is generative rather than remedial which separates it from therapy and counselling and it takes time, according to the time frame of the individual being coached. Time and patience is required from the manager!"

Benefits of manager coaching

- › The manager can develop good rapport with the team which energises team members and helps them to gain confidence
- › Team members can develop and improve their skills
- › A motivated team is able to take on more responsibility
- › The manager's time can be used more efficiently rather than micro-managing which is time-consuming
- › Productivity increases

Negatives of manager coaching

- › Not all managers make good coaches.
- › Not all managers want to be coaches or have learnt the skills needed to be an effective coach.
- › Not all manager/coach relationships work, especially if the team member has a sensitive issue he or she requires coaching for, but feels unable to approach the manager about the issue.
- › The process will break down and be lost if the manager/coach feels threatened by the positive changes taking place in his or her team.

How to be a better coach



1 | Learn to coach

Managers need to acquire critical coaching skills. As a manager/coach, build your skills by reading articles and books by professionals to improve your own coaching skills. You should also consider having a coach and a mentor of your own.

"Mentoring is about being guided on how to do the job better," explains Drake. "The knowledge, advice and resources a mentor shares will depend on the format and goals of the mentoring relationship - in this case workplace experience. Coaching always implies change and the organisation or team need to support the change that will occur within the individual and in this case the manager."

Improve your coaching skills. <https://www.bizlibrary.com/article/7-coaching-tips-managers-leaders/>



**“EVERYONE
NEEDS A COACH.
IT DOESN'T MATTER
WHETHER YOU'RE
A BASKETBALL
PLAYER, A TENNIS
PLAYER, A GYMNAST
OR A BRIDGE
PLAYER.”** BILL GATES



2 | Don't blur the boundaries

Coach when you coach and manage when you manage. “Not all managers should be coaches because if the boundaries of coaching and management get blurred, problems can occur,” cautions Drake. “Some managers get into ‘fix it’ mode and 15-minute meetings with staff may turn into fascinating but unproductive two hour sessions. It may be harmless but it can waste time and resources.”

3 | Encourage individual thinking

Good coaches give team members a chance to share their ideas, challenges and solutions. They give the individual a chance to find answers themselves. This helps to develop problem-solving skills. There will be times as a manager when you will need to give advice or direction on a particular issue, or make a critical call.



4 | Be willing to sacrifice time to the coaching process

The coaching process aims to bring out the best in the individual. While this does take more time than being prescriptive as a manager, people generally want to improve themselves. The coaching process engages and motivates which in turn leaves the individual more fulfilled in his or her job, ultimately improving productivity for the organisation as whole.

5 | Acknowledge when a professional coach is needed

In some cases the manager/coach scenario does not work and the solution is to bring in an outside coach with experience and discipline in coaching, and no ties or hidden agendas with the company. “Professional coaches are used to dealing with issues of confidentiality and know where to draw these difficult lines,” says Drake. “Sometimes calling in a professional is a better solution. It can also be more time saving for the manager and ultimately more cost-effective, as the external coach can push the individual/team and ask different questions, with a different coaching approach.”



Resources

- › *Margaret Drake - Business/ Executive Coach, Mentor Coach and Life Skills Facilitator*
- › <https://www.cpsa.com>
- › <https://www.thebalance.com>
- › <http://www.innerlifeskills.com>

9 QUALITIES OF A GOOD COACH

1 | Motivation and commitment

A need to make a difference and the ability to push forward to reach goals without being prescriptive

2 | Recognise what motivates individuals

Ability to acknowledge good performance in individuals

3 | Emotional intelligence

The ability to understand how emotions affect judgement and decision-making

4 | Respect for others

Empathy and respect for the person you are coaching

5 | Flexibility

Adapting to a change of course or action when something isn't showing good results

6 | Good communication skills

Conveying ideas and information effectively, but also listening and being able to read between the lines and 'hear' what is unsaid.

7 | Ability to ask questions

Asking the right questions in the right context

8 | Ability to mentor

Guiding and offering suggestions to improve a way of doing things

9 | Patience

Coaching takes time