

Five Step Format for a Coaching Discussion

The coach should plan for the actual coaching discussion and have a clear idea of what is to be accomplished in the session. The coaching session can also be used to define what the employee is to achieve or to follow up on the initial coaching session.

This five-step format is an effective way to structure the coaching discussion:

1. Open the discussion and spark employee interest.
 - State the purpose of the coaching discussion—what you want to accomplish.
 - Discuss the benefits of learning new skills.
 - Check the employee's receptivity and discuss what he or she wants to achieve.
2. Get the employee's views about his or her current performance/skill level.
 - Ask the employee to analyze current performance and skill level.
 - Probe for barriers to accomplishing the assignment.
 - Ask for the employee's ideas about how to address the barriers.
3. Give your feedback and views.
 - Acknowledge and praise areas of agreement.
 - Point out areas of concern and/or disagreement.
 - Share your experiences and expertise.
 - Suggest alternative approaches.
4. Resolve differences.
 - Discuss benefits and drawbacks of different approaches.
 - Vent any interfering emotions.
 - Agree on goals for future performance and begin action planning.



Coaching is a proactive process in which one individual (frequently the leader) guides someone else (typically the employee or team) toward successfully accomplishing an assignment.

"Proactive process" implies that coaching is done before the fact. For example, coaching is appropriate when new or stretching assignments are delegated to someone who may not have all the required knowledge, skill, or confidence. It is also useful for helping someone move good performance to an even higher level. It is typically differentiated from counseling, which is a takes place when the employee has demonstrated performance deficiencies that must be rectified.

5. Work out details of the action plan.

- Finalize and summarize the plan.
- Get the employee's commitment to the plan.
- Set a follow-up date.
- Express your appreciation for the employee's feedback.


Whether you are trying to improve an employee's lagging performance or help a solid performer reach the next level, coaching is most effective when it is an interactive process that is planned ahead of time.

This sample document is only an example and is based on the laws in effect at the time it was written. MRA-The Management Association, Inc. does not make any representations or warranties regarding the appropriateness or prudence of using this information for any particular individual or situation. Your company should add, delete, or modify the content of this document as needed to suit your purposes. This material is for your information only and should not be construed as legal advice. In some circumstances it may be advisable to have legal counsel review final documents prior to implementation. © MRA – The Management Association, Inc.

"Guides" implies that the coach does not provide all the answers and does not simply direct the employee in what to do and how to do it. Directing employees is a "telling" approach, not a guiding approach and is appropriate in emergencies or when the employee does not have the required knowledge. The "telling" approach does not encourage the employee to think through the situation. Unfortunately, many supervisors and managers have become adept at the "telling" approach, even when it is neither required by the situation nor desired by the employee. Proper coaching encourages the employee to step out of the passive role and seek answers independently.

"Successfully accomplish an assignment" implies that the employee should experience success the first time and, by doing so, develop a greater sense of confidence and competence to handle future challenges. This is in contrast to the belief of some supervisors that subscribe to the "sink or swim" method, which can reveal whether a person is resourceful, but may equate to lost productivity, increased frustration, and poor employee relations.

MRA's HR Hotline can help you!

 866-HR-Hotline | 866.474.6854

 InfoNow@mrnet.org

 mrnet.org/24-7/hr-hotline

As one of the largest nonprofit employer associations in the nation, MRA:

Serves 4,000 employers

covering one million employees worldwide.

Holds more than
2,000 Training
events annually.

200 HR experts

with more than 2,000 years of collective knowledge, experience and expertise.

Offers more than
1,000 HR Guides
templates, toolkits, and more.

HR SERVICES



LEARNING & ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT



TALENT MANAGEMENT



TOTAL REWARDS



MRA is Your TotalHR® Resource.

MRA helps you create powerful teams and a safe, successful workplace with talent, tools, and training.



Wisconsin

Minnesota

Illinois

Iowa

www.mranet.org 800.488.4845