

Ten Reasons Your Direct Reports Need You to Be Their Coach

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1. **Capitalize on strengths and overcome limitations.** Each of your team members has strengths (possibly underused) and weaknesses (possibly ignored). You offer objectivity and guidance in engaging their capabilities and helping them find ways to work around limitations.
2. **Enhance awareness.** You challenge your team members' existing perspectives, examine their underlying assumptions, and clarify their unarticulated expectations and desires.
3. **Feedback.** Your team members instinctively want to please. They are reluctant to seek honest impressions, especially negative ones. You, however, can help them see where they are blind to the impact their behaviors have on their colleagues and their customers.
4. **Competence AND confidence.** Many of your team members are stronger in one or the other, yet may not recognize the imbalance between their skills and assurance. Both are valuable. You can help them work on either, and when you do, it's likely both will improve!
5. **Servant leadership.** Some of your direct reports may lord it over their team members. Most effective leaders, however, seek to serve their associates. Help them understand and prioritize the perspectives of those under their authority, resulting in greater satisfaction and contribution.
6. **Building future leaders.** Your direct reports are busy solving today's problems, giving little attention to developing leaders for the future. However, there may be no greater responsibility when it comes to improving and sustaining your organization. Help your direct reports keep their attention on the long-term health of your culture despite the pressures of the day.
7. **Beyond functional/technical skill.** Early promotions reward technical proficiency. Effective leadership, however, requires healthy relationships and influencing skills. You offer education, support, and accountability to build and expand those competencies in your direct reports.
8. **Rehearsal.** When a team member faces a new situation, you help generate innovative options, practicing with them alternative behaviors that they never previously considered.
9. **Career support.** Everyone in your organization aspires for something greater than their current reality. They want to perform well and look good. They need you as their challenger, supporter, and advocate. Your agenda, as their career coach, should be doing whatever is required to help them move from where they are now to where they want to be.
10. **"Safe harbor" dialogue.** Leadership can be lonely. Who do your direct reports talk to when they want to blow off steam or think creatively? They risk doing so with any of their existing team, yet it's valuable to be able to express their sincere feelings. You confidentially serve as a sounding board in acknowledging their anxiety and in providing an environment of imagination.

This is a modification of an article (about the services coaches provide) distributed three weeks ago. If you'd like to see that article, look up www.buildingfutureleaders.com, click on the "Article Archives" page, and scroll down to find "Ten Reasons Leaders Need a Coach."