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Best Practice Guide to Coaching

Generated by the Human Performance Improvement Task Group

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INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the EFCOG Human Performance Improvement (HPI) Task Group (Safety Working Group – Integrated Safety Management Subgroup) identified the need for Task HPI-13-01: Use of HPI Fundamentals/Tools to Improve Organizational Effectiveness. A "White Paper – The Importance of Coaching" was developed. This white paper presented the business case for an effective coaching program, coaching's integration to effective Integrated Safety Management (ISM), benefits, and a proposed solution. The *Best Practice Guide to Coaching* is the outcome of the white paper's proposed solution.

The *Best Practice Guide to Coaching* is for anyone working in the Department of Energy (DOE) community who wants to learn more about coaching and how it can be used to improve performance and results.

Coaching is a process of letting people know that what they do matters. Coaching focuses on the behavior, not the person. Simply telling someone what to do and what not to do is not coaching. Effective coaching helps people become aware of their need for change and to take personal responsibility to change. This guide explores the various styles, skills and techniques that may be used based on the context in which the coaching takes place.

This guide is intended to be used as a reference document; where the user can read, learn, gain insights, and discover some additional references for a given topic. It is NOT intended to be used as an all-inclusive coaching document; there are simply too many methods, approaches, and desired outcomes for coaching employees. The user must understand the business needs, culture, goals, etc. of their organization and then select the best fit from this guide for that situation. Coaching is one part of leadership and must be combined with other leadership training and methods.

WHAT IS COACHING

A quick online search of the term "coaching" reveals that there are almost as many definitions as there are websites or organizations that focus on coaching. Many books have been written on the subject, indeed defining and describing coaching is a major component of quite a few businesses. But the encouraging trend is that many of these definitions contain common themes which may help one determine the essential elements.

From the DOE Human Performance Handbook (DOE-HDBK-1028-2009), coaching is defined as "The process of facilitating changes in behavior of another person through direct interaction, feedback, collaboration, and positive relationships." But coaching as a principle is not a concept that can easily be described in one simple sentence. Reviewing some of the other established definitions, several common aspects become apparent:

Coaching is to improve performance

Coaching is one part of an overall performance improvement strategy. Coaching by itself will not solve issues. It is used in conjunction with, or in addition to, other performance improvement methodologies. Coaching is a journey; it is not one and done.

The intent of the coaching is to improve performance. What may not be immediately apparent is that the improved performance is not just realized by the employee being coached. While this may be one direct result, the improved performance of the individual is intended to increase efficiency or the quality of the work, which will result in a better organization.

Coaching is a collaborative process

Coaching is not a simple a process where one in a position of authority simply instructs an employee on how to perform their work. The "collaboration" has to exist between the "coachee" and "coach." The person being coached has to be willing and receptive to coaching. Coaching can be multidirectional and not always from the person in the higher position (e.g., coaching "up").

Coaching requires personal interaction

Effective coaching is achieved through direct personal interaction. This typically involves the coaching session being performed in the employee's work place and usually when work practices and conditions can be directly observed. In fact, the term "observation" is key. An employee describing the process is never as effective as the employee demonstrating the process, which implies direct field observations.

Coaching is a positive process

Coaching is a positive process. While this may appear to be completely obvious, oftentimes a work observation perceived by the coach as a positive experience may appear to be burdensome (at best) or punitive (at worst) to the employee. Creating a positive environment and experience is essential and can be fostered by defining the expectations up front (how the coaching will proceed, what both parties can expect to get from the session, etc.), extolling the virtues of coaching to the employee, and ensuring that a process exists for timely feedback from the session.

Coaching empower the employee

Common to many of the definitions, whether explicitly stated or not, is that one of the main goals of coaching is to empower the employee. This empowerment can take many forms. For example, coaching can empower an employee to make process changes that improve operations or it can empower an employee to develop additional skill sets (leadership training). Since the employee is the one who has the most knowledge of how to perform their job and what barriers there are to prevent execution, empowering those on the front lines is the best way to identify, and ultimately solve, problems.

WHAT COACHING IS NOT

In exploring the definitions of coaching, it is important to note what coaching is not.

Coaching is not simply providing feedback

Coaching is not one-way. While providing feedback can be valuable, without putting that feedback in context and without providing an opportunity to discuss the feedback with the employee, it can be a limited tool. As an example, telling an employee through the performance approval process that they need to be more productive in a certain area will not necessarily result in improved performance. Even providing positive feedback, while important, can be limiting. But when you combine instant feedback to employees while observing their work in an effort to increase performance or productivity in a collaborative manner (allowing employees to ask questions and explain actions), you begin to move in the right direction.

Coaching is not mentoring

In a traditional sense and using the most simple of definitions, mentoring is the process of advising or training. In a more useful and contemporary application, mentoring typically involves a more experienced employee counseling a less experienced one. Mentoring implies "showing" somebody how to do something. Coaching, on the other hand, implies that the employee being coached already knows how to do a task and the coaching is intended to help the individual by reinforcing what is working and, if necessary, to provide the individual additional assistance.

Coaching is not telling somebody what to do or what not to do

It is more about working with the individual in a manner that leads them to be aware of the need for change and to take personal responsibility to make that change themselves.

ASPECTS OF COACHING

The preceding sections attempt to describe what coaching is and is not. To further help the reader understand the coaching process, it may be useful to describe some aspects of coaching.

Goals

One of the first things that should be discussed is the end goal of coaching. In other words, "why does an organization establish a coaching program?" If performed correctly, coaching can realize positive benefits at a variety of levels:

The primary goal of a coaching session, as has been mentioned earlier, is to improve performance by empowering the individual. The goal is to work with the individual to provide them with the proper resources and knowledge so that they can be more effective.

Benefits

Another major benefit of coaching is to allow, through direct work observations and open communications, the management of an organization to assess workplace conditions. These can be direct assessments of the physical environment (lighting, housekeeping, tool availability, etc.) or an assessment of the cultural environment (level of managerial support, communication between work groups, etc.). While traditional work observations may provide information on the former (physical environment), coaching is better suited to assess the latter. Assessing both the physical and cultural environments can lead to the identification and mitigation of barriers (obstacles) which may impact safe or efficient performance.

Coaching can also be an opportunity for the organization to gauge and reinforce, as necessary, management philosophies. This can be as simple as finding out whether the organization's operational excellence program or Safety Culture principles are understood and effective. While this may be accomplished through common work observations, the coaching may allow for more honest and comprehensive assessments.

Efficiencies are created by having empowered workers with the ability to make informed and responsible decisions in the field. The lower the level at which changes can be made to processes, the more effective the changes are. In essence, this creates an organization better suited to assess and make changes quickly. In other words, a mobile organization better suited to adapt and evolve.

FOUNDATIONS/ASSUMPTIONS OF COACHING

The following section discusses some basic foundations of coaching that are necessary. Following this discussion, assumptions which are implied to be present for effective coaching are given.

Foundations

The first foundation of coaching is that the organization has made the commitment to a robust and sustainable coaching program. Commitment can be ascertained by a widespread and established program. If an organization is to have legitimate program, it cannot be "hit or miss". In other words, the commitment has to be demonstrated by regular coaching occurring throughout all organizations. Coaching is not just for traditional field activities (craft work, assembly or machining operations), but is also useful for research and development organizations, administrative processes, and even other managerial functions. An effective program should include a description on how the coaching program is set up and operates. For instance, defining the frequency of interactions/observations, skills and training required for the coach, and the manner of capturing any feedback or follow-up actions are elements which can be documented.

Related to having a demonstrated coaching program commitment, coaching must be an ongoing process. An organization cannot simply create coaching sessions without having mechanisms in place to evolve the coaching process. In essence, coaching must be perceived as a vital process that must be maintained.

An organization must have an established process for acting upon information gained from coaching. As was mentioned above, coaching is not just a passive work observation. The coaching session may reveal opportunities to provide workers with better tools or remove roadblocks to success. If the workers do not see their feedback acted upon, or at least recognized, the coaching program will fail. Employees will quickly decide that it is just an empty gesture.

Assumptions

Coaching can only be effective if there is a high level of trust between workers and management. In a Just Culture, employees will open up and will be more likely to identify cultural or systemic problems which may be impacting performance. Workers have to feel that the coaching is truly for empowering them to become more effective workers and to have greater opportunities to control their work. On page 38 of Robert Sutton's book, "The No-Asshole Rule" he states, "In a fear-based organization, employees constantly look over their shoulders and constantly try to avoid the finger of blame and humiliation; even when they know how to help the organization, they are often afraid to do it."

The following are some assumptions which can impact the effectiveness of an organization's coaching program.

1) *Employees want to be successful. The vast majority of workers want to do a good job and contribute to the success of their organization. While there may be exceptions, an organization has to assume that their coaching program will be impacting those that desire to come to work and make a difference.*

2) *Similarly, employees generally want feedback. In order to be successful, the majority of workers want to know how they are doing. While it can be assumed that nobody wants to be told that they are doing a bad job, feedback as a tool to increase their effectiveness is typically welcomed.*

3) *Employees are more open to providing honest feedback if they feel valued. If an employee is made to feel that they are part of a team, rather than an expendable cog, they are much more prone to participate in work observations and coaching sessions.*

Definitions

Coaching   *The process of facilitating changes in behavior of another person through direct interaction, feedback, collaboration, and positive relationships. (DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, volume 1, glossary)*

Correcting   *Providing on the spot feedback to a performer for at-risk and unsafe practices and coaching performance that otherwise does not meet expectations. (DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, volume 1, pg. 3-19)*

Feedback   *Information about past or present behavior, and results that is intended to improve individual and organization performance. (DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, volume 1, glossary)*

Observation   *The act of observing individual behavior and/or organizational factors during the conduct of work in an organization.*

HOW DO OBSERVATIONS AND COACHING IMPROVE HUMAN PERFORMANCE?

Outcomes

Real-time field observations provide managers and supervisors with opportunities to do the following (*DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, volume 2, pg. 73)*:

- To verify how well the organization supports individuals' performance at the job site
- To reinforce desired behaviors and coach for improvements
- To document strengths and weaknesses of specific work activities
- To identify and document observable latent organizational weaknesses
- To remove barriers to desired performance that workers identify

The following list provides examples of observations that should prompt further engagement to improve conditions, processes, safety, and trust.

- A supervisor recognizes that one of his employees takes extra care to perform a task safely by carefully following the procedure, using expected placekeeping practices, and even coaches another worker on an at-risk practice he observed. (Positive worker behavior)
- A worker recognizes that safety barrier signs and postings are missing at the job-site. (organizational weakness)
- A worker notices that one of her peers diligently uses the designated walking paths, even though taking an alternate path would be much quicker. (Positive worker behavior)
- A worker did not obtain the required peer check for the step to be performed during the task. (At-risk worker behavior)
- A worker about to begin his task observes that the lighting at the job-site is very poor. (organizational weakness)
- A worker notices there are several housekeeping issues left over from a job completed a couple of months ago. (organizational weakness)
- When queried by the manager, an engineer was very knowledgeable about the procedural requirements associated with preparing an engineering calculation. (Positive worker behavior)
- One of your employees consistently requests peer reviews of her work and submits high-quality, error-free work products. (Positive worker behavior)
- A supervisor notices that a worker is performing a task requiring prolonged kneeling and is not using knee pads. (At-risk worker behavior)
- While reviewing a work package a worker realizes that steps in the procedure cannot be performed as written. (organizational weakness)
- The Information Services staff answering the Help Desk always provide friendly, timely, and high-quality assistance to resolve your computer problems. (Positive worker behavior)

Building Trust

Trust increases between workers and management when the issues being communicated by workers are being acted upon and resolved by management. The mere fact that managers and supervisors are practicing visible leadership by placing their "eyes on the work", asking questions, coaching, correcting, and reinforcing standards and positive behaviors, sends a message to workers that management cares about them. This has a positive impact on the relationships between management and first-line workers. Managers inspire performance by what they pay attention to, react to, and talk about. (Modified slightly - From INPO 07-006, Page 10) Managers and supervisors communicate what a good job is by what they accept. (From INPO 07-006, Page 10) Observations are an important tool for providing direct, immediate, and specific communication regarding acceptable and unacceptable work practices, thereby improving the performance of workers and the organization.

Another way to build trust is for the observer to model openness for feedback by asking the observee for their feedback on how they as an observer might be more helpful in giving feedback as a means to improve their performance too. When an individual performing an observation asks for feedback from the employee about how the observation went from his/her perspective, it provides insight to the observer on their performance (i.e., pluses and deltas) which can be used to improve the observer's observation and coaching skills. Additionally, it also builds trust between the observer and the employee.

The importance of feedback

Observations can be an instrumental feedback mechanism to an organization. However, if no feedback is provided regarding what is observed, good performance goes unrecognized and at-risk worker behaviors and organizational weaknesses, if not corrected, could result in errors or significant events. Additionally, when established behavioral standards are not being reinforced within an organization, new standards are established (i.e., standards drift).

On the other hand, it is quite easy to see how providing feedback in the examples above, can improve the performance. Workers who are recognized for positive behaviors observed will likely feel encouraged, and are more apt to repeat the behaviors in the future. If at-risk worker behaviors observed are corrected (i.e., the observer and worker have a meaningful discussion regarding the standard, the behavior observed, and to understand why the at-risk behavior occurred), the worker walks away with a clear understanding of what is expected and the observer has a clear understanding of why the at-risk behavior occurred. The reason why at-risk practices occur in an organization can vary from training, lack of resources, unclear standards/expectations, lack of reinforcement of the standard/expectations, the individual was distracted, lack of follow-up, etc. By understanding the reasons at-risk practices occur, leadership has the ability to take appropriate actions to correct them. If organizational weaknesses are observed, communicated, and actions taken to correct, workers are better able to complete their work in a safe and event-free manner.

CONVERSATIONAL/ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES/METHODS

There are multiple coaching techniques/methods that may be used. Each has it benefits and drawbacks. When selecting a technique/method it is important to understand the context of the interaction, the people involved, and the desired outcome.

Conversational and engaging coaching techniques go beyond compliance to standards and expectations. They promote learning and understanding; for both the coach and coached. Conversational and engaging techniques help strengthen relationships and teamwork, empower employees to participate, and finds the best solutions.

Listening

Hearing refers to the sounds that enter your ears. It is a physical process that, provided you do not have any hearing problems, happens automatically. Listening, however, requires more than that: it requires focus and concentrated effort, both mental and sometimes physical as well. Listening means paying attention not only to the story, but how it is told, the use of language and voice, and how the other person uses his or her body. In other words, it means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages. Your ability to listen effectively depends on the degree to which you perceive and understand these messages. Listening is not a passive process. In fact, the listener can, and should, be at least as engaged in the process as the speaker. The phrase 'active listening' is used to describe this process of being fully involved.

Say less, listen more…

- o We listen to obtain information.
- o We listen to understand.
- o We listen for enjoyment.
- o We listen to learn.

Additional *Listening* thoughts and sources:

- Julian Treasure: 5 ways to listen better
  https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better
    - o In our louder and louder world, says sound expert Julian Treasure, "We are losing our listening." In this short, fascinating talk, Treasure shares five ways to re-tune your ears for conscious listening — to other people and the world around you
- Skills you need (Helping you develop life skills) Listening Skills
  https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html
- The Balance: Types of listening Skills (with examples) – The importance of Listening in the Workplace: https://www.thebalance.com/types-of-listening-skills-with-examples-2063759
- Listening skills by Russ Lombardo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8EJVcRJSXo
    - o Improve your listening skills. Learn why listening is important, the 3 steps to listening, how to become a better listener, what defines good listening, and more.

- Improve Your Listening Skills with Active Listening (Mind Tools Video)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2z9mdX1j4A
    - o Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. Being able to do it well has a positive impact on all aspects of your life, including how effective you are at work. Research suggests, however, that we only remember 25-50 percent of what we hear, meaning that we could be missing important messages. Practicing "active listening" is a good way to improve your listening skills. You make a conscious effort to hear what the other person is saying, by paying close attention to them and not allowing yourself to be distracted.
    - o Mind Tools – Essential skills for an excellent career: Active Listening
      https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm

Interactive technique

Probing Inquiry:

- *Use exploratory questions to measure the person's understanding of what they are doing (Engaged, thinking employees) - Exploring "Why" to gain context*
- *using questions to test, understand, and challenge status and thinking.*

Interactive using an intrusive approach involves mostly telling and advising. The more the questioner listens and is truly interested in the other person will determine to what degree influence and engagement will take place. People have the ability to sense when a person is sincere in the questions they ask. The ideal is to limit talking to less than 25% of the time with the majority of the time on listening.

Additional *Interactive technique* thoughts and sources:

- **Conversational coaching - 10 tips anyone can use.** Saffron Grant writes an article that explores conversational coaching, how it can be used, and provides 10 tips.
    - o https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20141020115211-58059128-conversational-coaching-10-tips-anyone-can-use
- **"COACHING: THE POWER QUESTIONS":**
    - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlfTYj-3bCQ NewmarketLearning - Coaching is a large and complex subject. But at its heart lies effective questioning skills. This new program provides your managers with practical illustrations of how to use questions to help people think through a problem or a task for themselves. If it is a manager's intention to coach the other person, the type of questions they use will be different from those questions designed simply to elicit information.
    - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MynAJP5D1vs ScottBradburyUK - Questions help people to think; statements invite challenge. Your role as a coach is to help people think things through for themselves. Effective questioning technique is your most powerful tool. See more information at www.scottbradbury.co.uk

- **Say Less, Ask More: 7 Powerful Coaching Questions** - WBP 018 - Zachary Sexton - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZRFntCG9B8&nohtml5=False - These question will instantly transform you from an advice giving know it all to a powerful coach. If you want to actually help people in your life grow and change watch this video and then read the following book:
    - **"The Coaching Habit"** *Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever*, by Michael Bungay Stanier, *ISBN 978-0-9784407-4-9. Included in his book are questions to help the coach make good coaching a habit. Here is an introductory video to introduce his company "A Box of Crayons" and some resources;* http://www.boxofcrayons.biz/coaching-skills-for-managers/the-coaching-habit/
- **Coaching Employees: 5 Coaching Power Words**, cmoenic - Presented by Steven J Stowell, PhD. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J41YdcVJ5dI&nohtml5=False Learn what coaching is in this video. Also learn how to coach and how to determine if you are a good coach.
    1. Development, developing people
    2. Relationships (80% employees already know where they need help, come to you)
    3. Direction: let them know what is expected, direction, and how they can help
    4. Accountability: Need honest feedback and dialogue
    5. Results oriented
- **Employee Generated Solutions**: Solutions are improved when a coach asks good questions, listens to the answers, suggestions, and recommendations as they mutually lay out a plan together. Other benefits to an employee solution generated approach include: engagement, trust, mutual respect, confidence, ownership, and a commitment to performance. Key to successful performance would be ensuring the coachee has a lead role in developing the solution.
- On pages 15 and 16 of Zenger-Folkman's book "The Extraordinary Coach" they use the formula ("Quality of solution x level of Commitment = Benefit Level" or "Q x C = B" to demonstrate that the employee's ownership and "commitment" to carry out the task increases dramatically when the employee plays a key role in the decision even if the quality of the decision might be of a lower quality. Zenger Folkman lists a number of advantages of asking employees for their perspectives over telling and giving advices in the attached link.
    - http://zengerfolkman.com/category/employee-commitment-and-engagement/
- **Solutions-Focused verses Problem Focused**: Historically we focus our attention on researching and evaluating problems to solve problems however another approach that shows great promise is to instead focus on solutions. "Begin with the end in mind"
- Solution focused questions are more effective and helpful to obtain desired results. A brief yourTube video by Eleanor Shakiba shares some solution focused questions that could be used to find better solutions. Solution focused questions are better than problem based approaches.
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L04ipxxbyg
- In his book, "The Art of Powerful Questions" by Eric Voyt. page 5, he states that questions are powerful however, a note of caution, in starting a question using the word "why". Be very

careful with using 'why' questions. Even though you want someone to answer a 'why' question, it can be highly charged and can quickly put a person on the defensive, shutting down any future openness. Unless a "why" question is carefully crafted, it can easily evoke a defensive response, as it suggests judgement and people will feel forced to try and justify their answer, especially if the why question is about a past tense error. A "why" question works best when the questioner is sincerely interested in being generative (future focused), genuinely curious to find a solution, such as; 'I wonder why that happened?' then the inquiry has the potential to create useful insights."

- Peter Szabo in his book, "Coaching Plain and Simple, Solution-Focused Brief Coaching Essentials" suggests; that solution focused coaching does not focus on the problem but asks questions that are future focused like: what is your goal? And what is already working? Szabo also suggested four assumptions that are helpful for the coach who is working to engage the coachee in solution building, those four assumptions are:
  - Solution building is a fast track to problem solving;
  - Workers already have experience with the solution;
  - When in doubt trust the worker; and
  - Not knowing is useful.
- The solution-focused five step coaching format is called "plain and simple" or "brief coaching" as it is shorter and requires fewer interactions (sessions). This approach is especially helpful for the busy coach to draw out information, solutions, and suggestions from the worker who has generally been wrestling with the problem and solution. In brief coaching, they assume that the solution has nothing to do with the problem. This is very contrary to current perspectives and to put to proactively: "The solution does not care why the problem occurred". Here are a couple of introductory links:
  - https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/5663146-coaching-plain-simple
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX2FnFUqLMo

Ultimately, the coach is helping the coachee through the following four steps:
1. Increased personal awareness;
2. Identification of solutions, goals, and actions;
3. Taking-on personal responsibility and ownership and;
4. Performance.

- **LEARNER'S MINDSET:** Marilee Adams suggests that a coach must start with the proper mindset, Marilee Adams author of "Change Your Questions, Change Your Life" suggests that a coach who is sincerely curious, asking questions "to learn" more from and about others are most effective in promoting a win-win and engaging experience for both the coach and coachee in contrast to asking "judger questions". Here are a couple of links, one to her company, "The Inquiry Institute" http://inquiryinstitute.com/resources/choice-map/ and another to a YouTube video introducing the Choice Map with Judger and Learner's Mindsets: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azN9_jTbdmI

Learning – Training – Teaching – Demonstrating Technique

Learning: *As the familiar adage goes, "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." By offering advice, we are essentially offering our version of fish to our colleagues. By coaching instead, we will help grow the capacity of our colleagues, so that they can determine their own best action to take.*

Training: *Transfer of information, through development of knowledges, skills, and attitude.*

Teaching: *By definition, possesses knowledge and information that the student lacks.*

Demonstrating: The trainee/coachee observes a more experienced person perform a task followed by the trainee/coachee also being given an opportunity to perform the task while being observed.

Mentor – Protégé Technique

Longer term and relationship based – more development driven than task based

Mentoring: *is usually done by a senior person who is attempting to "guide" the mentee within the organization and convey wisdom to increase awareness and move them towards taking responsibility.*

Protégé: *a more experienced person who is concerned and supportive with the longer term "development" of the worker versus the performance of a specific task.*

Counseling: *more commonly involves people who are experiencing some dysfunctional behavior or internal turmoil.*

Adaptable Technique:

The coach must know the individual and what works for them

Adaptiveness must be grounded in a genuine curiosity to understand the other person's perspective. Listening is a must, we cannot, must not jump to conclusions. Once we start making judgements our relationship will quickly deteriorate and no one is a good enough actor to hide your attributions. This is also called the "Fundamental Attribution Error" because once judgement starts the judger will attribute ill motives. There is also another related phenomenon it's called the "Ladder of Inference" which means you have become the judge, jury, and jailer in one fell swoop and it is normally incorrect.

Additional *adaptable technique* thoughts and sources:

- Avoid "Jumping to Conclusions" be aware of the "Fundamental Attribution Error", and the "2016 Zenger Folkman Coaching Games – Ladder of Inference".
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73NSXgz24pA

- Another benefit to taking a Solution-Focused approach is that you are more adaptive to the needs and concerns of the person you are coaching. "Problem talk creates problems – solution talk creates solutions." Steve De Shazer Solution-Focused coaching is also called brief coaching as the sessions are shorter and need for return and continued coaching reduced substantially.
- "In solution building, by contrast, we insist that clients are the experts about their own lives. We rely on their frames of references…" 2 p. 19

TYPES OF OBSERVATIONS

Observations are an opportunity to identify performance and coaching should be considered as a way to improve performance. There are various types of observations which can be conducted throughout an organization. A few examples include the following:

Learning Observations – *An individual shows another worker how to perform a specific work activity or task and the individual watches them perform. Additionally, in some cases, simulators or mock-ups are created for workers to practice performing a task in a safe environment before executing the task in the actual workplace. In this manner, any mistakes or errors made by the workers are learning opportunities.*

Management Observations – *This is a traditional type of observation. Managers or supervisors conduct observations of work going on in the organization. Management observations can take place in any location including the field, briefings, meetings, training, etc.*

Paired Observations (Type 1) - *Senior managers conduct paired observations to ensure that subordinate managers and supervisors interact properly with the worker(s) being observed and identify meaningful strengths and performance gaps. A paired observation involves a senior observer—a mentor—observing a junior observer. This method compares the observations of the less experienced observer with those of the mentor. It gives the mentor insight into the junior observer's conduct and values, as well as how he or she relates to the worker through coaching and correction. After conducting an observation, both individuals compare notes about conditions, behaviors, and feedback, to identify differences. Differences usually denote contrasting perspectives, misalignment in standards, or blind spots. This gives the junior observer insight as to the quality of his or her observation and coaching effectiveness. (From INPO 07-006, page 32)*

Paired Observations (Type 2) - Two observers observe a work activity at the same time. This method compares the observations of observer 1 observing observer 2. It gives observer 1 insight into observer 2's conduct and values, as well as how observer 2 relates to those being coached and corrected. After conducting an observation, both individuals compare notes about conditions, behaviors, and feedback, to identify differences. Differences usually denote contrasting perspectives, misalignment in standards, or blind spots. This gives the observer 2 insight as to the quality of their observation and coaching effectiveness.

Paired Observations (Type 3) – Observations where a boss or superior, or a mentor, observe a subordinate conduct an observation and assess against an approved set of standards for coaching. This ensures the observed employees are modeling and reinforcing expected leadership behaviors.

Peer-to-Peer Observations – A peer to a worker performs an observation of the worker's task and provides feedback to them regarding positive behaviors observed and any at-risk practices observed. Often times, these types of observations involve bargaining unit personnel, are implemented in a no-name no-blame fashion, and are executed in conjunction with safety improvement programs (e.g., Craft Safety Watch, Actively Committed to Everyone's Safety, etc.).

COACHING CONSIDERATIONS

Preparation

First, the coach selects what interaction to conduct. This could be a specific task, a location, or an employee. Next, if necessary, gain insights and knowledge thru document review and interviews. Determine what you expect to see (what good looks like). Decide if the interaction should be scheduled or random. And finally consider any hazards or other prerequisites, such as radiological or industrial hazards and controls.

Additional preparation considerations and resources:

- DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Volume 1, Concepts and Principles, Behavior Observations, pg. 3-18 to 3-19
- DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Volume 2, Human Performance Tools, Observations, pg. 73-74, Performance Indicators, pg. 77-75, Work Product Review, pg. 83-84
- INPO 07-006, Human Performance Tools for Managers and Supervisors, Monitoring and Assessing, pg. 31, Observation Programs, pg. 31, Identifying Focus Areas, pg. 35
- DOE-HDBK-1214-2014, Conduct of Operations Assessment Field Handbook. Part II Observing/Assessing Operations, pg. 10
- Accentuate the Positive: Here are some videos on Appreciative Inquiry (David Cooperrider) that can help during the CONDUCT of an observation (Find what is working):

- What is Appreciative Inquiry.mov (Jackie Kelm)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwGNZ63hj5k
- Appreciative Inquiry: A conversation with David Cooperrider (TheDrukerSchool)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JDfr6KGV-k
- How to do an Appreciative Inquiry Interview (Jon Townsin)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzW22wwh1J4
- Appreciative Inquiry – John Hayes (Aarhus School of Business)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqHeujLHPkw
- David Cooperrider 15 minutes on Appreciative Inquiry and Education (Marge Schiller)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pM_yTrpAOSw

Introduction

If possible introduce yourself prior to the in-field interaction. Explain "Why" you are interacting.

If you arrive at the interaction location and the task is already in progress, recognize that interaction ARE a distraction to the employee. Be cautious not to startle the employee. Once you gain his/her attention then introduce yourself and explain why you are interacting. Ask if it is acceptable (and safe) to interact.

Interacting

Do not interfere unless employees' behavior could lead to harm. For Maintenance, Operations, Production, etc. stay in oversight role – do NOT become a worker. You should look for behaviors that demonstrate knowledge, understanding of the task, and engagement. Look for teamwork and management support. Look at the environment (facilities, equipment, etc.) for working conditions that can inhibit employees from achieving their best performance (error precursors or latent organizational weaknesses).

Additional observing considerations and resources:

- DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Volume 2, Human Performance Tools, Observations, pg. 73-74
- DOE-HDBK-1214-2014, Conduct of Operations Assessment Field Handbook. Part II Observing/Assessing Operations, pg. 10

It is recommended to interact with the observed employee WHEN SAFE TO DO SO. When an opportunity presents itself, then interact.

State what you saw and then ask why you saw it. You want to gain the employee's perspective. Practice active listening. Ask open ended questions to assess task knowledge and understanding. Ensure that you reinforce desired behaviors. When necessary, coach/mentor to improve performance/results - Ask the right questions to help employees arrive at their own conclusions. If necessary, diffuse conflict (do not attack the person; keep it focused on the process/task).

Additional interacting considerations and resources:

- DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Volume 2, Human Performance Tools, Observations, pg. 73-74
- INPO 07-006, Human Performance Tools for Managers and Supervisors, Coaching and Correcting, pg. 45
- DOE-HDBK-1214-2014, Conduct of Operations Assessment Field Handbook, Interactions during Observations, pg. 6

Feedback

Feedback is part of the continuous improvement process, and you want to demonstrate this. Ask for feedback on your observation skills. Seek feedback on both positives and opportunities for improvement. Be open to employee's feedback on the organization, programs, processes, equipment, etc.

Feedback is information about performance that helps the performer improve. Positive feedback is specific information that confirms to the performer that he/she is doing the right thing. Constructive feedback is specific information about a less desirable behavior that decreases the likelihood it will occur again while also giving a description of a more desirable behavior to take its place. One of the reasons feedback is difficult to give and receive is that we often give the wrong type of feedback. In Stone and Heen's book "Thanks for the Feedback" they suggest that there are three different types of feedback: appreciation, coaching, and evaluation and we need all three. Each one is necessary but if we provide or receive the wrong one it will be rejected as inappropriate or at a minimum unhelpful. On page 35, Stone and Heen share the giver's purpose behind each type of feedback:

- Appreciation: To see, acknowledge, connect, motivate, thank.
- Coaching: To help receiver expand knowledge, sharpen skill, improve capability or, to address the giver's feelings or an imbalance in the relationship.
- Evaluation: To rate or rank against a set of standards, to align expectations, to inform decision making.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SggjK0Gm3I4

Additional feedback considerations and resources:

- DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Volume 1, Concepts and Principles,
  - Reinforcing Expectations, pg. 4-14
  - Behavior Value the prevention of error, pg. 4-17
- DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Volume 2, Human Performance Tools, Observations, pg. 73-74
- INPO 07-006, Human Performance Tools for Managers and Supervisors, Coaching and Correcting, pg. 45
- Aubrey Daniels' Blog – Bringing out the best: I was going to give you feedback but…
  http://aubreydaniels.com/blog/2015/04/30/going-give-feedback/

- Internet Videos:
    - THE ART OF FEEDBACK: how to give and receive feedback
      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5m2xwVMMYI
    - Great Questions to Use When Coaching Someone (Malcolm Munro) -
      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dVtPDryqco
    - How to Coach Your Employees to Figure out Solutions to their own Problems (Malcolm
      Munro) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-61GT-fpuw
    - How to Give Constructive Feedback Effectively (Malcolm Munro) -
      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DZp8AZYjrY
    - The Science of Receiving Feedback: Mentor Workshop Introduction
      https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnojHbEBGqU
    - How to use others' feedback to learn and grow - Sheila Heen -
      TEDxAmoskeagMillyardWomen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQNbaKkYk_Q

NEXT STEPS – AFTER COACHING

Foster a culture of Healthy Accountability – hold each other accountable

Accountability must include the following three items or you are only setting people up to fail and
predetermining your scapegoat.

1. Clear and agreed upon expectations
2. Requisite resources and authority to act
3. Timely follow-up and feedback

"In a new form of accountability relationships, operators or managers involved in mishaps could be
more held accountable by inviting them to tell their story (their account). Such accounts can then be
systematized and distributed, and used to propagate vicarious learning for all. "

Fix what is not working (Do more of what is working)

NOTE: Do not create additional burden unless absolutely necessary

NOTE: Use existing action tracking systems such as the Corrective Action Program

The helping professions are aware that professional helping cannot be reduced to problem solving
alone. Practitioners long ago recognized that establishing a relationship of trust with their clients is very
important in the helping process. Professionals know that without trust, clients will be unlikely to
contract for services or follow through on recommendations. Consequently, those who write about and
teach professional helping have commonly added a step to the helping process before problem solving
begins. This step is called relationship building or engagement. They also add a final step, named
termination. In these steps, the practitioner pays special attention to sensitivity, warmth, and empathy
to establish and maintain a trusting relationship with the client."

"Unlike the problem-solving approach, solution building does not have an engagement step at the beginning and a termination step at the end of the helping process, as it continuously works at engagement and monitors client progress during each session".

Document value added elements (in Observation Program)

Observation Program: There are two versions, one version is to observe or be observed by someone else the other is to self-observe.

The very best observations are self-observations as they help both increase personal awareness and help promote personal responsibility for actions and results. Self-observations are also naturally used as homework assignments following a coaching session. There are three main categories of coaching relationships: Visitor, Complainant, and Customer: (and their proper homework or assignment).

- Visitor (Window shopper) – Compliment (also self)
- Complainant (Browsing shopper) – Partially engaged, Observation task or homework
- Customer (Interactive shopper) – Wants feedback, Either or both Observational and Behavioral homework/assignment

Share results

A Learning Organization shares results to foster a culture that values the prevention of events and continuous improvement. There are three main aspects to improving performance:

1) Discover; become aware of your current and desired state, results, or outcome
2) Learning; which includes new knowledge, skills, and abilities are fostered
3) Sharing; this is how learning is maximized

DISCOVERY -> LEARNING -> SHARING

The need to protect the learning environment is key. As soon as a person detects that that psychological safety is threatened (real or imagined) learning will end.

Additional take action considerations and resources:

1. "The Extraordinary Coach" by John Zenger, p. 15-16
2. "Ten Questions About Human Error" by Sidney Dekker, p. 203
3. "Interviewing for Solutions" by Peter De Jong, page 5-6, 18, 19
4. "1001 Solution-Focused Questions" by Fredrike Bannink p. 56
5. "Coaching Plain and Simple" by Peter Szabo p.9, 13,14,16
6. "The No-Asshole Rule" by Peter Sutton, p. 38
7. "Thanks for the Feedback" by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen, p. 35

SUMMARY

Good results can be achieved with questionable behavior. In contrast, bad results can be produced despite compliant behavior, as in the case of following procedures written incorrectly. Very simply, human performance is behavior plus results (P = B + R). Behavior is an _observable_ act that can be seen and heard, and it can be measured. Consistent behavior is necessary for consistent results. For example, a youth baseball coach cannot just shout at a 10-year old pitcher from the dugout to "throw strikes." The child may not know how and will become frustrated. To be effective, the _coach_ must teach specific techniques—behaviors—that will help the child throw strikes more consistently. This is followed up with effective coaching and positive reinforcement. Sometimes people will make errors despite their best efforts. Therefore, behavior and its causes are extremely valuable as the signal for improvement efforts to anticipate, prevent, catch, or recover from errors. For long-term, sustained good results, a close observation must be conducted of what influences behavior, what motivates it, what provokes it, what shapes it, what inhibits it, and what directs it, especially when handling facility equipment.

REFERENCE LIST

- DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Volume 1, Concepts and Principles, Behavior Observations,
- DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Volume 2, Human Performance Tools
- DOE-HDBK-1214-2014, Conduct of Operations Assessment Field Handbook
- Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) Good Practice 07-006, Human Performance Tools for Managers and Supervisors, General Practices for Organizing, Planning, Monitoring, and Feedback That Promote Excellence in Human Performance (December 2007)
- _The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't_, by Robert I. Sutton (ISBN: 978-0-446-52656-2)
- _Coaching Plain & Simple: Solution-focused Brief Coaching Essentials_, by Kirsten Dierolf, Peter Szabo and Daniel Meier (ISBN: 978-0-393-70593-5)
- _The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow_, by John H. Zenger and Kathleen Stinnett (ISBN: 978-0-07-170340-6)
- _The Art of Powerful Questions: Catalyzing Insight, Innovation, and Action,_ by Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs Eric E. Vogt (ISBN: 978-0-9724716-1-8)
- _Ten Questions About Human Error: A New View of Human Factors and System Safety (Human Factors in Transportation)_, by Sidney Dekker (ISBN: 978-0805847451)
- Interviewing for Solutions (HSE 123 Interviewing Techniques), by Peter De Jong and Insoo Kim Berg (ISBN: 978-1111722203)
- 1001 Solution-Focused Questions: Handbook for Solution-Focused Interviewing (A Norton Professional Book), by Fredrike Bannink (ISBN: 978-0393706345)
- Thanks for the Feedback, by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen (ISBN978-0—670-01466-8)