



EMPLOYING COACHING TECHNIQUES

Arguably the most important responsibility of supervisors is to develop the strengths, character, and leadership abilities of their employees—empowering them to be the best versions of themselves both personally and professionally. Of course, such development will improve customer service, efficiency, and employee retention, but more importantly, it strengthens our mission by affirming the inherent value of each community member in realizing the immense God-given potential within them.

Sir John Whitmore defines coaching as “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.” When done effectively, coaching outcomes include enhanced self-awareness and self-efficacy, better group dynamics, increased engagement in work and life, and greater confidence in approaching challenges. The world’s top athletes and performers have coaches to help them continually improve, and supervisors can use coaching techniques by asking questions to help employees elevate their performance or develop their careers. Different from feedback or mentorship, coaching instills ownership by encouraging employees to think critically and reach their own conclusions, rather than simply being told what to do.

ACT IN APRIL

1 Help employees improve their performance.

Ask your employees reflective questions about specific projects: *What worked well? What would you do again? What could have made this better? What would you do differently? What challenges did you face in completing this project? How can I better support you?* Such questions help employees think critically, take initiative and ownership of their work, and remember how they will work differently going forward.

2 Encourage employees to set goals to expand their skill sets and experience.

Employees are in charge of their careers, and supervisors can provide resources, support, and insight to help them be successful. Re-energize your employees by asking them what they would like to accomplish: *What specifically do you want to achieve? What is the deeper meaning or personal significance this goal has for you? What will happen if you accomplish what you are trying to achieve? When will you know you have attained your desired outcome?* Whenever possible, try to align your employees’ goals with departmental objectives or the Strategic Plan—by assigning tasks or providing leadership opportunities—to create win-win outcomes.

3 Support your employees in achieving their goals.

Help your employees meet their goals by asking them questions along the way: *What have you tried thus far to achieve your goal? What has helped your progress? What do you need to achieve your goal? Who might you ask for help? What are the next three steps you will take? How will you overcome potential barriers? How will you know you have succeeded?* Regularly checking in with employees will help maintain momentum in the pursuit of their goals, demonstrate your unwavering support, and simultaneously propel the University forward while further developing your team members.