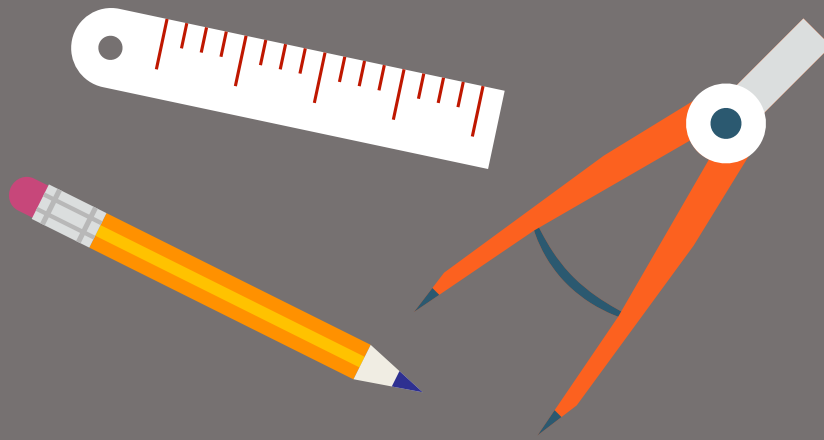


7 Coaching Moments And How To Take Advantage Of Them



PRACTICAL TOOLS

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Here are seven typical scenarios that can happen on a daily, weekly or monthly basis in any workplace and how to take advantage of them as coaching moments.

1. "I just don't get this"

An employee gets up from his/her workstation in a state of obvious frustration. You notice it, you're told of the incident by a co-worker or you notice at the end of the day the employee failed to complete a task satisfactorily.

Meet with the employee behind closed doors in a conference room, ask "What's going on?" in a non-threatening way (you don't want them to get the idea they're being disciplined) and partner with the employee in finding a solution to his or her recurring problem.

2. "Nobody ever taught me this"

Maybe a newer employee is unfamiliar with a particular software program and now he or she feels left out and stupid.

Some additional training is needed. Consider whether you should do it yourself or whether you can ask another respected veteran employee to step in and help out. Remedy the skillset gap and reassure the new employee that he/she is not stupid and will be an excellent contributor – it was simply an oversight in new employee training.

3. “I know I’m the top performer here, so I’m going to take some liberties”

They may be right about being a top performer, but if they habitually start arriving late or leaving early, it can kill departmental morale.

This employee needs an immediate coaching intervention. Recognize his or her outstanding contributions, but ask the employee for help in managing the department – they should be smart enough to see the effect on the morale of others. Get them more involved, ask them to help other employees or find other new challenges to re-engage the employee at a higher level.

4. “This company doesn’t pay enough”

That kind of statement may be an indication of an attitude problem. Some employees try to make themselves popular among the staff by appealing to the lowest common denominator.

Tread carefully because they do have a right to discuss working conditions. But you may want to consider a coaching session to find out what their dissatisfaction really is. Try to make them see that these kind of loud statements in an open office are not likely to get the results they desire, and aren’t helpful to anyone.

5. “I just want to get out of here at 5 every day and go home”

It's not that you want to keep everyone there late into the night (the most efficient employees get everything done in the normal working day) and you certainly don't want to run up a big overtime bill. But this kind of statement may be an indication that the employee does not feel challenged enough and is simply doing the minimum, while they could contribute a lot more.

Meet with the employee to learn more about his or her passions – what gets them excited and what do they like to do away from work? You need to find some job enlargement project for them that will challenge and motivate them to re-engage with the company.

6. “I just can't stand to work with ...”

Let's face it – personality conflicts do happen in the workplace and in the midst of the pressure to perform, these conflicts sometimes blow up. Sometimes a transfer is possible to get the feuding parties out of each other's paths. But if you need them both, you need to do some coaching.

Meet with the employee who had the eruption, let them talk out their feelings, tell them you understand how they feel but resist any temptation to lay the blame on either party.

Get the person to recognize that both employees are needed to get the job done. While they cannot be expected to go out for a drink together after work and play nice, you can demand that they behave professionally in the workplace and treat each other with respect.

7. “When will it ever be my turn?”

A person may not have gotten the promotion or transfer they aspired to, or they may not have received the raise they desperately wanted. They’re at a critical juncture here and they may get so disillusioned that they’ll start looking for another job, which is not what you want because they are extremely useful to you in what they do.

Find ways to spend considerable time with them. Tell them you understand how they feel. Maybe you can relate incidents from your own career where something similar happened and eventually it turned out to be for the best.

Reassure them their contributions are valued. Tell them you’ll help them achieve their goals and, within the limits of your authority, try to find new, interesting challenges for them that can help them advance their career and eventually boost income potential.