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Being a Better Coach

Purpose

- The team leader has a vital role to play in the development of his/her team by operating as a coach or counselor. Many team leaders accept this as sound common sense and have a genuine desire to play their part. For a variety of reasons—time or work pressures, disapproval from others, unwillingness to break new ground—this desire is often not converted into reality. Sometimes team leaders feel they do not have the expertise to master this new “technique.”

Method

Consider the following guidelines about coaching.

1. Essentially, coaching is the process of *setting tasks, monitoring progress, reviewing and learning from performance*.

Each of these apparently simple steps requires just a little more explanation.

Setting tasks; each task should

- a. Have a learning objective.
- b. Be appropriate to the learner’s ability, experience and development needs.
- c. Be capable of being monitored, e.g., dates, reports, collection of information.

Monitoring progress

- a. Meet regularly to discuss progress.
- b. Try to avoid providing answers (if you know them); let the person find out for himself. Ask questions such as: “What do *you* think?” or “What would *you* propose?”

Reviewing and learning from performance

- a. Review when tasks are complete.
- b. Carry out a thorough post mortem, e.g.
 - Why did this work well?
 - How could we improve even more?
 - What went wrong?
 - How could it have been avoided?
 - What should we do next time?

Fifty Activities for Team Building

2. The skills required are the basic skills of the effective manager, which are to
 - a. be able to listen carefully.
 - b. support the learner at all times.
 - c. help the learner analyze his/her own shortcomings and strengths.
 - d. set clear and attainable goals/objectives.
 - e. be aware of the feelings and needs of others.
3. Plan to improve your coaching by completing the *Action Plan for Coaching*, Handout 17.1.

Note

The preceding activity, *How Good a Coach Are You?*, is a useful lead-in for this.



Action Plan for Coaching

Learner's name/job title:

1. Opportunities: What changes do you want to achieve?
2. Objectives: How will you know when the change is accomplished?
3. Timing: How long will this take until completion?
4. Methods: What specific activities/methods will you use?
5. Monitoring: How and when will you monitor progress?

Ask yourself the following:

- a. Are the aims of the coaching important to both of you?
- b. Do the proposed methods offer a reasonable chance of success?
- c. Have you adequate resources to carry out the plan?

