

COACHING YOUR STAFF

Coaching and mentoring your staff is an important part of workplace training. Staff will need your support, knowledge and guidance to successfully complete their training.

Put simply, coaching is about sharing your skills and knowledge, in order to draw out the potential, expertise and commitment of your trainees.

Service IQ

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WHAT IS COACHING?

- ▶ Helping your staff discover their strengths, their motivations and their areas for improvement
- ▶ Being approachable and ensuring staff are not afraid to ask for help
- ▶ Bringing out the best in your people by encouraging growth, helping them set goals, and providing the information and support they need to succeed
- ▶ Remembering that everyone is different and learns in their own way, at their own pace. People have different needs, abilities, emotions and backgrounds that impact how they learn
- ▶ Building trust and confidence by showing genuine interest and responding patiently. Sometimes listening is more important than talking or giving answers
- ▶ Ensuring your staff feel accepted, respected and supported.

COACHING TIPS

Listening enables us to understand the needs of others and how we can help. It also underpins good relationships. Most of us listen to only about 25% of what we hear. That means we tune out the other 75%. That can result in misunderstandings, errors and people feeling ignored or disregarded.

A good coach listens well, takes feedback and understands what is being asked of them. Active listening makes people feel valued and will help you provide the right assistance to your staff.

- Give your full attention to your employees when you speak to them – do not try to multi-task
- Pay attention to tone of voice and body language
- Pay attention to the words your employee is saying
- Repeat or paraphrase (reword) what your employee has said to make sure you understand what they mean.

Question your staff to ensure you understand what they are asking, but also to prompt them to answer their own questions. Often people will be able to find their own solutions to their training problems, with a little guidance from their coach or trainer.

As a coach you will need to use both open and closed questions. Closed questions are generally answered with a “yes” or “no”. They are useful for clarifying information as they restrict the answers people can give.

Open questions require people to think more carefully about their response. They are useful when you want to find out more information, or encourage a trainee to find their own solution to a question or problem. Some examples of useful open questions include:

- “How would you like to spend the time we have available today?”
- “Why did you choose that option over this one?”
- “What part of your role do you find most frustrating?”
- “What part of this task/exercise is really confusing you?”
- “What do you think the answer might be?”

Sum up what you have discussed in conversations with your trainees. This will help ensure you are both clear about what you have agreed and what will happen next. It will give you the chance to make sure you have answered your trainee’s question and provided what they needed from you.

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