

Why don't managers coach?

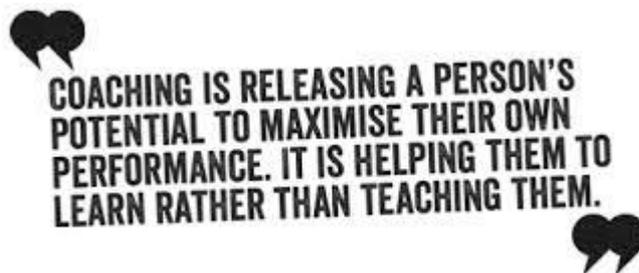
“Nearly 75% of managers have received training in how to coach their employees, yet 73% of employees never receive coaching, according to recent research.”

Why don't Managers coach more?

Giving advice is easy. Managers like to demonstrate they know 'stuff'. Asking coaching questions can be disconcerting. When you ask questions, you may wonder if you're really helping your employee in a valuable way. Questions make conversations slower. And, asking questions means you are no longer in control of the conversation or situation.

Developing Coaching Skills

As an executive coach, I know the benefit of working with Leaders to massively advance skills and competence. I also realise the benefit organisations achieve when their leaders employ coaching techniques with their own teams. To follow are seven questions you, as a leader in your organisation can ask to develop your own internal coaching capability. This is taken from a coaching text written by Michael Bungay Stanier.



COACHING IS RELEASING A PERSON'S POTENTIAL TO MAXIMISE THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE. IT IS HELPING THEM TO LEARN RATHER THAN TEACHING THEM.

1. The initial coaching question

Ask, “What’s on your mind?” to initiate a focused conversation. This question directs the conversation to the most important issue, as defined by the other party. Asking it puts that person in charge of the direction of the conversation. This question makes it clear that you want to talk about your employee’s most pressing issue, not your own. After opening with this question, use the “3P model” to focus the conversation. The three P’s are:

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- **“Projects”** – Determine what your employee is working on and discuss current assignments.
- **“People”** – Consider the employee’s relationships with “team members, colleagues, other departments, bosses” and “customers.”
- **“Patterns”** – Exploring your employees’ habitual behaviours can reveal how you can help them approach and accomplish their jobs more effectively.

2. The ‘what else’ Question



Ask, “What else?” This is the single most effective coaching question. By asking it, you generate greater understanding, improved mindfulness and enhanced self-knowledge, which increase the potential for meaningful two-way communication.

The ‘what else’ question grants you more time to shape the conversation in a productive way. It enables the employee to discuss candidly whatever is on his or her mind. This question moves you away from giving advice, it reminds you to listen before you speak.

3. The “focus” Question

Ask, “What’s the real challenge here for you?” This question helps you uncover a deeper issue worth addressing, not “just the first problem” your team member stated. Many managers/leaders try to solve problems as soon as they arise. Instead, “hold off on giving advice and help people quickly figure out their own path.” You need to resist the temptation to step in and take over.

The way people first characterise a problem often has nothing to do with the underlying issue. “Instead of moving into advice-giving, solution-providing mode,” ask the focus question. Its phrasing conveys your understanding that the employee faces numerous challenges and that one of them matters more than the rest. The words “for you” personalise the issue and make the employee responsible for determining which concern is a priority.

4. The “foundation” Question

Ask, “What do you want?” Like the focus question, the foundation question – and its companion question, “But what do you really want?” – takes you directly to the main challenge. This question can cause people to react by staring at you with their mouths open. This question is often challenging for employees to answer.

The foundation question deals directly with the common illusion that those participating in a conversation know what everyone wants to achieve. You and your employee must determine the need that underlies the want. For example, if your team member wants to leave early one

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day, try to ascertain why leaving early is important. "Recognising the need gives you a better understanding of how you might best address the want."

5. The "chill" Question

Ask, "How can I help?" This question saves a great deal of time. It cuts through all the hemming and hawing and means you can chill whilst your employee does the work. It requires your employee to make a direct request of you concerning what matters most to him or her. The chill question prevents you from immediately jumping into action and trying to solve a problem before you fully understand the situation.

The wording of this question proves critical to its effectiveness. You could also phrase it by saying "Out of curiosity what do you want from me..." You could also start with, "Just so I know...", "To help me understand better..." or "To make sure that I'm clear..."

6. The "strategic" Question



Ask, "If you're saying yes to this, what are you saying no to?" This is a complex question. You're asking the employee to commit to the previous yes. This precludes the popular excuse, "I never said I was going to do that." The strategic question asks employees to examine the implications of their choices. It can also clarify the "boundaries and form" of the employee's no.

Here again, the 3P model of projects, people and patterns can be useful: What projects should you delay or stop working on? What connections with other people should you sever? What lapsed ambitions should you attempt to fulfil? "What habits do you need to break?"

7. The "learning" Question

Ask, "What was most useful for you?" Along with the initial kick-start question, the learning question is a "Coaching Bookend." This question guarantees that everyone will find these meetings and sessions meaningful. Asking this question enables the employee to achieve a valuable "learning moment." It focuses the employee to pause, think and pay attention to the most important new information that emerges from the conversation.

Develop your skill

Employees today expect a lot from their managers and leaders, the good news is they themselves know a lot too. Adopting a coaching approach draws out what they know, helps guide them to an answer they are comfortable with and pushes employees to step up.

Why don't managers coach?

If you coach and use these seven questions with your team, it may take longer initially however over time “you will work less hard and have more impact.” As you develop your coaching skill, develop a set of questions that work best for you. Be curious; it will stand you in greater stead than any advice you may want to dole out to others.

For more information on coaching download our free eBook “A Managers practical guide to coaching”. Click on the link <http://bit.ly/1hmVOru> or see our resources section of the website. www.selectionpartners.com.au



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