



The best coaching moments are often unexpected events that occur during the course of our jobs – a project is over budget, a customer sent a letter praising an employee. As these cannot be identified ahead of time, they tend to be overshadowed by the more immediate business impact and are lost.

Once pressing business concerns are addressed, managers should encourage their employees to consider the root cause of successes or failures, identify the lessons learned, and think about how to apply these lessons in the future. By using a simple framework of questions, you can ensure that you are capitalizing on some of the best coaching opportunities and sending the message to your employees that their development is important to you.

Find the Root Cause

Before you can identify any lessons, it's important to understand the actions, events or factors that led to a specific event. Once you've targeted the root cause of an event, you can better identify your employee's role and focus on his or her skills/behaviours that (depending on the situation) need to be further developed, discouraged, or reinforced.



- ➔ What specific action(s) or event(s) do you believe caused this event?
- ➔ How did your actions contribute to this event?
- ➔ If you had to pinpoint one skill or behaviour that you feel had a positive/negative impact on the outcome, what would it be?

Teach the Lesson

Once you've identified the skill or behaviour that will serve as the focus of your coaching efforts, use the questions below to help your direct report identify the key lessons he or she take away from this experience.



- ➔ Where did you feel confident / uncertain during this event?
- ➔ Did you change the way you did things during this event? If so, do you think those changes were successful in hindsight?
- ➔ If you had to do it over again, would you do anything differently? If so, how would you do it differently?
- ➔ What do you think is the most important lesson you learned during this event?

Apply the Lesson

Teaching the lesson is critical, but only half the battle. You need to ensure that your employee applies this lesson in the future or else he/she risks losing this new knowledge or skill.



- Where can you apply these lessons in your current projects or assignments?
- How can I help ensure you continue to build on these lessons?
- What milestones will you use to ensure that this lesson is applied in the future?



To Think About

If you're like most managers, you often view coaching as a fairly formal activity – you often set time aside in your calendar to teach an employee a new skill or procedure, provide formal or informal feedback, or review a recently completed project. By taking advantage of the daily interactions you have with your employees (e.g. projects updates, questions regarding next steps) you can make coaching part of your daily routine. Most importantly, you can improve the quality of your interactions and strengthen your relationships.

Source: Learning and Development Roundtable research



Everyday Coaching Opportunities Tracker

Employee	Day	What did the employee and I talk about?	What questions could I have asked to make this a coaching opportunity?