

# The Care and Feeding of Coaches

By: Michael Neill

In our last issue we discussed the challenges faced by many senior level managers as they attempt to develop their managers as effective coaches. The three challenges to overcome were defined as:

1. Many Senior Managers have risen through the ranks, as have many of us, by being fast, accurate, possessing great technical skills and knowledge of procedures. Therefore, some may feel that what got them there will keep them there.
2. Because so much focus has been placed on the skills and knowledge listed in point 1, self-esteem is derived from these talents while a lack of confidence exists in the area of coaching.
3. The CEO track is often the CFO track. Understanding of analysis, strategy and finance comes more easily to the left-brainers than do intuitive people skills.

Please allow me to present a few ideas that may assist you in becoming the coach you would like to be.

1. Make coaching a part of each and every management meeting you conduct. For example, you may ask each manager attending to share with you one example of what they did during the past week to coach one of their employees in sales or service.
2. Catch your managers doing things right! Read Ken Blanchard's book, "Whale Done!" It is a great guide to teach all of us how to focus on what our managers have done well and how to effectively redirect inappropriate behaviors.
3. Make yourself available. Schedule time each month to visit branches/departments. You can't coach via email and memo. People need to and want to talk with you. Ask them how they are developing in their sales and service skills. Ask them to share a story regarding how they attempted to improve a customer's financial life with one of our products and services.
4. Talk about the need to improve our customers' financial life in every group interaction. Don't focus on the need to beat the competition or overcome the horrible economic conditions. Speak to the "heart" of the matter. People become engaged when they feel they are on a mission, rather than performing a task or escaping an economic catastrophe.
5. Read the book, "Discovering the Soul of Service" by Leonard Berry. You will then understand what Sr. level executives need to do to create the environment that causes employees to go above and beyond for your customers.
6. Don't make managers send you a weekly report on their coaching activities. This causes you to feel like you are coaching when all you are doing is managing/auditing more paperwork. You must be actively involved with PEOPLE.
7. Meet and greet customers in your lobby as you pass through. Your employees will see you as cordial and friendly. They will respond in kind.

Remember your employees and managers will never care more about developing performance than you do. If you will become their coach, they will most likely begin to coach!

Here's to your success.



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