



Coaching, Evaluating and Delivering Constructive Feedback – Learning Series

Topic III – Making Time for Coaching

January 9, 2013

We are pleased to bring you “Making Time for Coaching;” the third in a series of communications that discuss the value coaching brings to your management practice and team leadership. The content presented in this topic will address the importance of coaching, and will examine ways to make time for coaching. In addition to this message, this topic includes a ‘Making Time for Coaching’ Panel Discussion to be held in January 2013. During the conference call we will speak with panelists who have successfully used coaching effective techniques here at the Commonwealth. We encourage you to join us and benefit from their experiences.

To reference past topics, please refer to the “Previous Topics” section at the end of this message.

If you would like to provide feedback on this topic, please send your feedback to MassHRInfo@MassMail.State.MA.US. Your feedback is welcomed, and will inform enhancements to future iterations of this program.

Thanks for all you do.

This publication is intended for all Executive Branch managers. To join our mailing list, send a blank email to join-hrd-masshrcmclist@listserv.state.ma.us. If you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please send a blank email to leave-hrd-masshrcmclist@listserv.state.ma.us.

Overview: Making Time for Coaching

Making time for coaching is a worthwhile investment for Commonwealth managers. This topic will provide you with simple time management strategies to include coaching in your regular communication rhythm with your staff.

Coaching is a process that requires an investment of time that goes beyond the annual performance evaluation process. Making the time to coach your employees can be a challenge when added on top of a busy workload.

It may help to think of coaching as one of the key qualities of a leader, rather than another task that needs doing. Coaching doesn’t always have to be a long drawn out process where you sit down with the employee behind closed doors and coach. There are times when coaching should be a sit down meeting, but on-the-fly or informal coaching is often more effective and can be done more frequently. It doesn’t take much time once it’s a priority and you challenge your comfort zone.

Remember that management is more than just getting employees to complete assigned tasks. A significant portion of your position entails being a coach and leader. Your goal is to recognize potential, motivate people

to perform, leverage individual and team strengths, and identify and develop areas for improvement.

Here is an example demonstrating the benefits of informal coaching sessions.

Angela's workday includes many meetings both on and off-site. She finds it difficult to connect with her staff members routinely therefore she has resorted to holding staff meetings in a conference call setting. Angela is also facilitating coaching sessions with two of her staff. Over-the-phone coaching sessions are often rescheduled or cancelled. Frustrated with her lack of time to interact with her staff, Angela seeks advice from her HR office. Angela learns from her HR representative that it is OK to invite an employee to go for a cup of coffee or have lunch. If the employee accepts the offer, this relaxed time provides a terrific opportunity to engage in coaching discussions. Angela is thrilled to find out that it is acceptable to hold coaching sessions in a more casual environment.

Benefits of Making Time for Coaching

The benefits of effective career and performance development are outlined below:

- **Coaching is motivating:** When an employee recognizes that a manager is investing time in him or her, often the employee is more inspired to contribute
- **Coaching improves performance:** As individual employees are developed into higher performing teams, they can be trusted with more responsibility and greater growth opportunities
- **Coaching keeps the communication lines open:** As coaching conversations become a habit, there can be fewer "event-based" conversations and more direct focus on expectations and outcomes
- **Coaching may save you time in the long run:** The initial investment in time for coaching upfront may mean other aspects of your job may become less time consuming later as you reap the rewards

Keys to Making Time for Coaching

Start by focusing on positive reinforcement: Get out of your office and observe your employees, maybe once a day or once a week depending on your team. Look for things that are on-target in their performance. Focus on the behaviors you observed and the impact of those behaviors. Employees learn from the things they do well and when you take the time to point out the positive they will repeat these behaviors.

Ask your employees questions: Find out what their greatest challenges are. Ask what motivates them. Ask questions related to your organization's mission, vision and core values. By asking questions, you are engaging in a conversation about performance in a non-threatening manner. Engage your team in these conversations as appropriate, but remember developmental feedback is best delivered and received one-on-one.

Take advantage of your everyday interactions: Whenever an employee comes into the office with a problem or a decision that needs your attention, take the opportunity to coach them. Before long you can work through your discomfort, and see the positive results of coaching. Also, consider timing and be aware that giving developmental feedback at the start of the day could impact productivity throughout that day.

Glossary of Terms

To aid or refresh your understanding of the terminology used in this message, definitions of commonly used words are provided below:

- **Developmental Feedback:** Information provided to an employee about his or her performance with the intent of changing behavior that is inappropriate and/or ineffective
- **Motivational Feedback:** Information provided to an employee about his or her performance with the intent of sustaining behavior that is appropriate and/or effective
- **Time Management:** Act or process of allocating and distributing time in an effort to increase efficiency

and productivity

Next Steps

Activity: To reinforce the tips to assist you to make time for coaching, be sure to attend the 'Making Time for Coaching' Panel Discussion to share your own stories:

- *You will receive an email in coming weeks containing information about the panel discussion that is expected to be held the week of January 28, 2013*

Coming Next: Effective Career and Performance Development addresses the formal performance management process and your role as a manager/supervisor in helping your employees get the most from the experience.

Previous Topic

For your reference, links to all previous topics are provided below:

- [Coaching, Evaluating and Delivering Constructive Feedback – Virtual Learning Series Announcement](#)
- [Topic I – What is Coaching?](#)
- [Topic II – Planning for Coaching](#)



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