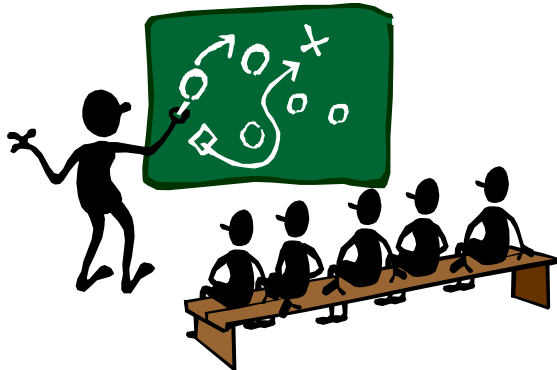


# KEYS Coaching for Performance Improvement

## Knowledge and Education for Your Success



Coaching is not simply a best practice—it is essential to fostering employee and organizational development. As a staff supervisor, you play a significant role in supporting and guiding this development.

So, c'mon Coach, let's get started!

Coaching is any discussion between you and a subordinate where the aim is to help him or her maintain and/or improve performance. Coaching takes place on the job and assumes that people can learn from everything they do. Coaching is not issuing instructions, telling someone what to do, or prescribing how to do it. It is about helping, guiding, encouraging, and allowing space to perform and do things differently.

Here are five key steps for coaching employees toward improved work performance (Fournies, 2000):



Now, use this handy checklist to guide you to more effective coaching:

- Identify the problem.** Good coaching begins with separating the behavior from the person, and that, in turn, means identifying the cause rather than the effect. In some cases, it means listening to the employee to discover what obstacles stand in the way to optimum performance.

- Does the employee know that the problem exists?** Sometimes performance problems exist because employees *think* their performance is acceptable. Another possibility is that, although an employee may know that he or she is not performing as expected, the deficiency itself is considered acceptable. These perceptions often result from too little feedback.
- Does the employee know what your expectations are?** One reason employees do not perform up to a supervisor's expectations is that they do not know what those expectations are and, consequently, do not realize that a problem exists.
- Does the employee know how to meet your expectations?** Even when an employee knows what the supervisor's expectations are, he or she may not know specifically what to do and when to do it.
- Are there obstacles outside the employee's control that are affecting his or her performance?** Factors beyond an employee's control may require a supervisor's guidance and support in navigating to prevent adverse effects on performance. Examples of these factors include equipment failure, late or incorrect reports or data, conflicting instructions, too many bosses, lack of materials or supplies, political dynamics, and budget constraints.
- Does negative consequence follow good performance?** Unsatisfactory performance may occur because good performance is punished. This may be hard to recognize. An example of this scenario is the program assistant who has to accept another program assistant's work because he or she finished their own tasks early.
- Does positive consequence follow poor performance?** Similar to the preceding example, the program assistant who has part of his or her work taken away is getting rewarded for not getting their work accomplished.
- Could the employee perform to standards if he or she wanted to?** If the answer to this question is "no," the employment arrangement will need to be evaluated to find out why and to determine if there's a possible solution. In this case, please contact your HR liaison for further assistance.

### Reference

Fournies, F. (200). *Coaching for improved work performance* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.