

COACHING DEVELOPMENT CAREERS & PERFORMANCE

THE MANAGEMENT GUIDE
TO SUPPORTING
YOUR EMPLOYEES'
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
AND PERFORMANCE

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	V
PREFACE	VII
INTRODUCTION: Why Coach?	1
The Workworld Revolution	3
The New Development Contract	5
PART I: THE PRINCIPLES OF CAREER MANAGEMENT	9
Career Management	11
Career Strategies	14
Building the Career Coaching Foundation	17
A Career Power Tool	22
Development is Not An Option; It's a Necessity!	28
AIM—PD: The Career Management Process	31
Power Questions for Coaches	34
An In-Depth Look at Assessment	38
PART II: COACHING	45
Coaching Basics	47
Coaching Agreements	50
The Tools of the Coach	56

PART III: CAREER COACHING vs. PERFORMANCE COACHING—THE DISTINCTION	59
Know Your Role	61
Career Coaching	63
Performance Coaching	67
True Performance Issues	72
Performance Issues as Development Opportunities	76
PART IV: DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	81
Development Planning	83
Suggestions for Development Activities	88
Development Activities Caveat	97
Competency Models and Development Planning	100
PART V: COACHING MEETINGS	105
Coaching Interactions	107
The “Red Flag”: A Communication Tool For All Coaching Meetings	109
Career and Development Meetings	111
Guidelines for Performance Meetings	113
Structuring the Career & Development Coaching Conversation	115
Coaching Pitfalls	117
Conversation Scenarios	120
REFERENCES AND RESOURCES	138
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	140

PREFACE

Whether the economy is up or down, organizations have a vested interest in retaining their best talent.

We are regularly asked to come into organizations that are losing their best performers to other companies. Today's marketplace demands that employers offer career and development support to their employees. This is especially the case in fields that are flooded with younger workers. Among the under-35 generation, there is a vast difference from previous generations in their willingness to take a wait-and-see attitude. This generation no longer feels that they must offer loyalty to their organizations. It is up to the organization to show interest in the employee's career and ongoing development, and to show avenues of opportunity to the employee that they may not otherwise know how to access.

**THE FOCAL POINT BETWEEN YOU
AND THE PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR
YOU IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR
PERFORMANCE AND THEIR CAREERS**

Forging your relationship around both of these critical elements in your employee's worklives is vital to their careers...and to yours.

The performance of your employees has a direct impact on you and your ability to meet your goals at work.

For most managers and supervisors, the first priority is managing performance. The term "performance management" can mean many different things. Mention "performance issues" to a manager and they will commonly associate it with handling difficult performance problems. Rather than supporting the development of already competent people towards even higher levels—towards peak performance. One of the things we will address in this guide is the notion of ongoing, on-the-job development, and its relationship to careers and performance.

Too many exit interviews of talented and valued employees have as the most frequently cited reason for leaving: a lack of career development or a perceived lack of career opportunity.

This is frustrating to managers and human resource professionals alike, who know that an abundance of need and opportunity often exists; employees and managers alike simply don't know how to tap into it.

PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT COACHING DILEMMAS

For most managers, coaching people in the process of developing on the job and managing their careers is not as obvious a process or priority as coaching their performance. Many managers feel ill equipped to provide adequate help and support in the area of career coaching, and many employees feel a lack of direction.

In our work, we regularly see career conversations stuck onto the end of the performance review. Typically, the performance review forms have a small box at the end, asking for the employee's career or development goals. That box is too often filled out superficially or not at all. In the past five years, development planning has come to the fore and organizations sometimes take great care in preparing development plans, but managers have few criteria with which to judge how well the plan is focused, or if it's even appropriate for the individual, and even fewer ideas in how to guide their employees in long-range career planning.

WITH MUCH FOCUS TODAY ON ONGOING DEVELOPMENT, AND WITH MOST LARGE ORGANIZATIONS REQUIRING SOME FORM OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, THERE IS STILL CONFUSION ABOUT JUST WHAT IS MEANT BY "DEVELOPMENT GOALS."

Are development goals only related to what is needed on the current job? Are career goals independent of "development goals?" Should you put more emphasis on on-the-job development than on career planning? What do you do with an employee whose consistently borderline performance drags down your results, and whom you suspect is in the wrong role—but who can't be moved to a better role for them unless performance improves? These are just some of the typical questions managers have as they approach the issue of employee development.

Further, some managers feel threatened by the whole issue of career conversation. They fear that just bringing up the topic may lead to a mass exodus to other departments. Others feel that with their stretched schedules, the idea of having to "coach" people seems like another great burden.

Coaching careers means dealing with fundamental issues in the worklives of your employees' issues that often reflect who they are as people—their hopes, dreams, and ambitions.

When you begin to ask people about their ambitions, you sometimes run into the fact that the ideas they hold in relation to their careers are not easily matched by the reality of their jobs. Sometimes people are disappointed, frustrated or even angry.

Each individual's career is a personal, lifelong quest for satisfaction and accomplishment, for the security of an income appropriate to contribution, for learning and growth, and for an important form of self-expression.

Satisfaction in career is also associated with good performance. Through proper attention to an employee's career development, it is often possible to improve performance. For this reason alone, it would be important to provide appropriate opportunity for your employees to give attention to their development.

OUR PERFORMANCE FOCUS

This book offers basics about coaching that apply to any coaching situation. Our focus is specifically on what we call career/performance scenarios and issues. When it comes to the topic of performance coaching, there are several different conversations that can be had. There is coaching to attain a particular goal such as learning a new skill or getting to the next level of competence in a current skill. There is coaching to address performance issues with “problem people.” And, there is “breakthrough coaching” in which an individual or a group takes on a seemingly impossible goal and the coach empowers them to make it happen.

This book looks specifically at performance coaching in light of the common situations most managers encounter when dealing with career and development issues.

Our knowledge of these situations comes directly from the many thousands of managers we have coached in our workshops in the area of employee development. These managers have come from almost every imaginable industry and every level of the workforce.

In the References & resources section on page 138, there is a guide to our website Resource Library, where you can find books that address other aspects of performance coaching.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Coaching for career and professional development provides the opportunity for you to contribute to the effectiveness, well-being and satisfaction of your employees by supporting them in this important aspect of their lives. The process leads to enhanced productivity, better teamwork, and a strong reputation for you as someone who supports development and cares about the people who work for you. Managers with this reputation become managers-of-choice, attracting the brightest and best talent.

**THE TRUE CONTEXT OF CAREER
MANAGEMENT HAS TO DO WITH EXPANDING
THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL
TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ORGANIZATION.**

There is an even more important reason to coach effectively! Career management has to do with more than individual success and satisfaction.

When your employees expand their contribution to the organization (your division, department, group, or work team), they expand your ability to get your job done and meet your own goals. In this sense, their development is your development!

By supporting your employees' career management, you will be directly supporting their contributions to the organization.

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