

TIPS FOR COACHING

Coaching, in the context of training and development, is a form of training to develop the ability and experience of your people by giving them systematically planned and progressively more 'stretching' tasks to perform, combined with continuous assessment and support. Like a good sports coach you can use the following coaching techniques to address areas for development and grow the capability of individual team members:

- **Have a coaching plan:** whether the coaching is to remedy a weakness or grow capability for a future promotion you need an agreed plan which;
 - **Identifies the improvement required** (e.g. Acquire business development capability).
 - **Spells out the standard of achievement required** (e.g. The level of competence and measures of competence).
 - **Details the action required** (the usual S.M.A.R.T formula).
 - **Stipulates the assistance to be provided.**

Try using the example coaching plan below.

- **Develop people with stretch assignments:** Provide assignments or goals that challenge your people and meet business needs at the same time.
- **Delegate:** People learn by doing. Identify opportunities to delegate responsibility (increasing over time) to people who would benefit from growing capability in those areas. Make sure you don't abdicate or micromanage. Discuss and make clear the level of delegation involved so that it reflects the employee's capability.
- **Give immediate performance feedback:** State what you observe, be specific and direct, show sincerity, and communicate face-to-face for both motivational and developmental performance feedback. Give timely recognition for a job well done.
- **Let people "Shadow an Expert":** one of the most effective coaching techniques is to partner someone with an expert and let them watch the Guru at work. Organise for your "Expert" to involve and teach the coaching subject, giving them some tasks to do in return for the chance to learn.
- **Hold frequent 'on-track' reviews and problem solving sessions:** Don't wait for the formal performance review process. Meet one-on-one with each person at least once per quarter to review performance and target both strengths and areas for development.
- **Plan career development:** Collaboratively set plans that define how employees will prepare themselves, from training to work assignments, to grow in their skills and capabilities.
- **Deliver training:** Give step-by-step instruction that involves your employee applying the skills or procedures in a hands-on way. (Maybe delegate this to an 'expert').
- **Reinforce good performance:** Catch employees doing quality work and demonstrating positive behaviours with the same effort that you catch them when performance doesn't go as well as needed.
- **Take chances:** Back good people to succeed. Give them opportunities to grow or fail. That's how we learn.