

Top Strategies for Coaching Staff to Success



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Donna Price, President of Compass Rose Consulting, LLC, provides business coaching to small business owners, business leaders, and work teams; using her experience as a senior level manager and extensive background working with people to achieve their goals. Donna's work focuses on building success in business and working with individuals to launch their dream. Donna provides training to managers on coaching their staff to success and ongoing coaching to assist managers refine their coaching skills.

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Creating work environments that are successful benefits both the employer and the employee. There are tremendous advantages to creating effective workplaces. This report outlines top strategies for realizing an effective team and how you can coach your staff to success, so that they are producing more and better and your business has greater earnings. As the manager, business owner or supervisor your commitment to your staff and their success is an essential key.

Be Real, Be Authentic:

In order to build a partnership you must be sincere, real and authentic. If you are not it will be impossible for you to successfully coach staff and build the rapport and loyalty that you want and that your business needs. Staff can read your sincerity. In coaching staff part of the goal is to build a partnership so that staff see you as the leader/owner/supervisor as an ally, someone that is on their side. Your goal as the leader is to have staff fulfilling the company vision. In fact, there are no sides, only the ones that we create. This approach is about taking down the barriers and the "sides" and working as an effective team.



Listen to your staff



Be open to hearing their ideas, their observations and let them know what you can and can't do. Staff have valuable insights and ideas. They are there doing the work of the company or organization. They see what works, what doesn't work and they see why or why not. **This is gold.** They have ideas about solutions. But if you are not open to hearing them and using them you won't know about this gold. The company will continue to function in the ineffective or inefficient ways that it has been operating. As the leader you can create open circles of communication where ideas are valued and welcomed. Share your ideas and ask for their thoughts and feedback. Be willing to be wrong.

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Remove barriers to communication:



There are many barriers to communication with employees. Some are invisible. They are the barriers that people create in their minds, with their personal history, assumptions and beliefs. These might include ideas that the boss is unapproachable. Our beliefs about the roles each person is in can create barriers to communication.

There are also physical barriers. These can include how the office space is set up. The boss's office can be intimidating in itself. The location of the office can establish "walls". Visiting the office can cause stress for employees especially if "summoned" by the boss. As the supervisor you can work to remove these barriers so that they aren't interfering with your communications.

Some barriers can be removed. Move from behind the desk. When you meet with staff sit without desks and tables between you and the employee you break down barriers to communication and ease the environment for the employee. The desk or table in the middle feels safer. It protects us, but it

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also changes the communication dynamic. It can set up a power relationship that gives the message of who is the boss and who is the employee. As you work to break down the barriers to communication, rapport and performance this can be an easy one to remove.

If you are meeting with a group of employees sit in a circle without a large table. Circles are wonderful because everyone can be seen and is equal in the circle. The circle can help remove the "we" vs. "them" structures that exist. You can work within these circles to establish a safe place for employees to communicate with you.

Share your vision:



It's important to start with vision: the company's and the employee's. What is the company vision? The company vision should be compelling and known by staff. When staff don't know the owner's vision for the company it is hard for them to help move it forward. Having a clear and compelling vision that employees can buy into provides a foundation for success.

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Sharing your vision with staff let's them help you in achieving it. Be clear with staff what your vision is for the company. When staff are unclear of the vision of the leaders/owner they cannot be as helpful in accomplishing the vision. They also can't figure out where they fit into the organization.

And the direction it is going in. Stating a clear and compelling vision to staff can be inspiring and motivating to staff.

I recommend that you first look at the core purpose of your business, what is the heart of the business? What is the business about, what is at the center of the business? Once you have identified your core purpose you can more clearly outline your vision. What is the direction you are taking the business? Where do you see the business? What is the growth, the new products, new services that you want in the business? Are there new buildings or other types of expansion? Both the core purpose and the vision are important components for staff to know and understand. The core purpose can give staff deeper understanding of your business, the vision gives them a roadmap.

Why include staff in the vision? Well, if they are working for you but are under an assumption of the purpose of the company and unclear about the direction the company is going the results can be detrimental to the organization. You want staff working in the direction you are going and not against that direction. Often this can happen as a result of this miscommunication or lack of knowledge and the results have a negative impact on the company.

The vision can be exciting, inspiring and ultimately motivating to staff.



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I met with a leadership team in which we discussed vision. During the meeting the owner of the company talked of his vision, the core of what was important to him in the business. It was different from what the company leaders knew. They were surprised. They gained clarity and understanding of what was important, where their focus needed to be. Vision matters, communicating vision matters more!

But what drives the individual isn't the boss's vision, the company's vision, but their own compelling vision.

- Employees can embrace the company vision but...
- True success comes from within and from personal vision
- Personal vision should be compelling and tie into the company vision
- Do you know your employees dreams and visions for their lives and career

Find Out About the Staff's Vision:



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Talking with staff and learning about their vision, their purpose and what they are trying to accomplish is valuable information for you as the leader or owner of the company. Are there ways the organization can support the employee's vision? Does the position that they are in support their vision as well as the company's? This is the ideal, but sometimes it's not the way that it is.

Looking at how you as the leader can empower the employee to live their vision benefits the company in several ways. It continues to build the relationship between you and the employee, it furthers you as a partner in their success, and when employees see that you are interested in them and their vision, they become more dedicated and motivated to achieve the company's vision.

Compelling visions are personal, written in the present tense, as if...they are happening now, and point to an exciting future. Encourage your staff to write their own compelling vision and share it with you.

Several times I have encountered leaders that had employees that wanted their job or wanted to open similar businesses to theirs. It scared them, but it's a really a great opportunity. The opportunity is that they have high motivation, high interest in your role, your jobs. You can use that motivation and interest to train the person, develop the person and at the same time help them in creating their vision.



Use the Performance Appraisal to Enhance Performance and a Framework for Coaching Staff to Success:

Our current appraisal framework:

Often the manager talks about issues that the employee didn't know were coming. The anticipation of the appraisal is stressful and the actual appraisal can be stressful. It's important to recognize your feelings about performance appraisals and to imagine the employee's perspective.

- History of being an uncomfortable experience
- Reframe the experience & create a positive, goal oriented environment that thrives on success, enhancing performance
- An opportunity to tune into the person and find out what is going on with them
- Create a plan for the upcoming year.
- Most individuals (most employees) want to be successful

Use the employee performance appraisal as a format for creating a goal plan with the employee, or you can create a goal plan separately, but either way create a goal plan that focuses the employee's energy towards success.

Today we are talking about how to reframe the experience for both the employee and the manager. With the manager as a coach and partner committed to the employee's success the environment can shift. The goal is to reframe the experience, creating a positive, goal oriented environment that thrives on success and enhancing performance and not on problems or "issues".

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In my experience working with many groups of people solving problems, I found that when they focused on what was going well and built upon it they were more successful than when they worked on what the problems were that they were having and what they needed to improve. In focusing on solutions, they ultimately identified the things that needed improvement as well.

Work with each staff to create a goal plan. Identify the different roles they have in their life and at work so that you can create a comprehensive plan. Keep it simple with at most 10 goals. Including personal goals helps to remind both you and the employee that there should be life/work balance. Start with what is going well and create goals that build on those successes. Write goals that are SMART: specific; measurable; achievable; relevant; time bound.

Create a plan for excellent performance:

You, the supervisor become the partner or the coach – coaching for success. In creating a plan focused on success for the employee, the manager begins to shift the paradigm to one of employee and coach/partner. As supervisors, our role is to build successful teams and we need successful team members in order to do that. If we focus on creating success, we are more likely to create it. Focus on the positive, the solutions. What's going right, how do we create more of it?

When we create goals that are SMART, we can measure them, and track their progress. If goals are soft, not measurable it becomes difficult to



progress the plan or give any feedback. So, how do we make them measurable? Measurable is countable, how many, when, who?

SMART Goals

SMART Goals have certain attributes that make them measurable. When you can measure the goal you then know if you are attaining it. Goals should be results or outcome oriented and not focused on the process.

- **Specific:**
 - *Write the goal with a specific outcome or result.*
- **Measurable:**
 - *Can be counted: how many? How much? Who?*
- **Attainable:**
 - *Is reasonably attainable, can be achieved within reason, a stretch but not impossible.*
- **Relevant:**
 - *Goals are relevant to the person's position, the organization, the vision, values of the company.*
- **Time-Bounded:**
 - *Write goals for the appraisal that can be accomplished within the timeframe of a year.*

This is an opportunity to reframe the experience and create an annual plan that is positive, focused on the future and compelling. The annual performance appraisal is an opportunity to enhance employee performance and create greater success for the company and the individual.

Coaching skills can be used in creating a good performance appraisal experience for both the employee and the supervisor and to keep good performance going throughout the year.

Once you have set goals your partnership has begun. Part of what makes the performance appraisal uncomfortable is that for many it is the only time of the year that their performance is discussed so openly. This plan becomes

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the center of your partnership with the employee. The plan needs to be kept alive and in front of you both. You have focused during this meeting on what has gone well and how you can build upon that over the next year. It is important to keep the goals alive during the year and not wait until the next appraisal to discuss them again. This just keeps the old framework of stress and discomfort going. The first step in keeping it alive is to...

Break Goals into Achievable Steps:

Often goals feel big and that “bigness” makes them overwhelming. Break goals down into the small actions that are needed to accomplish the goal. Identify which step you will take first. Steps can be smaller goals that the employee works on each month. Select doable steps and write them down.

Set up a system of accountability:

Meeting with employees on a regular basis provides a framework for talking about goals, scoring goals and figuring out what happened and what the next steps are. This is your partnership meeting. It should occur at least monthly. This gives employees feedback and a chance to talk with you about the challenges they are facing and how to overcome them.

Regular check-ins help keep people focused. When people know they have set out to accomplish a task by a certain date or the next meeting they are more likely to do it. When there is an accountability structure employee's know that it's important, it matters and they're going to be asked about it. When you set goals and then never check back in on the progress, employees can interpret that the goals didn't really matter and aren't important to you. These partnership meetings must be prioritized by you.



Don't schedule them and then reschedule them and continue putting them off. They are one of the keys in your plan for coaching staff to success.

Monthly review meetings should be positive. You can start with what went right or well. Remember the goals outlined are focused on creating better results for the company. You want that. Focus on the plan. At the monthly meeting spend time to:

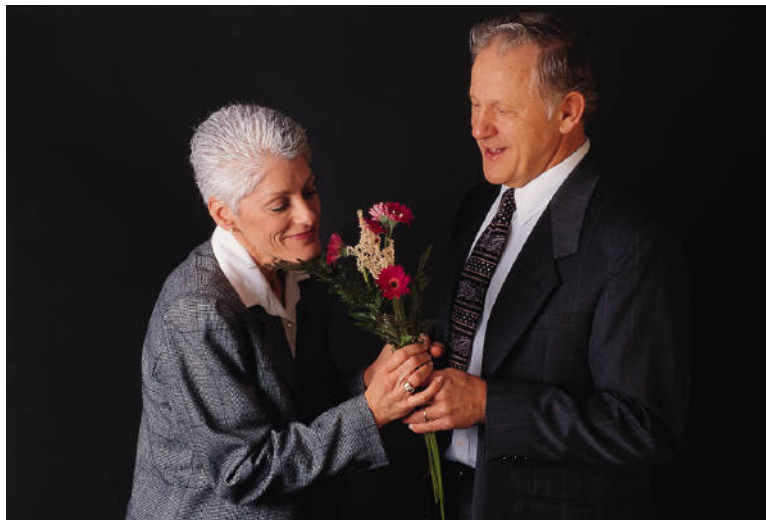
- Review the vision
- Review the accomplishments (What's going right?)
- Review the goals
- Score each goal – give it a percentage 60%; 85%
- When a goal is falling short use coaching skills to help figure out what the problem is and how to change it.
- Does the leadership need to shift to provide more supervision, training, direction....?
- If the goal is below 80% talk about what's in the way? Is the individual in their own way? If the person is in their own way, they need to make a shift in their feelings, beliefs, paradigm, to move forward and get out of their own way. Are they choosing not to make the necessary shift? It's an opportunity to talk about choices that we make. We each operate from a place of personal responsibility. We are responsible for ourselves, our actions.
- Use basic coaching questions to focus the meeting:
 - What's going right?
 - What makes it right?
 - What's the ideal, the vision?
 - What's not quite right yet?
 - What are the resources needed?

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- The monthly review of the PLAN gives you the opportunity to really check-in with staff and support them in developing success. It also prevents the annual performance review dread. They know you are invested in their success as well as that of the company. This is powerful. It develops you as a leader and partner of the staff member and lets you know where the focus needs to be. It also creates a regular stream of communication-both ways that can only improve results.

Be Generous.



Your generosity builds loyalty; generosity of time, benefits, wages, perks, working conditions and yourself. Greed of organizations, leaders or owners does not help their success. Treating staff fairly, and with generosity assists in building the rapport and success that you as the leader want.

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Through effective coaching of staff you can further build your business success. Staff are interested in your success and their's. By following the steps outlined and developing effective coaching skills you can shift the work culture. As the leader, your skills are paramount in building the business' overall success. People are your business, no matter what business you are in. If you don't treat your people well, you won't be able to build the success you want. Treating people well, recognizing their strengths and tapping into their knowledge and wisdom will only assist you in achieving your vision. As the leader you must be committed to success for the business and for the staff that work in the company.

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