

**Employee Training and Development**

## Coaching Employees

### Introduction

Test your perceptions about employee development. The *Coaching Concepts Survey* is an introductory test, to gauge your perceptions in respect of employee development. In column 'a' tick each statement if you agree, mark with an x if you disagree. Leave column 'b' alone for the present.

Let's now discuss, over the following section, each of the ten statements in the *Coaching Concepts Survey* as though each was being presented for ratification as a policy statement. The suggestion is that each and every one of them be made a policy in your organization and every organization which is interested in achieving results. These statements then come to a more practical grasp of exactly what it means in a job description when it says to be responsible for the development of people.

### Coaching concepts explored

Planned people development should be one of the basic concepts of any organization's professional management system.

This is an attempt to state a broad policy which removes any option about people development by stipulating that developing people is a pillar of whatever system of management your organization espouses. This people development should be planned, not given mere lip service or expected to happen by itself.

Adoption of this policy would guard against the simplistic way in which some managers consider themselves to be results oriented as opposed to people oriented, thus absolving themselves from people development. The major thrust of people development will be to emphasize that the development of people is the best means available to achieve results for the organization. Hence, rather than choose between one or the other, they are seen to be two sides of the same coin.

***Development of my people should be planned professionally just as production or budgeting programs should be.***

What is suggested here is not the hiring of outside staff specialists who become "professional" people managers. Rather, the comparison with sales or budgeting programs is to remind individual managers that they are personally responsible for planning employee development, just as they are personally responsible for planning production and budgets. This responsibility should not be

Coaching Concepts Survey		
	a	b
Planned people development should be one of the basic concepts of any organization's professional management systems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The development of my people should be planned professionally, just as sales or budget programs are.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is my responsibility to review individual development plans at least annually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Each of my subordinates should work out a specific plan for personal development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I should compile individual development plans for each of my subordinates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Periodic on-the-job coaching is a major part of any individual's development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Correcting mistakes / errors is a part of any individual's development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I should encourage my subordinates to take advantage of job rotation opportunities in order to grow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am expected to provide time for people to pursue development activities consistent with the workload.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am expected to recommend someone and help develop at least one replacement candidate for my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

taken lightly, but carried out professionally with the same care, training and assistance that is necessary in any other important responsibility they have.

Admittedly, most managers have not had training to be a professional in this field. All too often they have yielded to the internal “experts”, usually in personnel, to do this. In turn, this causes many people to resent such passing of the buck even when they understand what causes it.  
***It is my responsibility to review individual development plans at least annually.***

Three new thoughts are intended in this policy recommendation. *First*, because development is different for everyone, there should be *individual* development plans. While there may always be areas of growth or development common to many at the same time, these ought not to be the sum total of the people developing process taking place. It is often an easy excuse for managers to point to plant-wide or company-wide “people” programs as a way of absolving themselves of their people developing responsibility.

The *second* operable word in this policy statement is *review*. The manager is required to follow up on the people development plans. They are not to be spoken of enthusiastically for a brief period and then forgotten. If documented on company forms, they ought not to be forwarded to some staff office as though floating off into never-never land. They require monitoring so that progress can be checked periodically.

*Third*, individual plans should be reviewed at least annually. This is an attempt to offer some time frame for periodic review, so as not to make the task too time-consuming. Furthermore, a lot can happen in twelve months, so that this time span is not too soon for considering new situations that might warrant changing or updating the plan. Many practising managers indicate a twelve month time frame as a practical one, especially when the development plan is discussed in the context of the annual performance evaluation.

***Each of my subordinates should work out a specific plan of personal development.***

Two thoughts are contained in this policy statement.

*First*, **each** subordinate is to have a development plan. Again, we speak of the universality of development. This isn't only for the weak, or only for those identified as shining stars, or only the chief executive's relatives, or only for any select lucky or unlucky few. Everyone has developmental needs in order to help achieve the mission of the organization.

*Second*, there is the question of who works out this plan for development. Some of you will immediately think of some subordinates who do not appear capable of working out their own personal development, hence this may prompt a negative vote (or “false” mark) on this state-

ment. Clearly there will be some individuals less qualified than others to work out such a plan. But the intent is not to expect people to do it alone – quite the contrary. As we go on, we shall be able to identify together the individuals who might assist somehow in this responsibility. The real point of this statement is to fix on the subordinate a sharing of the development responsibility for which the manager is accountable. It becomes then a shared responsibility between manager and subordinate.

***I should require individual development plans from each of my subordinates***

This statement is a reinforcement of the previous one. In earlier versions of this Self—Inventory, the word demand was used but was found to sound unnecessarily harsh. Perhaps what the word ‘require’ means is closer to the mark. If it is to be a policy that all be challenged to develop to their full potential, if the option is not left to the manager to pick and choose which individuals benefit from development opportunities, then it ought not be a matter of choice to the subordinate either.

Again many managers can point to individuals who might state, or have stated, they are not interested in development. We've all encountered people like that. They readily assert that they have no interest in getting promoted; they know their job, they do it well, they simply want to work 9 to 5 and leave the jockeying for positions to someone else. This is precisely why the universality of the need for development needs reinforcing. It ought not to be an option.

The organization cannot afford to let people maintain that attitude. It is not what we want to people to think of promotion or becoming managers or anything they truly do not want to become, but in order to continue to perform well in the present areas of responsibility, people must keep pace with developments in their field. Because no job stays the same, no jobholder can stay the same. “Future shock” is a concept with which we are all familiar.

So much happens in the work developments around us that no job remains the same very long. Hence, if a worker is doing the job the same way he or she did a year ago, that person is less effective, if not completely wrong.  
***Periodic on-the-job coaching is a major part of an individual's development.***

The hope here is that the manager will feel at home with the statement and its implications. Periodic instruction or assistance on the job is an everyday occurrence. No one will deny the need for giving instruction or assistance on the job to those who need it, and some need it more than others. If we can begin to see this part of the warp and weft of individual development, then the universal change envisioned in these statements will not be so threatening to some.

Further, this statement begins to move us away from the planning of individual development to actually participating in that process. The best plan in the world is going to have holes in it and will require amendment from time to time. This is one-way in which a manager will move from talk to action, from moral support to personal involvement. As in work-orientated objectives, you can plan the work, then work the plan; the same is true for personal development.

***Correcting mistakes / errors is a part of individual development.***

This is very much like the preceding statement, in that opportunity for this kind of development activity is likely to occur on a day-to-day basis, and ought to be seen as an integral part of helping people grow. This makes correcting mistakes an opportunity to learn and profit rather than a matter of chastisement or shame.

Both this and the last statement should even be considered a part of a person's plan for development. The manager and the subordinate should envision that there will be times when giving instructions or giving corrections will be necessary. Engaging in these kinds of communications ought not to be seen as indicative of problems or failure or anything necessarily negative.

***I should encourage my subordinates to take advantage of job rotation opportunities in order to grow.***

This is intended as another example of a possible kind of development activity that might be appropriate for many individuals. Everyone should be encouraged to consider whether job rotation might be appropriate. Clearly not all individuals will find this so. It will depend on the nature of the job and so on. This statement is intended to indicate that this will not equally apply to people performing all jobs, but only to those where there is an opportunity.

***I am expected to provide time for people to pursue development activities consistent with the work load.***

Again, recall that we are talking about this statement as a proposed policy, not as things actually exist at present within the organization. The organization is encouraged to adopt this statement as a policy, removing most of the option from the individual manager. All managers would then be expected to provide time for people to engage in whatever the appropriate developmental activities will turn out to be for each individual.

It is really not a laughing matter when a worker asks to attend a workshop, for example, and is told by the manager, "OK you can go, but remember while you're gone the work will be piling up on your desk, so be ready to get stuck when you come back." It's as though the worker grows or develops on his or her own time, and should not be stealing company time to become a better employee.

Still, the exigencies of the job cannot be ignored, and that is why the statement includes mention of being

consistent with the workload. This policy provides an obvious chance to cop-out. However, it is not reason enough to delete reference to it, because the fact that development can often be scheduled around work exigencies, to the detriment of neither the work or the growth of people, if only an honest attempt be made to balance one with the other.

***I am expected to recommend and help develop at least one replacement candidate for my own job.***

There are a couple of words here which are often overlooked and which sometimes lead some managers to mark this one false. Notice it is a matter of **recommending** a replacement, not promising anything to anyone. The last thing you want to do is identify an heir apparent when there may be several persons in the organization who might be possible candidates in their own minds, if not yours.

Then it is a matter of helping someone to be a candidate for the job, not just selecting a person who might already be qualified and dropping the subject at that point. The manager realizes his or her chances for further upward movement may be enhanced by having someone already developed to take over the position to be vacated tends to take people development seriously.

Some have interpreted this as a promise to move upward as soon as someone is developed. This is not the intent. Rather the intent is to have someone qualified if and when the manager moves on. Some refer to this as the concept of "organizational surplus". As more and more organizations report they are "growing by leaps and bounds", there are more complaints that the one thing slowing down further growth is the lack of qualified personnel to move into key positions that open by virtue of this growth.

This policy statement can prevent delays in organizational growth, can prevent the need for constantly hiring from outside whenever new position opens up (thereby ruining morale), and can literally provide a surplus of people qualified to move into positions before there is even need for it. Some argue, that having too many qualified staff members is also a way to damage morale. While that has to be admitted as a possibility, it would seem to be a much happier fate. The record seems to indicate that we are so far in arrears the other way, that it will be a long time before we do any serious damage by having too many qualified people.

**Policy summary**

Here is how the president of one company put across the ideas set forth in the preceding policy statements when introducing planned employee development in his organization.

- Our organization is proud of the professional approach we take in all aspects of conducting our business.

- Having on-hand managers to meet growth opportunities is a valid and basic concept to which we are committed just as we realize the need for other resources like capital, land and ideas.
- A professional approach to helping development of our people in order to maximize their full potential will have a direct impact on the “bottom line”.
- Professionalism in people development is as important a responsibility for line managers as any other program they pursue to achieve results. We are a “people” business.
- A professional approach to people development is the responsibility of every manager in the company. We are dedicated to Planning for Individual Achievement and Organizational Results.

### Taking stock again

Assuming you can accept the ten policy statements as operable in your organization, whether or not they are actually made a formal matter of written policy, how many of them are you now putting into practice to your own satisfaction? You might want to return back to the Coaching Survey and make a notation under column ‘b’ about each of the ten statements. A simple ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ will indicate which of them you practice and which you don’t. Clearly, the statements you do not practice might be areas in this article to which you will wish to pay special attention.

## Coaching responsibilities

The *Employee Training and Development – Coaching Responsibilities* form is a method of planning and controlling the development of a subordinate. Here the manager would spend some time negotiating possible development needs with his subordinate to come to an agreement as to who should assist in the development and by what date the development will be completed or reviewed.

The responsibility for developing a subordinate need not fall on the shoulders of one manager. Utilizing and sharing resources to develop people would be in line with company policy. Looking at the *Linear Responsibility Development Chart*, recall one of your key people that you will be responsible for developing.

Enter the subordinates name and title. Write your name and title where it states “Prepared By”.

Down the left hand side of the sheet, list the activities concerned with the individual’s development and by what date the development will completed or reviewed.

## Development needs

Some possible development needs could be:

### Business climate

- Understanding of the products, services and goals
- Knowledge of production
- Knowledge of company culture
- Understanding of costs and marketing
- Understanding legislation

### Policies and decision making

- Knowledge of corporate policy
- Knowledge of the process and techniques for decision making
- Use of problem analysis and problem solving

### Employee selection and development

- Recruitment and selection
- Determining manpower requirements
- Job evaluation
- Employee induction
- Using the appraisal system
- Establishing training needs
- Using techniques for motivation
- Counselling subordinates

### Interpersonal skills

- Delegating responsibility
- Handling complaints
- Improving work habits
- Maintaining improved performance
- Overcoming resistance to change
- Handling emotional situations
- Disciplining subordinates

### Employee self development

- Management theories
- Motivation theories
- Marketing
- Engineering
- Finance
- Legal
- Industrial Relations
- Research and Development

### Communications

- Oral and written communication skills
- Report writing
- Presentation skills
- How to communicate a brief

### Planning and control

- Basic techniques for planning and control
- Critical path analysis
- Understanding management by objectives
- Evaluating to determine success

### Personal productivity

- Time management
- Use of management techniques
- Developing work assignments

Note the above are but a sample of some of the dimensions that may be used.

Across the top is room to insert the title of several persons within the organization that could assist in the program. Include yourself and the name of your subordinate where he will be controlling his own development.

Use the data boxes to indicate start and completion date of development.

### Suggested Steps in Coaching

- Set climate at onset of meeting
- Talk around subject
  - isolate and state problems
  - indicate opportunities clearly
  - indicate (mutual) benefits
- Reinforce past achievements
- Ask for ideas and assist in evaluating ideas
- Agree on goal setting process and use of a plan
  - set and agree on realistic objectives
  - set and agree time frames for each objective
  - delegate authority
  - clarify and confirm plan
- Confirm each role in the process and gain agreement
- Agree on follow-up procedures

### Summary

A coach therefore is a person who:

- plans the development of people
- reviews development plans
- requires that people develop
- gives instruction on the job
- corrects mistakes when they occur
- considers job rotation opportunities
- provides time for development activities
- develops replacement candidates
- identifies people development needs
- works with other development resources
- places formal and informal resources
- plans upward career paths
- identifies promotion potential



**WHY DO TOP COMPANIES  
CHOOSE  
CALL OF THE WILD  
TO DEVELOP THEIR  
EMPLOYEES?**

**CLICK**

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