

COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

Building a High Performance Team

Effective coaching requires that you:

1. Know what you want your team members to do.
2. Make sure they know what you want them to do.
3. Train them how to do it.
4. Motivate them to want to do it.

Signs of success: At the start of a career, desire can make up for a lack of skills. People with initiative will watch how you do things that work well and will pick up good ideas on their own.

Stress that they can control what happens to them. Emphasize that they're responsible for their own actions and results and that you will support them in direct proportion to their commitment.

Work habits: The major goal of developing good work habits is to stretch - to accomplish progressively larger goals. Train people to schedule high-payoff revenue-producing activities in prime time slots. Get them to do other activities in non-prime time.

How to grow people: The goal of effective coaches is to "grow" people. People tend to concentrate more on their failures than on their successes and on their weaknesses more than their strengths. This induces self-doubt. When this occurs, don't commiserate with them; help them look for solutions. Worrying about negative issues uses energy in a nonproductive way. People suffering from this negative syndrome may begin to procrastinate and become defensive and afraid that whatever they do will fail. They literally don't know what to do next and relive their past failures over and over. Help them focus on future success.

Look for positive things to praise people for, and remind them of the good days they've had. Point out progress no matter how slight it may be. Affirm their efforts to keep them from getting discouraged. "Inspect what you expect" to make sure the people you manage know what's expected of them in activity, performance and attitude. Being a good role model is one of the best ways you can help someone. Remember, the speed of the leader is generally the speed of the team.

How to motivate people: If your team understands what you want them to do, they know how to do it and they have the competence to do it, there's only one reason why they aren't doing it: They don't want to. This is a motivation problem.

The first step in overcoming this motivation problem is to know your people. Keep a journal on what you learn about each of them: goals, strengths, weaknesses, progress, setbacks and daily activities. Regularly meet with your people one-on-one to discuss obstacles, how their week ahead is shaping up and how their short-range goals are coming along. When you know what your people want and why they want it, you will enhance your ability to build a high performance team.