



10 Tips to Improve Staff Performance

If you manage people, you should understand the importance of effective coaching. How someone is managed can have an enormous impact on their effectiveness and productivity, and thus impact the productivity of the entire team. To make sure you're coaching your staff in the way that works best for them - and helps them work their best for you – here are 10 tips to think about.

1. Ensure you fully understand what coaching is.

Many managers make incorrect assumptions about coaching. It's important that a manager uses a clear and consistent coaching model, and understands the "*why*" (to enhance staff engagement and performance) as well as the "*how*" (using a collaborative dialogue model of engagement). The manager should be able to distinguish between 'bossing', coaching, counselling, training, and therapy.

2. Check your perspective on people.

A manager who sees people's potential is far better at coaching them towards it. A manager that judges people based on past and current performance, or believes that people are inherently limited, will not make a strong effort to engage staff for optimal performance. An engaged, well-coached employee will always out-perform one who is being mismanaged by a weak boss.

3. Learn and practice an Effective Coaching Model.

It's crucial that you start with a coaching model that is research-based and proven. That being said, there is a difference between taking a two-day seminar on coaching, and actually developing coaching skills. The course is an event, but the other is a process. Just as getting into (and staying in) shape requires consistent workouts rather than just one visit to the "fitness bootcamp" class, becoming a great coach isn't a quick fix. After acquiring the coaching knowledge, it's important to engage in continuous application. Partner with an organization such as ITOL that offers ongoing support and follow-up options.



4. Engage your Boss.

Sometimes a lack of engagement or support from senior management can be a real coaching roadblock. Present a case for the economic benefits of coaching, and make sure that they can see the ROI involved. With engagement at all levels of the organization, investment in a coaching culture will achieve greater traction and superior results.

5. Understand and value personality differences.

When coaching staff, be aware that each person has different motivators and communication styles. For increased impact, learn the styles of your team in order to adapt your communication to the listener. If someone is slower to speak and respond, for example, allow them time to think and process rather than interrupting with 'helpful' suggestions. Effective coaching adapts to the unique style and needs of the person being coached.

6. Prioritize your time - Stay focused.

Coaching can happen in different ways with different needs and circumstances. At times, there will be "mini" coaching opportunities that shouldn't be missed. On other occasions, longer or more intensive coaching sessions are called for. Plan your coaching times and know when enough is enough. Keep the session focused on arriving at a solution within the time frame allowed - avoid endless 'verbiage' about the problem, and coach to a resolution.

7. Stop putting out fires.

A manager who regularly steps in to solve staff's problems isn't doing them (or themselves) any favours. He's only training them to bring him the problems, rather than solving them. Coach your staff to develop their confidence and problem-solving ability. This alone will increase organizational efficiency. Sometimes the simple question, "What can you do about it?" will help to uncover a solution.





8. Seek regular feedback.

To support your continued growth, make sure that you get regular feedback. Awareness of where and how you are succeeding (and not) will assist you in making the changes you need for sustained improvement. This is an area where 360 Feedback is often helpful.

9. Listen, listen, listen.

One of the greatest skills a coach/manager must practice is active listening. Fully deploy listening skills with an open mind in order to ask more effective questions and get to the heart of an issue to assist them in finding a solution.

10. Keep growing and developing.

The rate of change in the world today means that every year, more and more of what we've previously learned becomes obsolete. Keep up-to-date with the latest research and development in the field. Join a Professional Body like ITOL, attend conferences, watch webcasts, subscribe to literature and web feeds.