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# City Difference Maker

Tips to help you effectively manage and lead your employees

## The Steps of Developmental Coaching

The two basic parts of a manager's job are leading people and managing "stuff." How many of us seem to walk into work each day; put on our fire-fighter equipment; grab a fire extinguisher; and put out fires all day? We may temporarily subdue a fire; however, the same source will likely be the cause of a fire in the future. Every manager has to "put out fires." The difference between an average and a great manager is the amount of time spent managing "stuff" versus leading people. Fires are avoided when we lead staff to minimize issues and help them take ownership in solving problems independently.

Employees need regular feedback, coaching and direction over a consistent time frame. Whether you hold a weekly, monthly, or quarterly meeting with your employees; they need to know you will spend the time and consistently schedule follow-up meetings. Developmental coaching meetings are tools that can aid managers in leading people. These meetings should be one-on-one; but the format may be used for team meetings as well.

If you are going to hold developmental meetings with your employees, the first thing to decide is the appropriate frequency. The more often you can meet with your employees the better. However, you will need to consider that different levels of employees require more or less follow-up. The key is consistency. So go ahead with monthly or quarterly meetings if it is more sensible due to your own busy schedule or the schedules of your employees.

### The 6 Steps

#### Step 1: Meeting Preparation-Before the Session

- Coach employees using only one to two items. Determine your primary objective and desired outcome.
- Decide the specific areas of improvement and anticipate the employee's reaction.
- Consider positive feedback you may offer to the employee.
- Meetings can be short. Anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes to be effective.
- Choose the appropriate time and place. Make sure to give employees your attention—don't multi-task by working on your computer. Ensure there is privacy for one-one meetings.

#### Step 2: Relate

- Build rapport with employee to open communication. For example, discuss something that may or may not

be work related.

- Introduce the purpose of the meeting. Be direct but not judgmental. For example, "I would like to talk to you about the....."

#### Step 3: Discuss Perceptions

- Ask for the employee's perception first. Ask for strengths and areas for improvement.
- Practice active listening. Ask for details.
- Reinforce the common ground; where you and the employee agree.
- Finally, give your perceptions on areas of strengths and areas for improvement. Make sure this is the last step in this process.

#### Step 4: Identify and Remove Barriers

- Focus on the issues, not the person.
- Have a discussion. First ask for the employee's view of challenges.
- Ask employee to generate options and ideas for success.
- Encourage the employee to role-play problem-solving dialogue, if appropriate.
- Ask the employee to suggest the next action.

#### Step 5: Agree on Commitment to Action Plan

- Mutually agree on a plan of action.
- Find measurable action steps with time frames.
- Ask the employee to summarize the agreement. Conclude the meeting by restating the agreed upon action items by saying, "What are the takeaways from this meeting?"
- Encourage and display confidence in the employee.

#### Step 6: Monitor Progress and Follow-up

- Evaluate measurable results for improvement.
- Review your notes before the next coaching session.
- Stay consistent with your meetings. Your employee should know they WILL hear from you at a reliable date in the future.

The steps of successful developmental coaching can aid us in developing our own habits to effectively communicate with our employees. Managers that are willing to spend the time developing their employees tend to have more time to lead them. The fire fighting gear can stay in a closet somewhere where it can be accessible only in case of emergency; rather than being carried around daily.