

[From the Bookshelf]

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The Coach: Creating Partnerships for a Competitive Edge  
by Steven J. Stowell, Ph.D. and Matt M. Starcevich, Ph.D.; Center for  
Management and Organization Effectiveness, 1987.

New work technologies, increased competition, and employees' desire for more involvement in their work are changing the traditional role of the supervisor. Rather than directing, planning, and controlling the work, supervisors are asked to facilitate processes, and to mentor, counsel, and coach their employees. In organizations moving to teams, coaching is an important aspect of the team leader role.

"Coaching is the key mechanism for partnership building and maintenance. It gives you the opportunity to change and focus behavior that concern you, or to motivate and reinforce behavior that you find desirable."

According to Steven Stowell and Matt Starcevich, supervisors and team leaders need to take time to work with employees in a positive manner to resolve problems and develop employees to their full potential. Their book, *The Coach: Creating Partnerships for a Competitive Edge*, is written as a coaching tool to help supervisors and team leaders develop techniques suited to a wide variety of personalities and situations. Human resources management specialists may find this book useful in helping those who seek guidance on how to develop their coaching skills.

\* Eight-Step Coaching Model

Eight-Step Coaching Model. Based on an in-depth study, the authors have developed an Eight-Step Coaching Model. (NOTE: This description of the model focuses on problem resolution, but the authors point out that the model also may be used to challenge and improve the performance of employees who are already performing well.)

1. Be Supportive. Probably the most important component of the coaching model, support is given in all of the steps in different ways. Support can be demonstrated through flexibility, assistance, understanding, listening, positive feedback, encouragement, and openness.
2. Define problem and expectations. The coach and employee must mutually define the problem in a non-accusatory manner. The employee should be given time to explain the situation and the coach should restate the

problem to make sure the problem is mutually understood. The coach should clarify the expectations desired. It is best to work on only one problem at a time.

3. Establish impact. This step helps the employee understand the negative impact of the problem being addressed. It gives the employee a chance to offer solutions for improvement.
4. Initiate a plan. The employee and the coach should work together to develop a plan and set goals to correct the problem. The goals should be specific, clearly defined, and attainable.
5. Get a commitment. Coaches should get affirmative commitment to action plans and see to it that the earliest steps in the plan are initiated immediately.
6. Confront excuses/resistance. It is not uncommon for employees to offer excuses about why plans for improvement can't be done. The coach should get the employee to focus on what can be done to be successful rather than focus on what might not work.
7. Clarify consequences. The coach should clarify what is likely to happen as a result of not completing the plan.
8. Don't give up. Solving problems takes time. Once an action plan has been initiated, the coach must keep following up to be sure the employee remains committed to completing the plan and resolving the problem.

Coaching is hard; it takes time. There is never one right answer or solution. Working together, the coach and the employee can resolve problems successfully.

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