

Become a Master Manager Coach!

10 tips for being the best and getting the best

by Barbara Babenco Healy, February 9, 2015

Betsy Albright is the COO at a large medical Foundation. “I’ve learned a lot as I have transitioned to manager and leader in my career, but I wasn’t really feeling like I was making a significant impact on my staff.”

Like Betsy, most of us weren’t conscious of all the things we needed to learn as we transitioned into management. As a result, most of us have missed some lessons along the way.

For example, leaders who missed some lessons when they first began managing others may not provide “*personalized, intimate, one-on-one coaching*” (Marcus Buckingham) that provides constructive and effective feedback, so their staff may miss growth opportunities and perform less well.

Along with this, the workforce today has changed significantly and the knowledge, skills and values required are shifting too quickly for traditional approaches to management. As a result, **the best way to make an impact on employees and organizational productivity is to become a Master Manager Coach.**

To ensure that you are coaching your staff in a way that works best for them and helps them work most successfully, I have outlined the following tips.

1. Learn and utilize a consistent coaching methodology

I use a 5-step coaching process that allows my employees to discover what they already know and to develop their ideas further. Whatever you use, make sure it is research-based. Using a process creates a collaborative environment with a structure that leads to real outcomes.

2. Ask powerful questions

Your job, as master manager-coach, is to allow your employees to discover their own possibilities. We all have many answers, sometimes buried deep inside of us, sometimes more easily accessible. Generate these discovery questions and you will see greater understanding. Your employees will be making progress toward their important goals.

3. Explore stories

“Those organizations that do not provide personalized coaching will become much less desired employers than those that do.” Jason Averbook, CEO at The Marcus Buckingham Company

Listen to your employee’s stories and help them to explore and generate insights, narrative coherence, and goal clarity – to imagine a preferred future. When connected to the company’s context, story telling helps people see real and immediate value in acquiring new behaviors. These new behaviors are at the heart of building individual and organizational capability when sustained.

4. Use a “strengths-based” approach

The Marcus Buckingham Company says, *“Deep down, people don’t want feedback...what people truly want is attention, and the best kind of attention is attention about becoming better in the future.”* (Source: [Top Trends in Talent Management White Paper](#))

Research shows that understanding our strengths and using [Appreciative Inquiry approaches](#) to coaching can increase a person’s life satisfaction and well-being. Helping your employees develop and utilize their strengths can have a significant impact on their professional and personal life. Start with the assessment through [VIA Institute](#). Check out StrengthsFinder 2.0.

5. Understand and value the diversity of styles

Be aware that each person has different motivators and communication styles. Learn about your own style and the styles of all of your staff members. Flex your style as needed for increased coaching impact. If someone is slower to respond, for example, allow her time to think and process rather than interrupting with “helpful” suggestions.

6. Stay focused

Successful leadership takes into account both getting the work done and goals met (task) and engaging the hearts and minds of your staff (relationship). Keep your coaching sessions focused on outcomes and behavioral changes that are inclusive of both.

7. Be a life-long learner

This tip is self-explanatory. Enriching yourself on a continuous life-long basis will enhance your life and the lives of your employees. The most effective leaders are highly emotionally intelligent. Take classes, read books, stretch you!

8. Build accountability

Meeting with staff face-to-face is essential for understanding nuance and for generating trust. In addition to making sure that you follow through on any commitments, it is also useful to build accountability for the employee's side of developing and implementing their action plans.

9. Seek feedback

Make sure that you get regular feedback to support your own growth and learning. Being aware of what is working effectively and what can be improved will assist you in making any changes that can help your employees sustain improvement.

10. Listen deeply

Practice the art of actively and deeply listening to your employees. Approach listening skills with an open mind in order to ask more effective questions, and to get to the heart of an issue to assist them in finding good solutions. Help others feel not only understood and respected...also empowered.

The Bottom Line

Ten is not a magic number but being on the journey to becoming a Master Manager Coach provides you the tools to improve performance and results, while enhancing employee satisfaction and retention. People are always a high-payoff investment.

About the author: Barbara Babenco Healy is an organization development expert dedicated to the professional and personal development of leaders. She is the founder and Principal of Barbara Healy Associates working as an expert leadership advisor, speaker and executive coach for fortune 500 companies, health care, academia and well known non-profits. Barbara is a master facilitator of *The Coaching Clinic*. Certified by the Development Dimensions International and also in *Positive Psychology*, Barbara is qualified to use the GEI Team Emotional Intelligence Survey. She is a graduate of Harvard Kennedy School's *The Art and Practice of Leadership Development* and the Boeing Company's *Accelerated Quality Improvement Program*.



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