
OFF-THE-CHART COACHING RESULTS™

By Lorna Riley, CSP

Certified Speaking Professional

760-639-4020

"Winning is a habit."

Coach Vince Lombardi

According to American Management Association's President Lawrence Appley, the primary job of managers is to, "get things done through others." This includes "ing" functions such as planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and coaching. Managers get paid for delivering results, therefore the achievement and non-achievements of the people they manage equals *their score*.

The truth is, managers need their employees more than they need managers. Both managers and leaders get paid for what their *employees* do, not what *they* do. To optimize this agreement, managers and leaders must effectively intervene to get things done *through* others.

When executives hire, they merely "rent" behavior, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The paradox is that it's behaviors that drive results, but it's *people* that provide (or don't provide) the behaviors. The challenge for managers and leaders is that while keeping score on results, they must reach the person *behind* the behavior in order to influence results. Coaching is the answer.

Effective coaching is one of the most powerful strategies leaders and managers can employ to develop the people behind the behaviors. The Oxford Dictionary defines coaching as:

to tutor, train, give hint to, prime with facts

Coaching is a *directive* process to train and/or orient employees to the realities of the workplace and to help remove barriers to optimum work performance. When managers learn that they can get results not through intimidation or threats, but through supportive relationship building and communication, results can soar off-the-chart. The benefits to coaching are enormous.

BENEFITS TO COACHING:

1. Maximizes employees' strengths
2. Empowers employees to work more effectively
4. Increases employee buy-in and loyalty
5. Reduces ambiguity by communicating standards of excellence, expectations, and priorities
6. Orients employees to company values, strategies, and their role in the attainment of goals
7. Holds employees accountable for work performance
8. Reduces employee stress by knowing how to "win"
9. Encourages employees when discouraged or undertaking new or challenging assignments
10. Builds trust
11. Provides appropriate training and support when needed
12. Solicits and responds to new or innovative ideas
13. Views employees as partners and critical to the success of the unit
14. Helps executives become effective role models
15. Strengthens relationships and loyalty
16. Explains reasons for decisions, procedures, and gives advance notice of changes when possible

If coaching is a power-horse for reducing and even eliminating obstacles to peak performance, then why aren't more managers and leaders coaching their people?

WHY MANY MANAGERS AND LEADERS AVOID COACHING

A few of the more popular excuses include:

1. Don't have the time—too busy putting out fires
2. Fear of a failed session—lack of confidence in doing it "right"
3. Employee doesn't ask for help (hides the truth of their incompetence)
4. Afraid employee won't respond and more severe measures may be necessary
5. Hopes the situation will resolve itself without management intervention
6. Feels awkward
7. Employee may get mad or defensive
8. A sign of weakness or incompetence on the part of the manager
9. Could communicate having hired the "wrong" person

TWO TYPES OF COACHING

Coaching can be divided into distinct categories of purpose:

1) *Motivational*

These include encouragement, compliments, improving morale, networking, rewarding good performance, building confidence

2) *Developmental*

These include feedback, evaluation, training, goal setting, creating strategic plans, mentoring, employee orientation, removing workplace obstacles, gaining understanding of a problem, changing unproductive attitude/behaviors, diagnosing performance gaps, resolving conflict, clarifying standards and expectations, career planning

Sometimes there's a fine line between motivational and developmental coaching, for developing employees (when it's done right) can be very motivating, and motivating employees helps their development. Don't split hairs over this. Coaches help bring out the best in others, but remember, you can only coach and manage *what you can measure*.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COACHING

There are many opportunities for coaching throughout the day. Go through the following list, marking M for motivational or D for developmental. Don't worry about right or wrong answers. Just start thinking about your role in the following situations. When coaching is effective, it both motivates *and* develops employees. Add your own at the bottom of the list.

new hire orientation

lack of teamwork

training of a new job skill

feeling of alienation

training in standards/expectations

low commitment to existing goals

learn skills for advancement

low commitment to new goals

correct mistakes

job burnout

getting behind in technical skills

difficulty managing stress

want more work responsibilities	resistant to new priorities
difficulty with work responsibilities	bored, want more of a challenge
difficulty making decisions	resistance to new standards
difficulty balancing priorities	resistance to new policy/procedures
difficulty working with others	hard feelings
uneven quality of work	rewarded with more work
follow up to training session	feeling no appreciation, no rewards
feedback on work	lack of opportunity
performance reviews	power plays
career guidance	suggestions for managing a risk
other:	other:

COACHING HOW-TOs

Motivational coaching is by far the easier of the two strategies. It could be as simple as an on-the-fly statement that says, “Great job.” It’s even more helpful when paired with more specific comments about what you like or appreciate about someone’s behaviors, i.e.

I'm really impressed with the way you were able to maintain your cool under fire. You remained pleasant yet concerned and immediately took action to resolve the customer's problem. That really makes us look good. You're a real asset to this organization. Thanks for doing a great job.

This simple motivational “coaching moment” will enable you to soon discover the power of the 3Rs:

Reinforced Responses Recur

Anytime you observe a behavior that you want repeated, reinforce it with a positive statement such as a compliment. People will remember the reinforcement and tend to repeat (recur) the behavior more frequently. Positive reinforcement creates sustained, desirable behaviors over time.

Developmental feedback on touchy issues such as a reprimand may take some planning. The more complex the issue, the more planning you may want on your approach.

Guidelines on how to provide effective developmental coaching feedback:

1. Give feedback only on observable behavior and *be specific*. "I am concerned about the errors in data entry over the past week. Over ten were found."
2. Never criticize the person, only the situation, i.e. reports, tardiness, errors etc. "There are too many errors," not, "You're making too many mistakes."
3. Give negative feedback in private.
4. Be balanced. Never deliver negative feedback without something positive. "Your reports have always been complete, accurate, and on time. I'm concerned about the frequency of errors over the last week. What's happening?"
5. Understand the employee's situation and perspective *first* by asking questions before giving *your* input. "What's going on with...What happened?"
6. Ask for the employee's input and suggestions for change. Collaborate on a plan of action. "What are your suggestions for improvement? (Listen.) That's great *and* here are a few ideas that have worked well in the past as well..."
7. Be sure employees hear the feedback directly from you.
8. Try to give one piece of positive or developmental feedback each day to each employee. Your supportive attention is in and of itself, motivating. "Keep up the great work. We value your efforts. Thanks for being such a great team player. We can always count on you..." etc.
9. Consider appropriate timing. Coaching feedback is most effective immediately after or during the behavior. If you see behavior that needs correction, do it as you're seeing it. Don't stockpile issues. Be sure to follow-up later in the day with a positive, motivational statement. "We really value your work around here. If we didn't, I wouldn't have taken the time to work with you this morning. We appreciate all of your hard effort. Keep up the great job."

When planning a more in-depth, developmental coaching session where behaviors need to change, consider the following steps for an effective session:

1. Retain: State what you like about the person's behaviors, i.e.,

What I really like about...
You've introduced some great ideas...

That's helpful...
This is a good idea...

2. Change: State what needs to change and gain agreement that a problem exists (avoid transitioning to this stage with the word, “but.” It erases the positive “retain” statement.), i.e.,

This area needs to be changed...
This could use some improvement...

There are still a few problems...
I'm concerned about...

3. Exchange: Collaborate on ideas for improvement.

What do you think about...
How about this next time...

How would you do it differently?
Any thoughts?

4. Gain: Agree on next steps for changing behaviors and follow-through, i.e.

So what we've agreed is that...
Let's see if we both understand the next steps...

Let's review what we've agreed...
You will have it back by...

5. Claim: Meet at the appointed time for follow-through and reevaluation, i.e.,

How's it working out for you?
What have we gained from this?

That was a great idea.
The results are terrific!

Be an encourager, supporter, and enabler. The results of effective coaching will become contagious. Everyone will be supporting others to move the organization towards not only meeting business objectives, but creating off-the-chart results!

Contact Lorna Riley for a complete list of training programs and speeches:

Lorna@lornariley.com Or call 760-639-4020.

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