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COACHING

We are born with an
evolutionary impulse that drives
us toward the fulfillment of
our greatest potential.

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Manager Training: Coaching

“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them become what they are capable of being” – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

At the end of the day, coaching is simple: it's about helping each member of your team live up to his or her true potential. How can you know when employees are achieving top-level success? The results are different for each person, but the effort is the same for all: it's when they are doing their best, every single day.

John Wooden is one of the best coaches in college basketball history. He coached the UCLA boys to 10 NCAA national championships in 12 years, including an unprecedented 7 wins in a row. He won the national coach of the year award an astonishing 6 times. If anyone knows about coaching, it's John.

In his famous Ted Talk, John defined success as the “peace of mind only attained through self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to be the best you were capable of being.” And that was what he wanted for all his players - a deep soul-satisfying feeling of success. The kind of feeling you get after a hard day's work outside, when the sweat runs down your face, and you feel the satisfaction of a job well done deep in your chest.

To John, that type of success was what basketball was all about. Winning was just a by-product of his boys working their hardest and never giving up. In fact, after the game, John would tell them, win or lose, the only reason they should hold their head up was if they gave it their best. He didn't believe in giving less than 100% effort. John's success as a coach came because he ultimately believed that his job wasn't just to win titles, but to coach his players to give their best, no matter what.

As a manager, your goal should be the same. You should be spending a good portion of your day helping your team members achieve their highest potential. Regardless of

what you are doing, whether it's rewarding, challenging, or encouraging your employees, it should be centered on a desire to help them grow. As they learn and evolve into productive employees, it will benefit you – their growth will transfer into your success as a manager and the company's as a whole.

Thinking of yourself as a coach is helpful for a number of reasons. First, it reminds you that your achievements are ultimately won through the work of other people. Managers who focus on themselves can never reach the heights to which those who focus on teamwork can achieve. Keep in mind; managers are only as good as the success they create in their team members. If you want to be successful in your position, you'll only reach as high as your team lifts you!

Second, it spurs you into becoming a strategic thinker. The best managers are the ones who think big picture; they are constantly looking for ways to improve the process and the people who carry out the day-to-day work. A coach can't get out on the court and run the plays himself; likewise a manager can't rely on his own abilities to get everything done. You must realize you cannot get out there and play the game yourself. Instead, use this knowledge to your advantage. Don't micro-manage your employees. Utilize the time on the sidelines to constantly strategize a path to victory for the players on the court.

Finally, adopting a coaching mentality is the key to proper delegation. When you step out of the producer's mindset and into a coach's thought process, you relieve yourself of the debilitating mentality that you have to do everything in order to be successful.

Think about this:

1. Do you have a coach's mindset? Why or why not?
2. In what ways are you actively helping employees do their best? How can you improve?

Delegation

By adopting a coaching mindset, you have the ability to properly delegate using these 5 steps:

1. Choose the right person

It's easy to delegate to the first person that's around when you need something done. Or the person you like the best. Unfortunately, this person is usually the LAST one right for the job. Instead, make sure you are delegating to the person with the right skills and capabilities. Don't base your decision on what is convenient in the moment; base it off talent, availability, and skill. Regardless of how well a team member performs, if he doesn't have the time, he won't be able to do the task well. Likewise, someone with ample time but without the capabilities needed to make the job a success is similarly unsuited for delegation.

2. Specify the result

While this one may seem obvious, the most common delegation mistake is not articulating the exact result you are looking for. If you don't tell people what a successful project looks like, don't be surprised when they come back with their own version of your vision! Clear communication is vital. What exactly do you want accomplish? What will the end result be? Make sure your employees understand and can articulate to you the success criteria before they begin a project.

3. Establish a time frame

When you hand off an assignment, you are going to naturally think it will be the most important item on an employee's to-do list. This may not be true. Employees often have a hard time prioritizing between what should be done first and what can wait. Don't assume they know the order in which their tasks should be done. Give them a timeframe for each project you hand off. That way, you can hold them accountable if it is late, plus it gives you a deadline to know when you should check back with them.

4. Communicate their level of authority

Can the person you gave the project to actually complete it based on his or her own authority? Or do they need a signature from you to get the project streamlined? The last thing you want to do is give a project to someone who will have to jump through a myriad of bureaucratic hoops to get the job done. If your delegate doesn't have the proper authority, make sure you are able to sign off on the right approval before the project starts so that it does not hit any authority roadblocks.

History is a wonderful example of this problem in actions. Wars have actually been lost because battlefield commanders did not give proper authority to their subordinates. In fact, the night before the Normandy invasion in World War II, Hitler went to bed and told his men that he was not to be awakened under any circumstance. As the Allied troops hit the beaches, the German army was overrun without any central command help because the generals were waiting for Hitler to wake up! Moral of the story? Don't leave your employees stranded without the proper authority to make things happen.

5. Monitor progress & give proper feedback

Unless you have complete and utter confidence in handing the project off, you need to develop a system for monitoring. Set up a reporting system so that you know when key parts of the project are complete. Be available for input and offer your advice and assistance, but only if needed. In other words, practice effective delegation by providing a feedback structure so no one gets confused along the way. Keep in mind that a system of communication is extremely helpful to employees. It gives them confidence knowing they will have help when they need it, plus it keeps problems from spiraling out of control.

Integrating these 5 steps into your day-to-day management will change the way projects get completed. It will cut out unnecessary delays, save you the hassle of having to redo the project, and give employees a deeper sense of satisfaction from knowing they achieved the vision set out for them. Proper delegation will be hard to implement at first, but the long-term effects are well worth the effort.

Think about this:

1. How could integrating these 5 steps change your projects' success?
2. Which delegation step do you need to implement immediately?

Self Development

The key to proper coaching is not found in right delegation or supervision. It is found in the way you think about and live your life. Leaders and coaches are ultimately models for success, or models for failure. Your team members are watching you – what are they seeing? Are you modeling a learning and growth mindset? Or complacency? Don't be surprised to see them slacking off if you take 2 hours for lunch every day, fail to keep in physical shape, and spend most of your free time watching TV instead of reading books. Ask yourself this question: "Do my team members look up to me with respect, and want to model their personal growth after mine?" If the answer isn't a resounding "YES!" then it may be time to take a hard look in the mirror.

No matter where you are, you can always "up your game." One of our team's favorite slogans is, "better than yesterday". You should be working to be the best version of you, each and every day. To help you on the path to continual growth, take some time to work through these steps to realizing your full potential. Keep in mind: you can't confidently lead where you've never been before.

The Road to Successful Self-Development

1. Take personal responsibility

It's easy to blame anything and anyone when something goes wrong. But that's what unsuccessful people do. They blame circumstances, the people around them, the weather, the economy . . . the list goes on forever. What they don't realize is that by doing so, they are giving away their LIFE. When you decide that no one is to blame but yourself, it puts you in the driver's seat of your life. Sitting up there, you realize that your life is a result of the actions you've taken and the decisions you've made. But that's also the best part. By realizing this, you come to understand that YOU can change it. You

have the power to take back control of your life. You have the freedom to choose your own life. And it all starts by taking personal responsibility.

Once you change your way of thinking, you will probably be surprised at the difference it makes in your employees. The change in your team can be quite dramatic! When you take personal responsibility for your failures, you foster a culture of honesty and integrity. Additionally, you are communicating that it is up to each team member to get his or her job done. Just as you are taking personal responsibility for your duties, so they will be expected to get the job done and not “pass the buck off” to the guy standing next to them. Or to you!

2. Be authentic

No one likes a fake person. But managers often feel they have to be an entirely different person for employees to respect them. So they put on a “work mask” to get the job done. Unfortunately, this can easily be taken the wrong way. Confidence may seem like arrogance, and being “hard-nosed” to finish projects can make a manager come off as rigid and mean-spirited. Faking it at work can be extremely detrimental to team building as a result. It also takes a lot of energy to play a part instead of being who you are. The extra energy expended by trying to be someone else takes away from your ability to work at your highest potential.

So be authentic! Managers that outwardly appear as they inwardly live more easily foster trust and respect. Employees can see you are being genuine, which helps them understand the way you manage them. They will also know that “what you see, is what you get.” Consistency in action comes from authenticity! Employees can bank on your response to their actions and will better know the type of action you require. Also, by being genuine yourself, you allow them to be the best version of themselves.

3. Take action

Taking action is huge for self-development. If you don’t take action, nothing will get done. Dr. Steve Maraboli, a best-selling author and speaker, puts it this way: “The

universe doesn't give you what you ask for with your thoughts; it gives you what you demand with your actions." Without implementation, strategy, vision, and goals are all useless.

Unfortunately, taking action can be tough for those who are prone to perfectionism or procrastination. Perfectionists never finish a job because they are always looking for ways it can be better. They continue working, making endless improvements even though 80% would have been good enough! Perfectionism paralyzes our ability to make decisions and commitments because it is obsessed with the "ideal" as a minimum requirement for success.

Procrastination is a similar form of perfectionism, in that it refuses to take action until the result it wants is guaranteed. As a result, people who struggle with procrastination put off taking action until it's often too late. So how do you combat these two debilitating mindsets? Aim for 80% completion of a project.

The 80% solution to project completion is based on Pareto's 80/20 principle (80% of the effect comes from 20% of the cause). Instead of shooting for 100% and getting bogged down by perfectionism and procrastination, get started by only intending to get 80% of the finished product done. Then, if you feel like it needs more work, you can delegate the next 80%, which ends up giving you a 96% finished product! You can continue this pattern until you feel like the result is up to the standards necessary.

Confidence is built by using this system because fast engagement with an idea, and a sense of completion, adds to you and your team's sense of pride in getting work done. It also helps boost your team's camaraderie by getting them involved in your projects. By constantly targeting 80%, you can more easily delegate because the task will pass through several layers of quality control. You can feel satisfaction with the progress, while also continuing to make improvements along the way, if necessary.

4. Focus on what's important

Managers are often plagued with the constant need to put out fires that seem important, but are often just distractions. Understanding the difference is paramount to success. Ask yourself: “Is this task adding value or just sucking up my valuable time? Can I delegate this task to someone else if it still needs to be done?” In order for you and your team to be highly successful, you need to carve out time to prioritize your days and the tasks in them. Devote time in your schedule to focus on what grows your people, makes the company money, and uses your talents at their highest and best levels.

Focusing on what matters will have a profound impact on your team. As you structure your days in meaningful ways, you can teach your employees which situations require your immediate attention, and which ones can wait. Also, it will grow their confidence and authority as you delegate key aspects to them that don’t require your hand in them. Your newly freed up time can then be put towards what really matters: making you more successful and the company more money.

5. Build a legacy

What matters when you leave is what you leave behind. When you get an opportunity to move up, or decide to move on, what will you leave behind? Will people remember your impact on their lives, or cheer when you are gone? Every day you have the ability to create lasting change in your employees, peers, and the company as a whole. Don’t waste it. Create a legacy that will last beyond you! Grow people into successful employees and future managers. Your own success will be reflected on the faces and the systems that you leave in your wake. Make it worth it. Make a difference.

Think about this:

1. How many hours a week do you currently spend on self-development?
2. Rate yourself from 1-10 (10 being the highest) on each of the self-development steps. How can you improve in each of these areas?