

SIGMA

Leadership Series



**Great Leaders
Develop Others**



GREAT LEADERS DEVELOP AND COACH OTHERS

“ Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance.

– Timothy Gallwey

As experienced, skilled members of the organization, leaders have unique insights into how their employees can be more successful, both in their current job and in the future. As a result, they are able to help employees develop their skills through coaching. Leader coaching has been shown to predict an employee’s satisfaction at work, job performance, and commitment to the organization^{1, 2}. Additionally, coaching has been found to be related to the accomplishment of organizational goals^{3, 4}.

Coaching others involves supporting the development and career goals of employees through work assignments, ongoing developmental discussions, and constructive feedback. It is a process whereby employees can develop their abilities, learn new skills, and gain valuable new experiences. It also conveys your interest as a leader in the growth and advancement of others by dedicating time, energy, and resources into their development. Investing in employee growth directly benefits both the employee and the organization.

In assessing your ability to develop and coach others, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I communicate effectively in coaching conversations?
- Am I able to provide freedom and autonomy to my employees to aid in their growth?
- Am I able to have an open discussion about my employee’s goals and ambitions?
- Have I formalized a plan for my employees’ long-term development?
- Do I make time to follow-up with and provide feedback to direct reports?

Improve Your Ability to Develop Others

Use your communication skills: Communication is essential for successful coaching. Coaches must be able to actively listen to their coachees and demonstrate their understanding. When speaking with your employee in coaching sessions, try summarizing what they say and asking clarifying questions to ensure you understand their perspective. Also, note their tone of voice and body language, as both can provide you with more information about their thoughts or feelings. Overall, you should be listening more than speaking, and asking more questions than giving advice. Try to prompt your employees to offer their own ideas, insights, or suggestions.

Recognize your role in coaching: Some leaders coach with the single goal of improving the performance of their employees. Keep in mind, the ultimate goal of coaching is not to provide solutions to problems; it is to equip your employees with the skills to solve those problems themselves. This means allowing employees the freedom and autonomy to try new approaches, make mistakes, and correct their own errors. Your job is to walk employees through the learning process when mistakes are made, to reframe failures as opportunities to grow, and to help employees develop the skills they need to succeed.

Understand the different kinds of feedback: Coaching always involves sharing constructive feedback with the coachee. That means feedback should be kind, but honest and instructive. Be sure to frame feedback around things that are actionable and reasonable for a person to change, rather than things that are out of their control. This will reduce resistance and helps maintain a positive relationship. Additionally, keep in mind that you may still need to provide feedback to the same person in different contexts. For example, if a coachee is also involved in a project unrelated to their coaching engagement, you will need to provide them with separate evaluative feedback. Additionally, be sure to recognize your employees' efforts and praise their successes, both within and outside the coaching conversation.

Start Doing These 3 Things Now to Coach More Effectively

The following steps can help you become better at developing and coaching others:

- 1. Have a frank conversation.** Coaching conversations are the time for honest and direct communication between the leader and employee. Ask open-ended questions to ensure you understand the goals and motivations of your employee. What are they hoping to accomplish in the future? What are some roadblocks they currently face in their development? What would make the coaching engagement a success for them? Use this time to get a sense of their values and priorities, and to mutually set realistic intentions and expectations for your coaching going forward.
- 2. Create a plan.** Together, the coach and the coachee should aim to set 2-3 goals to tackle during their coaching engagement. These goals should be based on a balance of the wants of the employee and the needs of the organization. Both parties should agree, but try to let the employee lead the discussion. Make sure goals are SMART – that is, specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. Write these goals down and plan timelines for milestones and check-ins. These steps will help ensure both the coach and coachee are on the same page and are accountable to these goals.
- 3. Make time to be involved.** Although all coaching engagements will be different, a structural hallmark of coaching is regular, consistent meetings. This gives you a chance to touch base on lessons learned thus far, current progress and roadblocks, and next steps. Be sure to provide your employee with frequent constructive feedback on their performance, successes, and areas for further development. Just remember, skill development is a process that can take time. Have patience while you grow your ability to coach and while your employee grows their skills.

Resources



[Coaching in the Workplace](#)



[Most Managers Don't Know How to Coach People, But They Can Learn](#)



Develop your ability to develop and coach others by taking advantage of SIGMA's coaching services.

Contact SIGMA for coaching on developing your skills as a leader.

SIGMA Assessment Systems, Inc.

Email: support@SigmaHR.com

Call: 800-265-1285

References

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