

# COACHING



## INTRODUCTION

Coaching is one of the most important and most difficult things a manager does. It is at the heart of effective performance management. It forms the basis for continuous performance dialogue between manager and employee and is the best tool at a manager's disposal for ensuring performance and for developing an employee's skills in the long term.

## THE COACHING MODEL

Coaching is about getting people to change and improve in the long term. People change their behavior only when they see a reason to change, when they understand that it is in

their best interest to change, and when they see that not changing is a barrier to achieving goals that they think are important. For this reason it is one of the most difficult of managerial styles to use, in that effective coaching requires commitment and buy-in from the employee to improve their performance.

Coaching begins with a clear understanding of the gap between actual and desired performance. When this gap is made clear, there is a natural tension that is created which the coach needs to manage to bring about commitment to change. With the coach's support, a goal statement and action plan are put together to bring about the desired change.

### Q&A #1

**QUESTION:** How many of you have employees you would like to help change to improve their performance?

**ANSWER:** Coaching.

Coaching is a non-directive approach to change. Rather than simply telling an employee what needs to change, proper coaching involves listening and giving feedback, involving employees' ideas and motivation for change, and providing support for improvement without stepping in to do the job for the employee.

Managers who coach well are making an investment for the long-term. The result of effective coaching is increased communication and performance from the employees who are developing their skills to better handle their current assignments and to better prepare for future assignments and advancement opportunities.

**Q&A #2**

**QUESTION:** Why don't employees do what they're supposed to do?  
**ANSWER:** You don't know until you've begun coaching them.

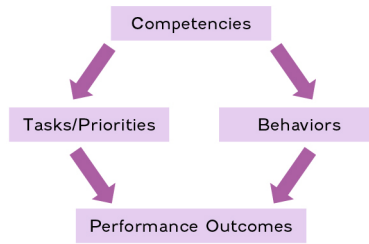
**PERFORMANCE DRIVERS**

There are several factors that drive performance. When some aspect of the result is not being met, there are three factors to consider:

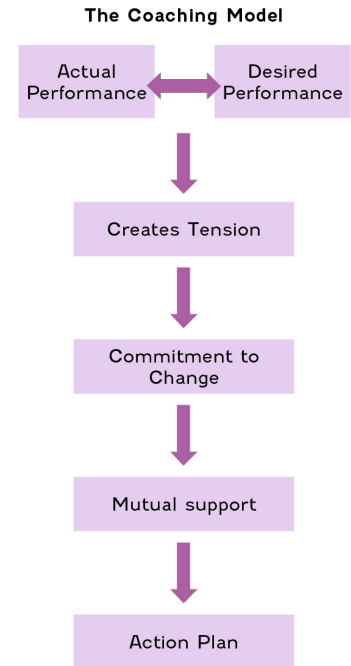
1. What are the behaviors that are affecting performance?
2. How much time and priority is the employee placing on the outcome?
3. What are the characteristics and competencies that underlie the result you are expecting?

Typically, results are driven by behaviors and priorities. Where is the employee putting his or her time and the behaviors they manifest day-to-day determine in large measure what the results will be from the employee's efforts. But what drives behaviors and how they spend their time? These, as the chart below indicates, are driven by the underlying competencies the employee brings to the job.

Coaching involves doing a "gap analysis" in each of these four areas.



First, you need to be able to define what constitutes desired performance in each area. What are the desired outcomes, expected behaviors and priorities, and competencies that are key for performance in the job. Then you need to assess where the employee is in his or her performance in each area. When you have clearly defined the gap in each area, then you are ready for a coaching discussion with the employee.



### TO DO LIST

✓ Do a “gap analysis” on the employee’s performance to determine a roadmap for coaching. Do this for each key factor in performance: outcomes, tasks & priorities, behaviors, and competencies. Outcomes and tasks/priorities are usually symptoms of the need for coaching. The cause of performance problems usually lies at the level of behaviors and competencies.

✓ Sit down with the employee to have a coaching discussion. Begin by establishing a clear and mutual assessment of the gap between desired and actual performance. Keep at it until there is a real commitment to improve on the part of the employee.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Whenever an employee is let go for poor performance, there has usually been a management failure along the way. Employees want to know where they stand. As a manager, one of your most important responsibilities is to give the feedback to your employees that they need to improve performance and to address the gaps between desired and actual before they become significant issues in performance.

### Q&A #3

**QUESTION:** How do you get an employee’s commitment to improve?

**ANSWER:** “You have to take what we want and what they want and connect them in their brain.” - Charles Dwyer

“There are only two problems in psychology: One is how to get a person to do something one time. The second is how to get them to do something over and over again.”

- Aubrey Daniels

