
TTI DNA[®]

Employee Development/ Coaching

*A session from
Rx Online*

Employee Development/Coaching

Facilitating, supporting and contributing to the professional growth of others.

Why is this skill important?

In today's workplace, it is essential to have an open attitude and willingness both to learn from others and to coach others. Each person brings a unique skill set to the job. Often two people with the same working title have dramatically different areas of expertise and natural talents. We all know that it takes resilience and an open mind to accept constructive criticism and to learn by observing others. But it also takes creativity and a willingness to contribute to individual and group productivity in order to be an effective mentor or coach.

Most effective coaches and mentors have acquired the skills to create and manage professional relationships based on trust. The same people make it their goal to encourage development and nurture learning. You will not become an effective coach or mentor overnight, but you will soon begin to recognize and practice good coaching (and become more open to being coached yourself).

A person who has good skills in Employee Development/Coaching will be able to accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of an individual, evaluate these traits against the requirements of a job or goal, and then design a program that will effectively elevate that person's skills to the level they need to achieve success.

A person with good abilities in Employee Development/Coaching partners with their employees in their development planning, enabling them to take charge of their own growth and learning opportunities. You should serve as a guide and coach to others seeking development opportunities. Don't serve as a director. It is essential that you learn to take a proactive approach to managing your employees, taking responsibility for helping them develop their own strengths and improving on their weaknesses. Feedback, both positive and negative, is a critical part of development and coaching, and well-timed feedback encourages desirable behaviors and skills and helps people stay on-track in their developmental process.

In contrast, a person who has poorly developed skills in this area may not take a proactive approach to management and will fail to perceive the importance of planning ahead to develop contingent talent. Instead, that person will tend to be reactive, dealing only with the immediate needs at hand.

What are skills associated with Employee Development/Coaching?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Employee Development/Coaching:

- Expresses confidence in others' ability to perform.
- Identifies developmental needs.
- Encourages initiative and improvement.
- Provides opportunities for training.

- Gives new, difficult and/or challenging work assignments.
- Acknowledges and praises improvement.
- Trains, coaches and mentors others to develop.
- Views mistakes as opportunities for learning.
- Promotes learning and growth.

How do you develop your own skills in Employee Development/Coaching?

- Provide orientation materials and good training for new or re-located employees.
- Provide ongoing coaching tailored to specific people or situations.
- Express confidence in others' abilities. Always be pleased but not surprised when someone accomplishes something unexpected.
- Create an environment of trust. Keep confidences and give honest and forthright advice. Don't gossip.
- Listen to other people. Be prepared to accept compliments gracefully, but give credit where credit is due and accept constructive criticism just as gracefully.
- Establish 360-degree performance measurement programs and empower individuals to contribute to their own work plans and define their own goals.
- Identify others' strengths and needs for development through formal assessments and informal observation and discussion.
- Design effective plans for development. Define specific goals and create concrete activities that will help you or someone else reach the goals you set.
- Create assignments that encourage people to learn new skills or develop hidden talents.
- Provide resources for training and development. These can range from arranging financial support for after-hours education to providing books and tapes on specific work-related topics.
- Be a role model for development. Be open about the risks you take and the learning experiences you take advantage of.
- Ask yourself what people need to do to get positive feedback from you. Be reasonable and clear about your expectations of others.
- Give positive, immediate recognition and attention to people.
- Be up front about your purpose in giving positive or negative feedback and act with the other person's best interest in mind. Be especially careful to be descriptive rather than evaluative in your feedback.
- Recognize when someone has made efforts at improvement and development and reward his attempts. Don't rely on results as the only measure of improvement.
- Make positive feedback specific and relate it to behavior or action. Describe what a person did, emphasize how it affected the organization and encourage repetition of the behavior or activity.
- If you need to give constructive criticism, do so in a private conversation. Give feedback that focuses on the quality or quantity of the work being done, not on the individual doing it.
- Conduct assessment meetings after important assignments are complete. Discuss strengths and mistakes made while pursuing the assignment to enable the experience to be a constructive learning one.
- Encourage the view that mistakes are opportunities for learning. Don't write off mistakes, but make careful and intelligent analysis of mistakes made. Try to create concrete plans for avoiding the same mistake in the future.

Employee Development/Coaching

Activities

Activity I: Recognizing Others' Potential

Recognizing the unique strengths and needs of others is critical in coaching and mentoring others. Think carefully about someone who is asking for your advice or who has asked you to serve as her mentor.

List three factors or traits that you see as key strengths for this individual

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write two ideas for encouraging or promoting each of the behaviors you listed as strengths in the individual.

1. _____
2. _____

List three factors or traits that you see as problem areas for this individual.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write two ideas for modifying each of the behaviors you listed as problem areas for this individual.

1. _____
2. _____

Activity 2: Training and Coaching

Survey your employees to determine what training and coaching needs they perceive in your department. Act on their recommendations. If software training is needed, arrange it. If employees feel they need more of your time, arrange for more office hours.

Look for training materials relevant to jobs in your department. If they exist, read them to familiarize yourself with the material in them and update them if they are out of date. If no training materials exist, work with current staff members to design training materials for their positions. Be careful to assure them that their jobs are not threatened!

If your company does not use a performance measurement system, pursue implementing one in your department. There are many reasonable programs that are relatively easy to implement.

Activity 3: Goal Setting

1. Use whatever performance assessment tool your company uses (or one you have learned to use if your company does not currently have a performance appraisal system.) Schedule regular meetings with your employees to discuss performance within the framework of this assessment tool. If there are discrepancies between your perceptions of the person's work and their own perceptions, work to understand them. Help the employee understand what skills are critical for success in her position.
2. For each employee, fill out the following table:

Coaching Needs	
What needs has the employee mentioned to you? What does he wish to improve on or get further training in?	
What job changes have occurred in that person's position that necessitates new skills?	
What issues appeared during the employee's normal performance appraisal?	
What upcoming responsibilities will this employee need new skills for?	

Activity 4: Encouraging Others

Set a specific goal of making positive and encouraging comments or taking action to help others reach their goals. Make a list of people you wish to encourage, determine something positive you can say or do for each person, and find a way to take all of the positive actions that you can make by the end of this week.

Person's Name	Positive Action to Take for Him/Her	Completion Date