

Coaching does work, but only if the "coachee" is into being coached.



## When coaching fails

BY BILL HOOPES

I got a call from a friend of mine, a client. Try as he might, he "just couldn't make the coaching process work." He was seeing to it that his people got the instruction they needed to perform their tasks, and he personally followed up on the job to reinforce the right habits. Still, he was upset because the process only worked with some of his people some of the time.

The call led me to reflect on the recommendations I make and how dependable they really are. The fact is, coaching does work, but only if the "coachee" is into being coached.

When you put a loser on a winning team, it doesn't work. One of two things happens; the loser goes away, or the team is negatively impacted by his or her presence. You must get rid of negative people. And you should do that on *your* schedule. That means you must be proactive and have a process for dealing with those who are not meeting your expectations.

### When coaching fails, take corrective action

Because, when most of your team enthusiastically turns right, some people just seem to turn left, every leader needs to understand and become proficient at using corrective action. I'm talking about what you do when coaching fails.

### Here is the corrective-action process

► First, don't act without all the facts. It's very easy to assume you know what's up based on history, but

you can be wrong. Verify the facts, and don't rely on word of other employees.

- Once you have details, set up a private meeting.
- In the meeting, document all that you and the employee say and any commitments either of you make. If the situation results in a termination, it can become a legal matter. You need documentation.

### Holding a corrective-action conversation

You need a private setting and plenty of time to talk.

1. Confirm that the employee understood and accepted the assignment in question. Be sure there were no roadblocks preventing expected results.
2. Explain the person's performance versus agreed to goals. Point out the failure to meet expectations and the negative impact on the team.
3. Important: Ask and allow the employee to explain why he/she failed to meet expectations.
4. Evaluate the employee's response to identify any legitimate causes of failure to perform and decide on necessary and immediate corrective action behavior you will require.
5. Require the employee to commit to the corrective-action performance plan.
6. Arrange a series of follow up dates/times when you will meet to confirm improvements.

Using this process doesn't guarantee you'll turn the person around, but it ensures that you will have done your best to correct an unacceptable situation.

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