



# Coaching: The Key to Bringing Out the Full Potential of Your Talent

Coaching is an essential component of good management. On one level, coaching is an ongoing process that empowers managers to ensure alignment and execution on strategic goals. Managers can use coaching sessions to ensure the business stays on track, adjust performance, provide direction, and praise progress.

And yet it's more than that. Coaching provides the structure to help employees be more. A good coach can inspire employees to new levels of performance and help them transition into more responsibility. Coaching, then, serves multiple functions—ensuring employees meet performance goals in the here and now *and* developing talent for a brighter future.

Too often, coaching gets lost in day-to-day activities and is treated as a once-a-year event. Managers will take the time at the beginning of the year to set the strategy and create goals with employees to meet key milestones. But management is not a set-it-and-forget-it activity. Treating it as such leads to employees being surprised by a review. To make meaningful behavior changes, employees need to get feedback immediately after an activity or goal has been met. In addition, goals will need to be adjusted as the marketplace changes.

This is why coaching is such a crucial tool for managers and leaders. Providing the appropriate level of feedback and coaching to your team members will improve your ability to execute on your organizational strategy. Coaching sessions also help both the manager and employee set aside time to reevaluate goals, skills, and resources against a constantly shifting business environment and recalibrate based on the latest information.

Coaching builds trust in organizations. Employees always know how they are doing and what their manager thinks of their work. It's a mechanism that allows the manager and employee the opportunity to discuss performance on a regular basis.

Yet for all the discussion around coaching, it can be tricky. Having an effective coaching session relies on the manager's ability to:

- **Prepare.** Managers need to gather data and enter the coaching session with clarity on what needs to be discussed and how these items affect the business.
- **Have constructive and critical conversations.** Coaching sessions can be difficult, and the manager needs to be fully prepared to engage in a productive conversation about performance.
- **Create a climate of trust.** Trust between the manager and employee is a critical component of effective coaching sessions. Employees need to be prepared and open to the coaching conversations. Openness is a result of trust. If an employee believes that the coaching session is a way to discuss performance goals and have a constructive conversation, then the employee will come to the meeting open and ready to learn.

Coaching, then, is a higher-level skill for managers that needs to be honed through practice and reinforcement. At AMA, we train managers how to coach through experiential learning. When people can practice these skills and get feedback on things like *how* they interact with others, their ability to empathize and communicate with employees, and their ability to refocus conversations back to strategic goals, it helps them master skills outside the work environment. Because a good coach can mean the difference between mediocrity and excellence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manny Avramidis'.

Manny Avramidis  
President and CEO  
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