

Why Leaders Should Consider Shifting To A Coaching Leadership Style Now More Than Ever

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The idea of coaching isn't new, and the very definition might sound self-explanatory: a coach is someone who instructs and trains. Think about your favorite sports team's coach. What's essential to the definition, however, is that coaches help teams toward achieving a goal. When it comes to business, however, coaches become a bit more nuanced. Not only are coaches helping lead their teams toward a goal, but they are implementing programs that help employees and team-members improve their performance and develop stronger skill sets. Coaches are giving their team opportunities to be the best of the best and excel not only in their organization, but develop themselves personally and professionally.

Why is coaching so critical to career advancement? Because it's not just about professional development, but about boosting your employees' confidence and building strong communication skills, thus improving their performance and productivity.

If You Aren't Coaching Already, Now is the Best Time to Start

In this near post-pandemic world, we are all navigating through the traumas of last year: not just the grieving process, but trying to adapt to a new normal. Regardless of your situation, everyone needs to understand that life is not what it used to be. Even in the best-case scenario, if an employee hasn't contracted covid, hasn't lost anyone, or doesn't feel too affected, there are still ramifications to adjusting to change nearly every day. Our jobs, safety, security, and health now relies on daily choices. In 2021, employees aren't just stressed and overwhelmed with their jobs, but they're also stressed with day-to-day life.

Amidst this, we're seeing ourselves experience the great resignation, or the turnover tsunami. And in most cases, people aren't leaving because of the company. They're leaving because of experiencing disappointing leadership. People are feeling stagnant in their careers and not seeing any opportunity for growth. Now more than ever, leaders are being called to coach their employees, thereby developing trust and loyalty that work both ways.

Coaching Isn't Just Focused on Short Term Wins

Typically, when leaders are coaches, they're focused on helping their team gain both short-term and long-term wins. Coaching leaders are focused on continuous momentum, helping people gain traction by gaining short-term wins while working toward long term goals.

Focusing on both will help mentees and team members feel the fulfillment of short-term wins while building the skill sets needed to gain traction on long-term goals personally and professionally. In order to keep your eye on both kinds of "prizes," you should work with your fellow leaders on identifying just what those long-term goals will be. Then, it might help to work with your mentees individually to communicate to them what you would like out of this coaching relationship, as well as (and perhaps more importantly), what they are hoping to achieve.

Leaders Should Be Coaches

Who should be coaches? Of course, it's always a good thing when you see your employees engage laterally to help one another out on a regular basis. But it's best for leaders of the team or the organization to be the coaches who can be seen and valued as a trusted mentor, someone on whom people can rely with confidence. It also helps with employee retention, of course, when people view management as a team of people who know what they're doing and are investing in their workers as much as their workers are investing in organizational goals and values.

[In order to be a coach, though, you should also know about leadership styles and which one speaks to your style best.](#) The coaching leadership style is unlike other leadership styles in that other styles don't always focus on employee growth. The coaching leadership style focuses on 360-degree feedback, on communication, and on helping people develop themselves. Just as with a sports team, you want to ensure each player is better and stronger to ensure the team is winning.

But managers and leaders aren't born perfect coaches. Who is coaching them? HR leaders, in fact, can be supportive and effective manager coaches, helping leaders perform more effectively, offering them feedback on the strengths and setbacks of each leader's character. One of the most important traits of a leader is their people skills, their ability to sympathize and communicate with their workers. HR leaders should be able to coach managers and help leaders foster a healthy work environment for all.

What Employees Need from a Coaching Leader

You know what you need from your employees, but in order to be an effective coach, you should be thinking about what your employees need from you. Your employee needs, first and foremost, open communication and trust. Unless people trust that they can communicate to their leaders where they're struggling and needing assistance, the coaching relationship will likely and quickly turn into an uphill battle. This relationship needs vulnerability and honesty that works both ways, a two-way street of communication. How can you be vulnerable and honest with your employees? And how can you strike a fine balance so that you still can be viewed as a trusted and knowledgeable leader?

Additionally, employees are more likely to be enthusiastic about the work they do when they know their coaches are genuinely invested in their growth and willing to work with them on their short term and long term goals. Speaking of which, what are your goals when it comes to being a better leader? What do you need from yourself? One of the answers to those questions should be, if not already practiced, an active and regular habit of acknowledging successes, wins, and overall hard work. The workplace can often become so busy that the work seems merely expected, without time to acknowledge a task's completion before it's onto the next. However, making space each day to acknowledge what your employees are doing right so that they feel empowered and energized to grow from that will go a long way in building that relationship.