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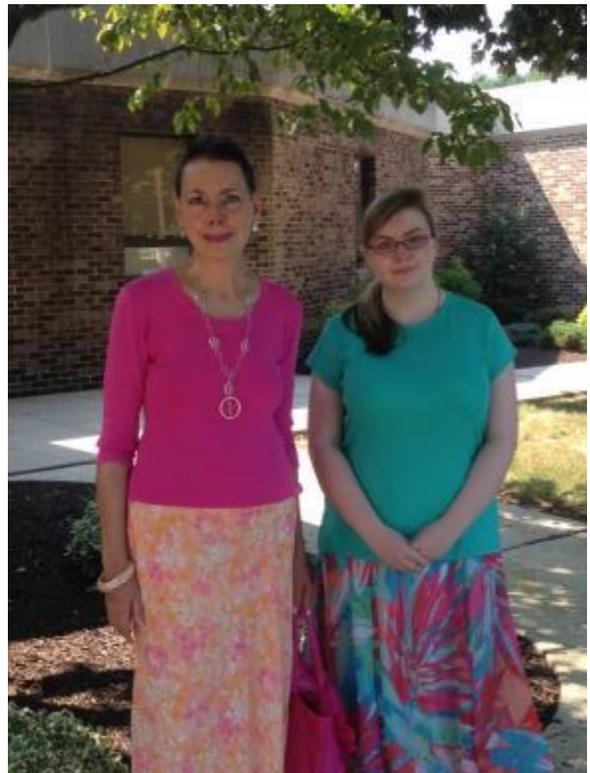
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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

Taking the Mystery Out of Coaching Employees

To be completely transparent, I never really thought about the concept of *employee coaching* until I, myself, became a manager who supervised several staff. While I didn't call it *coaching* back in the mid 1990s, in essence I was doing it. I realize now that I did it best with someone I'd hired to handle some very essential duties. As time went on, I saw that this woman was capable of expanding her skill set in ways she didn't believe. Through the power of consistent, credible, compassionate coaching she grew in professional stature. I was proud of her! And proud of me for doing my job.

Yes, coaching your direct reports IS your responsibility. Whether you coach to improve performance,



Sylvia enjoyed a lovely summer visit from her niece, Sarah

coach to inspire and motivate, or coach to develop potential, you can't say you're fulfilling your obligations as a boss unless you do it. The second part of that statement may be hard to swallow.

My feature article below aims to remove the mystery from how to coach your employees. If you've been reluctant to tackle it, take a look at my tips. If you've been coaching staff for years, you may find something new to consider. From experience I've learned that process matters. Intuitively, you probably know that's true.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

10 Tips to Effective Employee Coaching

Some studies show that people in supervisory positions spend less than 10% of their work time coaching their staff. Assuming that's accurate, there's no wonder that performance problems persist and key talent walks out the door. Formal annual reviews just aren't enough. Think of them as one slice of bread on a sandwich. What about the other slice? What about the filling? Getting the best out of your employees is critical to your organization's survival and ability to thrive. Proactive coaching, done well, is the answer. Here are ten tips to strengthen your approach:

1. Build a respectful, trusting relationship.

A quality relationship with your employees lays the foundation for any coaching that takes place. If you don't have the right relationship, you can't pull it off.

2. Identify problems or areas for growth.

Select one (or two) that, if fixed or achieved, makes the biggest positive impact. Focusing on too many issues at once overwhelms people. Clarify and plan your message.

3. Schedule a series of meetings.

Be sure to explain the purpose of these meetings, specifically the benefits to individual staffers, the team, and the company at large.

4. Communicate observations and expectations.

In a calm, neutral, sincere tone of voice begin by highlighting particular employee strengths and how they've added value. Then move

into areas for improvement or, in the case of shining stars, your vision for taking folks to an even higher level. Give employees a chance to discuss their concerns and goals too.

5. Explore options for moving forward.

Remember: Usually there are several ways to correct a problem, increase work load, or acquire a skill. Ask employees for their ideas before sharing your own. Wherever possible, offer choice.

6. Challenge them.

Your job is to stretch people—not keep them comfortable. Let folks know that you are raising the bar AND that you are there to support them during the climb.

7. Create a single page action plan.

Do it together. Be sure to include the desired outcome(s), objectives, strategies and/or tactics, resources needed, a time line, and success criteria. Put it in writing.

8. Get their buy-in.

A plan without employee agreement and commitment is nothing but a fancy document. Negotiate where you can. Show people how working the plan helps them win too. You can't minimize WIFM.

9. Listen to what isn't being said.

Silence during staff coaching sessions isn't golden. It may mean confusion or resistance. Periodically during these conversations check in by asking: "How is all of this landing with you?" Or, "Tell me what you are thinking right now."

10. Follow up.

Developing an action plan and sending folks off to work it by themselves without following up at certain intervals down the road is a recipe for failure. Let people know that they must demonstrate progress every two weeks or every thirty days. Establish dates for emails or face to face meetings.

Coaching is a different approach to developing your staff. It involves teaching, guiding, providing feedback, mentoring, and advocacy. Organizations that incorporate coaching into their work days on a regular basis generally set themselves apart from their competition in terms of employee engagement, talent retention, process flow, and profits. Of course the decision to coach—or not—is totally up to YOU.

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What Clients Say

I hired Sylvia a couple of years ago to help me figure out how to deal with one of my competitive, defensive nurse managers who was creating—and inflating—problems amongst her staff and with me. The issues were escalating, and I was beginning to feel afraid and out of control. In a lot of ways this woman was a valuable member of my management team, but I was getting tired of all of the drama. It sapped me of energy that I needed for performing my other duties. Once she fully understood the situation, Sylvia taught me how to coach this person without demeaning or alienating her. Over time I began to see things turn around for the better. My biggest take-away was the template Sylvia gave me for coaching all of my staff, regardless of purpose.

- Elizabeth R., Practice Manager, Cumberland County, PA

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Offers and Opportunities

Want to Know How to Laser Coach?

This special offer is for folks who feel time crunched yet realize they need to provide some sort of coaching to a particular employee immediately. The first 3 readers who contact Sylvia will be invited to schedule a FREE 20 minute phone call to **learn how to conduct a powerful 5 minute laser coaching session**, regardless of purpose. Sound attractive? Send an email today to: sylvia@launchinglives.biz

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RESOURCES

How to Be a Great Coach: 24 Lessons for Turning on the Productivity of Every Employee

This *how to* book by Marshall J. Cook can make the task of employee

coaching straight forward and simple. Grab your paper back copy now on Amazon.com for \$13.00.

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TIP

Identify an employee to whom you have given the same coaching message over and over again with no evidence of positive improvement or notable advancement. Rate this individual's level of investment in the performance or development goal. Then, with brutal honesty, assess your coaching skill. Does the sticking point lie mostly with the staffer or with you? Believe me, deep inside you know the answer. Perhaps the employee doesn't care enough about his/her job to make the necessary or desired changes. Maybe you haven't been an effective coach. Regardless of where most of the fault lies, YOU have some work to do.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On September 25, 2015 Sylvia is scheduled to present "The 10 Components of Professional Image" to the West Shore Chamber of Commerce Women in Business Round Table during their regularly scheduled meeting.

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Join Sylvia on these social networks!

About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic

approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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