

LEAD WELL

THE TEN
COMPETENCIES
OF
OUTSTANDING
LEADERSHIP

TIM SCHNEIDER

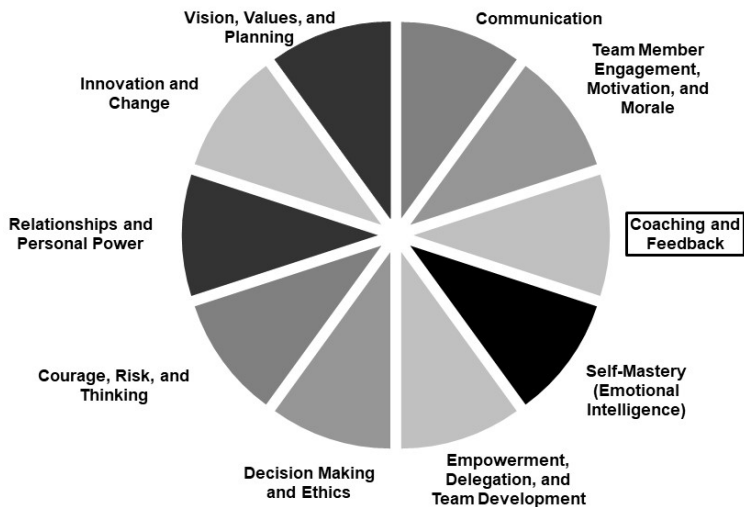


Chapter 3

Coaching and Feedback

“Coaching is destined to be the leadership approach to the twenty-first century.”

James Belasco



- ✓ Positive Feedback
- ✓ Feedback Mechanics
- ✓ Eligible Populations
- ✓ Balance
- ✓ Correct Fit
- ✓ Why Bother
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- ✓ What They Need/Frequency
- ✓ Corrective Feedback
- ✓ Coach as Teacher/Counselor

Coaching has many definitions and contexts. For our purpose, coaching is a stream of communication from the leader to team members for the purpose of maintaining and improving performance.

Often times, coaching is viewed as an athletic function that summons visions of Bobby Knight, Dean Smith, Tom Osborne, or Lou Holtz. The model provided by the athletic version of coaching isn't far off from the business model but there are some distinct differences.

One of the challenges expressed by leaders is the lack of time to devote to coaching. This is a classic symptom of a leader being too involved in doing and not involved in leading. When debunked this comment is really more about a lack of comfort in coaching skills than it is about available time.

Team members who do not receive regular coaching often feel disengaged from the organization and leader. Morale suffers and in the absence of good coaching, team members take an active role in defining what's good and bad in the organization. Strong personalities, sometimes for very bad reasons, will rise to an unofficial position of importance and drive team effectiveness. Team members with no coaching also become fearful, tentative, and resentful from not knowing where they stand.

When effective coaching is present, the opposite occurs. Team members are engaged, upbeat, clear in their direction, and clear in their understanding of where their performance is at. With good coaching, team members develop a much clearer understanding of the organization's needs and how they fit in the big picture. They also see hope for their own growth.

The core coaching skill is good communication. To coach you must be able to communicate. In groups, with individuals, following up in writing; a leader must be able to effectively express comments, suggestions, praise, and encouragement.

The other core skill in coaching is being a people person. Although this phrase is grossly overused, you must enjoy interacting with team members to be an effective coach. The boss that hides in her office and buries her nose in projects and paperwork is often expressing a discomfort in dealing with people, thus avoiding coaching activities.

The journey into effective, excellent coaching begins by breaking it into three separate pieces. The first piece is feedback. Feedback is providing either positive or corrective information to team members about their performance or behavior. This is the most common form of coaching and should represent a big part of a leader's coaching interactions.

The second tenet of coaching is teaching and mentoring. This is different from feedback in that it takes a more long-term and nurturing approach. Teaching and mentoring are about providing skills to be successful and growing people for maximum results.

The final piece of the coaching puzzle is a catch-all that includes decisions to release team members, game planning, and protecting team members. For the purpose of simplicity, we will call this operational coaching.

No single part of coaching is more important than another and none are effective without the other. For team success, feedback is needed, mentoring and teaching are needed, and the operational elements of coaching are certainly engaged. All are equally important and equally distributed from a leadership perspective.

Positive Feedback-The Basics

The correct and frequent delivery of positive feedback is the most powerful tool available to any leader. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most widely misunderstood and underused.

Positive feedback is providing appreciation and acknowledgement when a team member performs at, or higher than, expectations. It is simply designed to replicate the positive behavior or performance from the team member

and create a culture where others strive for positive feedback and acknowledgement.

For those who are dog owners and those that have previously enjoyed the company of man's best friend, compare positive feedback in work team members to the process of conditioning dog responses. When you throw the tennis ball to the dog and he brings it back, you say, "Good dog." When you throw the ball again and he brings it back, you again say, "Good dog."

In the event that you cease saying, "Good dog" the dog will stop bringing the ball back. You say "Good dog" to praise a positive event and encourage the replication of an appreciated behavior.

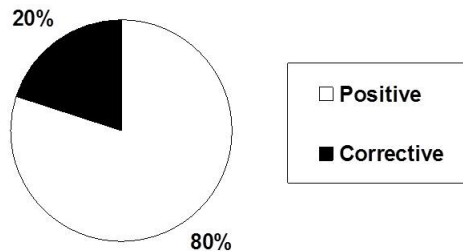
If you've raised children, you can compare interactions with them to the correct use of positive feedback at work. When a child brings home a good report card, we say, "Good job, nicely done." The intent is to reward the good grades and encourage more good grades. Every time the grades come back well; we repeat the praise.

Please don't misunderstand this comparison. Adult working humans are much different than dogs and children. Or are they?

Adults react to reinforcement conditioning in the same way as children and dogs. When positive feedback exists, they will

replicate the behavior. When no positive feedback exists, there is little motivation to replicate the performance.

Feedback Distribution



The target distribution of feedback is 80% positive and 20% corrective.

Why Bother

In about thirty years of consulting and training work, we have documented an incredible phenomenon related to the lack of positive feedback in working environments. It's the "Why Bother" phenomenon.

Basically, what happens is that a team member does something well and the leader does not acknowledge or appreciate the activity. The first time around, there's not much harm because intrinsic motivation and pride will drive the team member to do well again. Unfortunately, by the second or third time without acknowledgement, thanks, or reasonable

belief that any appreciation is coming, the team member will develop a “why bother” approach and begin performing at minimum or worse levels.

This phenomenon also occurs when a leader is seen only in the role of critic in chief. The only time we hear from the boss is when something is wrong, or she always tells people how to do it better so, “Why bother?”

“Why bother” can become pervasive in workplaces and organizational culture when there is no expectation for positive feedback. It’s very common when a leader ascribes to the “I pay them to do a good job,” or “I expect them to do a good job,” or “when they don’t see me, they know they are doing well,” philosophies. Arcane and fatally flawed, you can’t produce replicated good performance through ignoring people.

Another contributor to “why bother” is using systems instead of human interaction and positive feedback. Annual performance reviews, employee of the month plaques, and bonus checks have value but do not come close to the immediate reinforcement needed to reproduce good performance.

As a leader, if you want to jump start the performance of team members or recharge an entire work group that you

think is under-achieving, positive feedback can cure the “why bother” phenomenon quickly and re-motivate team members.

The Mechanics of Positive Feedback

The desired outcome of positive feedback is to have a team member continue to produce good results, strive for additional positive feedback, and replicate needed workplace behaviors. In order to achieve those outcomes, positive feedback needs to be delivered correctly.

The first rule of positive feedback delivery is immediacy. As with any reward, it must be given close to the event to provide the necessary memory connection and avoid the “why bother” phenomenon. Immediacy is relevant to when the leader learns of the performance and availability. A direct supervisor with an office adjacent to someone who handled a difficult customer well will have a different definition of immediacy than a regional manager located in Buffalo when she learns of the great performance of a branch office team member in Atlanta. Immediacy requires action as soon as soon as feasible, not as a second, third, or fourth priority.

Positive feedback must be delivered in a direct and straight forward manner. For the objective of positive feedback to be met, the recipient must clearly understand the message. If the positive feedback is wrapped in a long and convoluted story laced with historical comparisons and first-person references,

there's a good chance the team member will disconnect, and all the value of the positive feedback will be lost. There is no substitute for the direct and simple approach of, "Good job with that project," or, "Thank you for handling that customer."

As shown in the example above, specificity is also a key element in positive feedback. Without event or behavior specificity, positive feedback will lose its effectiveness and sound hollow and insincere. When positive feedback is connected to specific events and behaviors, it demonstrates your attentiveness as a leader and conveys the strong message of sincerity and genuineness.

Your demeanor when delivering positive feedback is the final mechanical element. The bottom line here is that your delivery tone must match the tone of the message. Effectiveness is hurt greatly when a message of appreciation is delivered in a flat, cold, or grim manner. Positive feedback needs to make an emotional connection beyond just speaking the words. Team members need to feel your appreciation and enthusiasm for the achievement.

Unchained Melody

One of the most important rules of coaching involves connecting positive and corrective feedback messages. This method has been used for years and even achieved a name: The Sandwich Method. This describes the abhorrent practice

of placing corrective feedback between two pieces of positive feedback.

Nothing could be more ineffectual than combining or enjoining different types of feedback. The self-critical will only remember the corrective piece. The halo effect types will only remember the positive feedback. At a bare minimum, the person receiving the feedback will be confused.

“Did I receive praise, or did I get chewed out?”

The most common expression of chained feedback comes in the form of, “You did a great job with that customer, but you needed to complete the order form in a timelier manner.” The big *but*. You can see some team members expecting it. When they hear a piece of positive feedback, they wait for the other shoe to drop and hear the *but* statement.

The interesting part of this method is for whom it is designed. It certainly does not help provide a clear message to the team member receiving the feedback. It certainly doesn't ensure good spirits and the replication of great results from the person receiving the feedback. This method was designed for ease of delivery by the person providing the coaching. Easy, yes. Effective, absolutely not.

Feedback needs to be delivered in separate event formats. If the performance was good, the team member receives positive feedback without chained conditions or comparisons.

If the performance was not good, the team member receives corrective feedback without glossy coating. Positive feedback and corrective feedback. The two shall not be joined together.

Correctly so, some people have discussed performance where the bulk of the performance was good but there were legitimately some things the team members could have done better. This is a situation in which the leader must use some judgment and decide what type of feedback is most appropriate and what type of feedback could be better deferred for a teaching or mentoring type of session. When the bulk of the performance is positive, provide positive feedback and wait on any discussion of things that could be fine-tuned or done better.

Eligible Populations-The Superstars

One of the bigger stigma points related to positive feedback is wrapped around the eligible populations and who receives it.

In most organizations, regardless of type or size, between five and ten percent of team members are exceptional contributors. The “A” players. These are the people that consistently achieve more, work harder, and generally aspire to higher responsibility levels. Not only do they receive positive feedback regularly, but they also often demand it. They are the team members that will often tell you what

they've done well, or the leader is already well aware of their awesome performance.

It's tempting to take this type of superstar performance for granted, but don't. Believing that these star players provide their own internal feedback or that more feedback for more good performance may spoil them will lead them down the path of "why bother."

Eligible Populations-The Average Joe

Most organizations also have a large population of team members that are "just doing their jobs." Nothing spectacular. No superstar status. Just doing what we need them to do. These team members are often the plurality of a working unit and are likely to comprise eighty to ninety percent of a total team population.

The epiphany question about this population is whether or not they deserve positive feedback. The simple answer to this is yes. The more complex answer is also yes.

The population of standard performers is the population that is most at risk of leaving the organization because they are not appreciated, engaged or acknowledged. They toil away at what we need and ask of them but rarely hear from us unless something is wrong. This population is also at risk of performance deteriorating beyond acceptable levels.

The only way to encourage their continued contributions to organizational success is to provide them with the positive feedback earned by achieving their objectives and meeting expectations.

Eligible Populations-The Problems

To complete the bell curve, we also have between five and ten percent of team members that perform below standard or are problematic on behavioral levels.

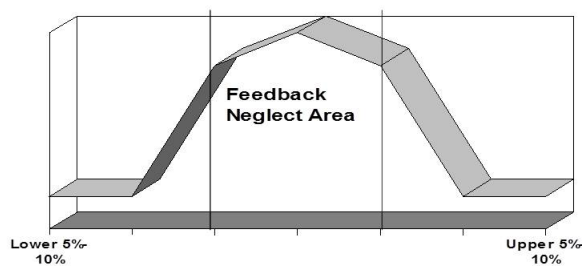
A typical pattern develops with these team members. After they've been coached, counseled, and documented, supervisors and managers go out of their way to hyper-scrutinize their performance. They look for additional mistakes, stumbles, and failures, and when they're found, more coaching, more discipline, and more forms are engaged.

What does that course of action achieve? Team members who are more disgruntled and detached. Team members who feel hopeless. Team members who become our biggest critics and are toxic in the working environment. That's what we create with this approach.

Documentation and formal discipline have their place. They're necessary from a compliance perspective and to show good faith and fairness. What they don't do is make someone a better or more successful team member.

With the same vigor that is used find more mistakes and issues, effective leaders go out of their way to provide positive feedback when a problem team member does something well. This technique has a greater success rate than the continued hyper-scrutiny of a team member's performance. Though not a panacea with tough team members, it is another useful tool.

Neglected Feedback



Very often, average performers do not receive any volume of positive feedback.

What You Need is Not What They Need

Another stumbling block is using your own need for positive feedback as a model for giving it to everyone else.

Leaders have greater self-management. Leaders have greater resiliency. Leaders have greater mechanisms for providing honest feedback internally. You know when you've

done well. You may even have a small, internal celebration. Unfortunately, many leaders assume that all team members have the same internal dynamics.

People need to feel appreciated and that their contributions are valued. This goes beyond a paycheck. They desperately want to hear some positive feedback from their leaders.

In a perfect organizational climate and culture, line level leaders are hearing positive feedback from mid-level managers. Mid-level managers are hearing positive feedback from division leaders. Division leaders are hearing positive feedback from senior executives. That's the way it should be.

Reality check. Sadly, in many organizations, positive feedback needs to be provided to team members even when the leader is not receiving any himself. It's easier when you receive it but just because you might not be isn't an excuse not to provide it to your team members.

There's another message here as well. Some team members will attempt to rebuff or minimize any positive feedback. They will even tell you they don't need it. Don't buy into their rebuffing. They want positive feedback and need it as much as any other person.

Positive Feedback Frequency

Many leaders fear they may end up providing too much positive feedback.

The bottom line is, there's no such thing.

When results are positive and a team member achieves success, they should receive positive feedback. Might be twice a day. Might be six times. Might be once this week.

When delivered correctly and to all eligible populations of team members, there is no spoiling the child. There is just the replication of positive behaviors and good performance.

The Need for Balance

As the transition begins from the positive feedback role of coaching into the corrective feedback role, balance between the two must be achieved.

Consistently, one of the most frustrating comments from team members is that they only hear from the boss when things are bad. Or even the direct quote from the boss, "They know they're doing fine when they don't hear from me." This tends to be symptomatic of an environment led by a critical boss in which corrective feedback dominates.

Another symptomatic comment relates to team members who do not easily accept corrective feedback. They become defensive. They get angry.

Take a close, long look in the mirror. Defensiveness is not an innate, genetic behavior. It is learned. It is learned from an environment that is void of any positive feedback. It is learned from an environment in which the boss only bears bad news or criticism of work. The only time team members are called into the office is to be chewed out.

With that type of environment, even the most well-meaning team member will become defensive and bitter when all he hears about is what he's doing poorly. The effective leader strives for balance between positive feedback and corrective coaching. Even better, the effective leader evaluates where the organization is in terms of global performance and manages individual feedback in the same proportion. If the organization is hitting eighty percent of all targets, group leaders will provide a proportion of eighty percent positive feedback to twenty percent corrective feedback.

Balance and proportion will create a culture where corrective feedback is received as easily as positive feedback.

Corrective Feedback

The polar opposite of positive feedback is corrective feedback. The purpose of positive feedback is to achieve the replication of a valued event or behavior. Therefore, the purpose of corrective feedback is to reduce or eliminate poor performance or behavior.

Corrective feedback, in large part, is the process of establishing expectations and boundaries for team members. It is not punitive. It is not a form of discipline. It is rather a very direct response to a situation when a team member does not produce or behave in needed areas.

A great disconnect occurs in many organizations because of a hesitancy or fear in providing regular corrective feedback. When asked, team members will pretty universally want to know where they stand. They want to know what they're doing well and what they could do better. In the other corner, many leaders have trepidations and fears associated with providing corrective feedback and would rather hold the information for later. Some would rather put it in writing or surprise a team member with the corrective feedback in an annual review.

The remarkable thing about corrective feedback is that it utilizes many of the same skills and techniques associated with positive feedback. Immediacy in corrective feedback is

very important to make sure that the risk of a poor piece of performance or bad behavior is not replicated. In corrective feedback, this risk takes on a multiplier effect because other team members see when someone errs and isn't coached about the event. This could cause greater performance slippage among the team, and you'll end up coaching multiple people instead of a single team member.

One of the reasons that immediacy of corrective coaching is often missed is because of an avoidance tendency in many leaders. Fearing a confrontation or not wanting to risk their likeability, some leaders defer a corrective coaching interaction until later. Unfortunately, later rarely happens and some leaders use justifying statements such as, "I'll talk to her if she does it again," or, "The next time he does that, I'll talk with him," or, "It really wasn't that big of a deal." These types of deferrals must be fought off and the feedback must be provided immediately when performance or behavior is unacceptable.

Another skill shared by both corrective feedback and positive feedback is using a matter-of-fact communication method. In positive feedback, a direct approach is used to improve clarity and make sure team members understand what they've done well in the simplest terms. With corrective feedback, clarity is important, but directness is used to make sure the leader doesn't use too many words or paint himself

into a corner. He simply indicates the failure point, iterates the expectation, and makes sure the message was understood.

That might sound like, “Bob, you were late today. I need you here every morning at 8:00. Are you clear with that?” Or perhaps, “Mary, your report is not accurate. You need to go back and check the numbers in the farthest right columns. This report must be accurate because of the impact it has on our financial statements. Do you understand what I need?”

Some people will look at this type of dialog and perceive harshness. However, harshness is communicated by tone and not the words you use. A direct delivery ensures that the team member clearly understands the intent of the coaching interaction and the expectations for performance or behavior. It’s not harsh but direct and to the point.

Tone and Demeanor are Important

In corrective coaching, your tone and demeanor are important in making sure the dialog doesn’t spiral out of control or turn into a heated argument.

Corrective coaching is about changing behavior, not belittling or humiliating team members. Yelling does not work. Providing corrective coaching when you are angry or disappointed does not work. Those emotions come out in the dialog and guarantee a poor coaching session.

When the leader is emotionally hyper-charged, it's the wrong time to provide corrective coaching. Those are the moments when the leader must exercise some good self-management and judgment and walk away. Immediacy is important but you must be able to deliver the corrective feedback in a calm and cool manner. If the team member senses anger in you, she will respond with anger as well. It won't take long for the interaction to end with one or both parties saying things they shouldn't, and the relationship being strained beyond repair.

One of the best techniques to control tone and demeanor in corrective coaching is to focus only on a singular event or behavior. When a leader rattles off a laundry list of failures, his emotional thermostat will rocket up as will the tone and demeanor of the team member. Single event corrective coaching will also ensure that the dialog is not about the total value of a team member but about a single performance error or behavioral failure.

Controlling the Dialog in Corrective Coaching

Some leaders tend to think there's some type of constitutionally guaranteed right for the team member to have his say during corrective coaching. In some instances, a healthy exchange of information is needed, but more often it's unnecessary and turns a simple coaching session into forty-five minutes of wasted time you will never recover.

Think about the times you provided corrective feedback and opened the discussion to the team member. In most cases, what you heard was either excuses, blame, or denial. In all those instances, the responses didn't change that the team member exhibited below expectation performance.

The best course of action is to not invite team member responses during corrective coaching. Lay out the issues, reiterate your expectations, and obtain a commitment for understanding or correction. Anything else becomes background noise and not particularly useful. One of the reasons team members use excuses, blame, or denial is that it's worked for them in the past. You or a fellow leader bought into it and backed off the corrective coaching. You taught them to use those responses.

If you do allow team member discussion during corrective coaching, each of the responses must be met head-on and challenged appropriately. If you bite on the response, you are further allowing the team member to escape responsibility for not meeting expectations.

With denial, it's important to always use your first-person observation of performance or behavior. This closes the door on any challenges such as, "Who said that?" or, "Who told you?" Those are awkward situations at best and in many instances, impossible to work through. Using first person

coaching such as, “I saw you ...” or, “When I reviewed your report...” will eliminate most denial objections.

Blaming others is a pretty common response in corrective coaching. Sometimes it comes in comparatives to other team members’ performance or even the leader’s behavior. It’s important to shift the team member’s focus back to personal accountability and say, “This is about your ...” or, “This is not about JoAnne, this is about you.”

Excuse making team members require a more diplomatic approach. Using your best leadership judgment, you must determine if the excuse is justified and beyond the control of the team member or just an excuse that could have been anticipated or worked through.

When dialogs are controlled correctly, most corrective coaching sessions will last no more than a few minutes. Focus on issue, expectation, and understanding and keep the side dialogs and debate to a minimum.

Environment is Critical

Where you perform corrective feedback is as important as how and when. These interactions must be private and not done in any environment where other team members can hear the details of the conversation.

The model used by most people is to use an office and shut the doors, windows, and blinds. Unfortunately, the only time some leaders shut the doors, windows, and blinds is to deliver corrective feedback, disciplinary action, or to terminate a team member. You might as well put a neon sign on the office door indicating that bad news is in session.

Try to use a location that ensures the needed privacy for corrective coaching without calling attention to the event. Use a hallway, meeting room, parking lot, or someplace that is quiet and private but doesn't signal what's going on. It will also add a certain amount of unpredictability to the leader's routine so that coming into the office won't automatically signal bad news.

Consequences of Failure

Another point of good judgment for coaching leaders is when to add some language about the consequences of continued failure or poor performance. This is an "if, then" statement that clearly lays out what will occur or could occur if the team member continues with unacceptable performance or bad behavior.

This type of statement most often sounds like, "If this occurs again, I will have no choice but to ..." The part about having no choice is a reinforcement of the leader's

responsibility to the organization to discipline or terminate a team member when they continually fall below expectations.

The reason that judgment is so important here is that not all corrective coaching sessions should include this element. In fact, it should be reserved for the most serious corrective coaching or in those cases where the team member is being coached for the same thing or similar event on multiple occasions.

Adding the consequences of failure statement to corrective coaching is actually a service to team members. They need to know how serious an event is, and they need to understand that there are consequences to repeated failures. The statement also disarms any objections to increased use of discipline or termination, “because you didn’t tell me it was this serious.”

Why Some Corrective Coaching Sessions Get Heated

Many experienced leaders, managers, and supervisors tell great horror stories of corrective coaching sessions gone wild. They tell of the screaming team member, the threatening team member, the crying team member, and the ultra-defensive team member.

What most leaders won’t do, however, is to look in the mirror and determine why the corrective coaching session

went poorly. They won't see if they caused or facilitated the session spiraling out of control.

The bulk of problems associated with corrective coaching sessions arise from a lack of balance between positive feedback and corrective feedback. If the only time team members hear from the boss is when they've failed at something, you can guarantee their defensiveness and bitterness. If they only see the boss when something is wrong, they will develop resentment, anger, and deep disappointment.

The simple solution to ensuring the corrective feedback coaching sessions go well is to make sure positive feedback is provided in the correct dosage well in advance of providing any corrective feedback. Consider feedback as a bank account. In order to take something out (corrective feedback) you first must make some deposits (positive feedback).

The Other Sides of Coaching

There are several more key competencies related to coaching that are as important as providing positive and corrective feedback. They might not be as prevalent in terms of time invested but they are equally important. Some of these coaching roles are significant paradigm shifts from the traditional leadership view.

Correct Fit-The Beginning

The first interaction a leader has with a team member is during the hiring and recruiting process. Although usually brief, this first meeting needs to be used to assess the proper fit of a potential team member.

Traditionally, interviews were used to discuss qualifications, education, and experience. All those things have value, but not nearly as much as organizational or team fit and interpersonal skills. To drive this point home, look at your current problematic team members. The ones with two-inch thick files. The ones that come off and on disciplinary action with regularity. The ones that are constantly causing trouble but avoiding termination.

Now, as you look at those problematic team members, critically review why they are problematic. Is it because of a lack of technical skills, qualifications, and education or is it because they're a poor fit with the existing team or they lack interpersonal skills? Most managers and leaders agree it's because of the latter and not the former. Interpersonal skills and ability to fit with the existing team are far greater predictors of workplace success than technical ability or education.

The leader's job during the interview process is to determine if someone will fit properly with the existing group

and in the culture built by the leader and team. This is most often discovered in situational questions about how a job candidate would respond and react to common scenarios in your working environment. The leader can then compare the job candidate's response to the desired outcome or how the team currently responds and reacts. This is also a great technique for behavioral interviewing.

The leader must also check and test a potential team member's interpersonal skills. How do they work with others? How do they communicate? How do they solve problems? How do they handle adversity? How do they operate under pressure and stress? What do terms like accountability and responsibility mean to them? These are the interpersonal skill check points that are so critical in the modern working environment.

An effective leader recruits team members based on interpersonal skills and fit and avoids the common over-emphasis on experience and education.

Correct Fit-The End

The most difficult role of coaching is ending someone's employment. Difficult, but necessary.

In fact, many managers and supervisors make a far bigger mistake by extending employment longer than they should and providing way too many opportunities for improvement

and change. This is not an invitation to be rash and take these decisions lightly, but the impact of not terminating a team member when required is far greater than terminating a team member too soon.

The Lakota Sioux tribes of the northern and western plains had a saying: “When you encounter a dead horse, it is best to dismount.” Not comparing team members to dead horses, but good leaders recognize when someone is not fitting or not performing pretty early in the team relationship.

When the determination is made, after appropriate coaching and counseling, that the team member will not perform or will not fit, the leader must end the employment.

In the modern working dynamic, most firing decisions require multiple levels of approval and many sets of documentation and hoops to jump through. One of the biggest leadership mistakes is to look at these obstacles as insurmountable. Some managers and supervisors, when told to obtain additional documentation, simply give up and label the team member as fire-proof or protected. This mistake, although convenient at the time, will lead to greater performance and behavior problems with the entire team.

Dragging out a termination action sends a horrible message to other team members. Rewarding poor performance or behavior tells the team that those actions

work. As a leader, you will also be faced with people that dare you to fire them. Don't back down. Do them the favor for which they are asking.

Coach as Teacher

One of the most interesting leadership coaching roles is that of teacher. It can be challenging and extremely rewarding when the teaching turns into performance.

Teaching occurs when a team member needs instruction, and the leader is the primary source of information. This model is not as optimal as peer-based teaching, but it represents the reality in many operations. There are two primary issues to be concerned with related to teaching. They are over-teaching and under-teaching. Each are equally damaging and can be a source of disengagement and dissatisfaction from team members.

Over-teaching occurs when a leader provides too much information or too much detail. Instructions need to have room for team member participation and day-to-day innovation. If they are overly detailed, that room does not exist, and innovation and participation will not occur. The other risk point in over-teaching is convoluting the chain of accountability. That will be covered in detail later in sheep breeding comments.

Under-teaching is usually an assumptive behavior. That means the leader assumes the team member knows more than he actually does. The leader provides very little in the way of direction because of the belief that the team member already knows the rest. In truth, the team member should be the sole source of how much information he does or does not know. The leader is responsible for creating an environment and culture that allows team members to ask for teaching and be open about their lack of operational abilities.

A final pitfall related to teaching is also assumptive in nature. Far too often the leader uses a teaching method that makes sense for them. For example, if the leader learned it by reading the manual, he or she will guide team members to do the same. If the leader learned by doing it on the job, the leader will direct others to do the same. The problem with this is that all people learn differently. The effective leader will find the learning style of the team member and gear teaching accordingly.

Effective teaching needs to be driven, from a stylistic and content perspective, by the team member, and performed by the leader with patience and empathy.

Coach as Counselor

As some roles of coaching are under-utilized, the role of counselor tends to be over-used.

The baseline definition of the counselor role is to delve from standard corrective feedback into the reason for the performance or behavioral lapse. Rather than talking about being late, the counselor tries to determine the reason for the tardiness.

There are times when a counseling approach is absolutely necessary but it's relatively rare. Also remember what your fiduciary responsibility is and isn't. Your job is to protect the organization, not cure the person. You are not qualified to act as a counselor when you get into discussions of substance abuse, relationship issues, or psychological problems.

Sometimes our team members need to talk. Sometimes they have complex issues crossing into work performance and behavior. Listen to them. Be empathetic. Be compassionate. Be supportive. Don't be overly anxious to solve or offer solutions. Gauge that with caution.

By the way, there is a significant difference between empathy and sympathy. Empathy is understanding where a person is coming from and their perspective. Sympathy is compromising expectations or requirements due to an event

or series of events. Some team members seek a leadership ear to gain sympathy and avoid accountability.

The best course of action for most leaders is to be a referring source when they believe counseling is needed. Effective leaders find they can be empathetic and caring without crossing professional boundaries when they refer team members to appropriate professionals inside and outside of their organization. Avoid using the auto response of “You need to go see human resources,” and demonstrate genuine concern before you make the referral.

Quick Guide: Rules for Positive Feedback

1. Immediate
2. Communication Method: In-Person
3. Communication Approach: Direct and To the Point
4. Communication Tone: Positive and Upbeat
5. Environment for Delivery: Private First, Then Public with Permission
6. Overcome Objections
7. Be a Gracious Receiver of Positive Feedback
8. Provide Feedback to “Star” Performers
9. Provide Feedback to Troubled Team Members
10. Provide Feedback to “Average” Team Members

Quick Guide: Rules for Corrective Feedback

1. Immediate
2. Communication Method: In-Person
3. Communication Approach: Direct and To the Point
4. Communication Tone: Non-Emotional and Low-Key
5. Environment for Delivery: Private
6. Overcome Objections and Control Interaction
7. Provide Feedback to “Star” Performers
8. Provide Feedback to Troubled Team Members
9. Provide Feedback to “Average” Team Members
10. Use Consequences of Failure When Needed

Quick Guide: Recruiting Team Members

1. Do NOT Settle

- Take Time to Recruit New Team Members
- Start Recruitment Over if Needed
- Do NOT Look for a Warm Body
- Team Members are the Legacy of a Leader
- Look for Entire Package of Skills and Attitude Desired

2. Recruit for Attitude and Fit

- Avoid Over-Emphasis on Technical Skills
- Avoid Over-Emphasis on Education
- Avoid Over-Emphasis on Experience
- Look for Positive and Energized Attitude
- Look for Personal and Workplace Skills

3. Get Additional Evaluations

- Second Interviews
- Involve Team Members
- Check References
- Team Members
- Customers
- Friends and Family

4. Look for Candidates in Non-Traditional Pools

5. Slow Down and Make Good Choices

Quick Guide: Improving Teaching and Training

1. Involving Team Members
 - The Leader Might Not Be the Best Teacher
 - People Doing the Work Know Best
 - Connects Team to New Team Members
 - Allows for Re-Forming of Team (Tuckman)
2. Patience
3. Formalize the Process
4. Appeal to All Learning Styles
 1. Solitary
 2. Social
5. Provide Learning for All Learning Approaches
 1. Visual
 2. Auditory
 3. Kinesthetic
6. Certify and Celebrate Learning
7. Create Opportunities for Continuing Learning and Growth
8. Create a Culture of Learning and Knowledge Sharing

