



## **Coaching and Mentoring Insights For Positive Results**

*"...When coaching principles govern or underlie all management behaviour and interactions, the full force of people's performance potential will be released." - John Whitmore, Coaching For Performance*

Spend less time putting out 'people fires' and more time focusing on creating a positive and motivating work environment for your volunteers and/or staff that is built around a solid coaching/mentoring perspective. A positive coaching/mentoring culture, based on mutual respect, mutual trust and freedom of expression, builds and sustains workplace relationships, encourages new levels of performance and productivity, reduces turnover and improves morale.

Developing your coaching and /or mentoring skills will impact your ability to influence, manage and motivate others to perform at their best.

Dr. Jan Northrup Kratochwill explains mentoring as offering the wisdom of one's years, helping through the tough times, giving a pat on the back and helping someone target their skills for advancement. Mentoring usually involves using one's experience and knowledge of the organization to help guide someone less experienced, passing down knowledge through advising and counseling versus longer term acquisition of skills.

Where as coaching, according to James Flaherty, author of Coaching: Evoking Excellence In Others, involves working with people leaving them more competent and more fulfilled so that they are more able to contribute to their organization and find meaning in what they are doing."

As a coach/mentor you play an important role in unlocking another person's potential, helping to maximize their own performance, believing that person possesses more capability than they currently possess and providing essential accountability to participant holding them accountable for implementation and results. It is important to engage the individual in ongoing discussions on key accountabilities and performance expectations so that they understand what is expected of them and what a good job looks like.

Your role as a coach/mentor, be it on an informal, spontaneous basis or a more formal basis, may vary and could involve acting as a sounding board, orientating new volunteers/staff, helping develop skills, tracking progress and/or enhancing personal growth experiences.

The role of a coach/mentor can be a very stimulating and positive experience leading to:

- Personal satisfaction of giving back something of personal importance
- Stronger leadership abilities
- Personal knowledge, insight and experience
- Higher visibility in the marketplace and with one's peers

- Renewed energy and commitment to developing others

James Flaherty emphasizes 6 important areas that a coach needs to address to bring about Intended outcomes.

- A coach needs to address short term actions that support individuals in reaching their goals and over the long term so that the individual is left competent to deal with these situations as they arise as there will always be more challenges
- A coach needs to account for behaviour because behaviour leads to outcomes.
- A Coach needs to provide a new language that allows an individual to make new observations and encourages individual to be self correcting and self generating.
- A coach provides practice time that allows the language introduced to become permanently part of the individual's structure of interpretation and makes it possible for individual to be a long term excellent performer.
- A coach needs to adapt to fit individuals.
- A coach needs to ask good questions that get to the heart of the issue and get the individual thinking differently and better.

Target Training International, a company in the forefront of people performance, recommends the following tips on developing personal coaching/mentoring skills:

- Think of your people in terms of their potential, not their performance.
- Communicate a vision and a belief in its value.
- Lead based on the foundation of your values and beliefs.
- Share information with others – don't hide news, feedback, critiques or praise.
- Support people when they make mistakes, and help them learn from the situation.
- Choose your battles wisely.
- Be decisive.
- Don't make other people's decisions for them.
- Listen to others' problems and help them define solutions.
- Be persistent.
- Encourage others to take initiative, reward them for independent decisions.
- Don't procrastinate.
- Build teams and empower them to address problems.
- Recognize the value of others' contributions.

Knowing the powerful impact that coaching /mentoring can have on individuals and organizations, take a moment to determine what you are going to do in the next month to strengthen your coaching/mentoring skills that could enhance your ability to influence, manage and motivate your people to enjoy and maximize their experience with your organization?

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