

The Benefits of **COACHING** Six Ways It Can Boost Productivity

by Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, CPAE





“Coaching isn’t therapy. It’s product development, with you as the product.”

—Fast Company magazine



Business experts often cite coaching as an effective way of enabling employees by making sure they embrace their jobs and maximize performance. By coaching, I don’t mean those all-hands-on-deck motivational sessions where a celebrity or high-powered speaker (like me!) delivers a keynote address aimed at improving solidarity or general productivity. Those definitely have their place but count as coaching only in the most general sense.

Coaching isn’t the same as an annual evaluation, either, though some coaching may take place during the evaluation. It isn’t mentoring because that usually doesn’t involve a manager. Nor is training,

another essential, the same as coaching. True coaching involves one-on-one, informal facetime between a manager and his or her direct report, in which both parties discuss what the employee needs to do, learn, or become in order to boost his or her performance.

Coaching is rarely a one-time thing or a merely annual event like an evaluation. The manager has the responsibility of checking in with each direct report on a regular basis to see if their team member needs more attention, using the opportunity to improve not just the individual, but the team as well.

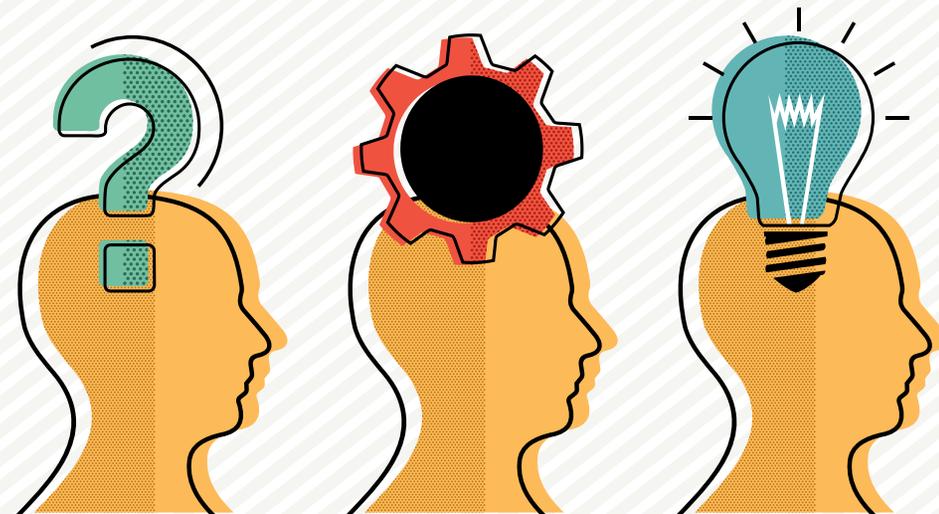
Here are just a few reasons why coaching can help direct reports boost their productivity:

IT’S COMPASSIONATE

If nothing else, coaching proves that management cares about the worker, their well-being, and their abilities. Sure, it’s all about making them work better in the context of the office, but it can improve their lives overall if undertaken properly. Warning: without some level of emotional investiture by the manager, it rings hollow.

IT ADDRESSES SENSITIVE ISSUES IN A SAFE PLACE.

The manager and employee talk things over in a private space, where the employee can discuss their issues as well as the manager. No one but those involved knows what they discussed. It takes place during a scheduled round of interviews when all the manager’s direct reports receive individual coaching, so it doesn’t seem like the employee is “called to the office” for poor performance, even if that’s the case.



COACHING IMPROVES MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION

Resulting in employee engagement and ownership of their jobs. The best coaching inspires and boosts confidence because it concerns not just what the employee is doing wrong, but also what they're doing right.

GOOD COACHING HELPS AN EMPLOYEE DISCOVER AND MANAGE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This leads to attempts to maximize strengths and improve weaknesses (if worthwhile) while also overcoming obstacles and challenges. It also sets goals or benchmarks for the employee to strive for and teaches them to stay on task, helping them improve their time management and fostering problem-solving skills.

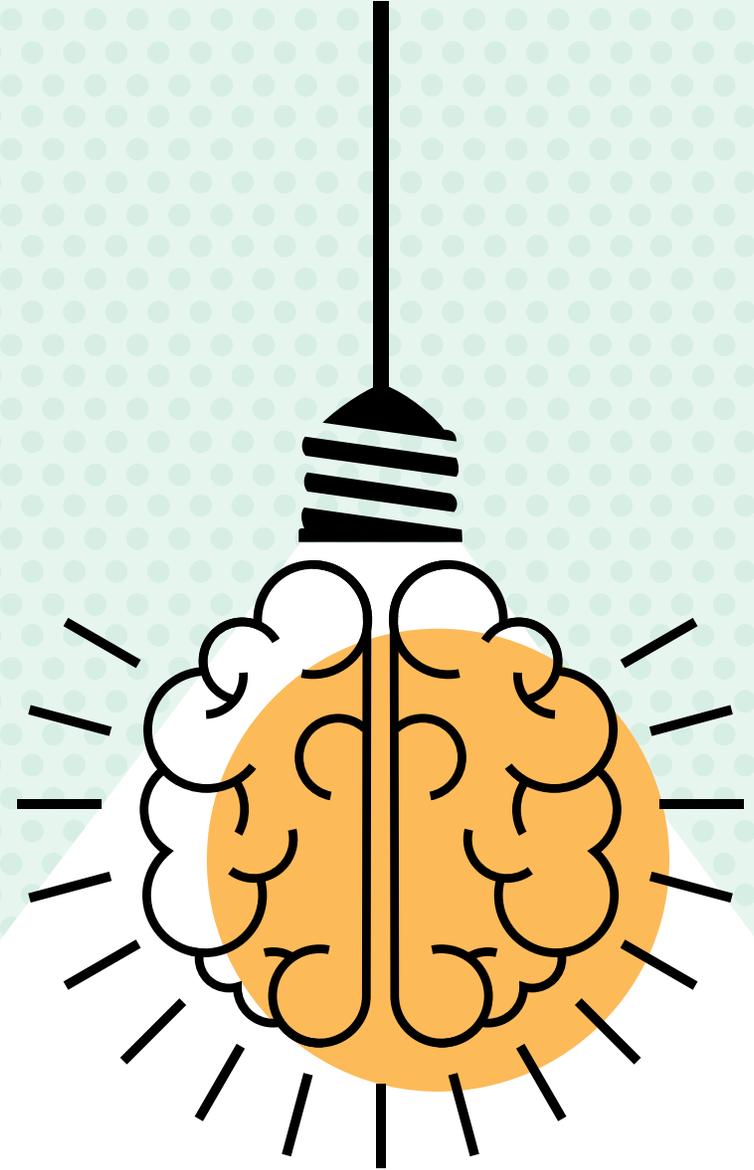
IT PROVIDES A DEEPER LEVEL OF PERSPECTIVE

And personal awareness to the employee moving forward.

IT HELPS THEM IMPROVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

At least between the employee and the manager, and ideally between them and all team members. Among other things, this promotes more effective teams with stronger bonds built on meaningful connections.

All these factors can increase personal performance if the direct report takes them to heart and the manager follows up regularly. The latter point is where coaching often fails... if it's tried at all.



Whither Coaching?

Coaching in the enlightened workplace can result in better training; better integration of the worker into the team; the worker buying into the vision and goals of team and organization; finding better ways to communicate; and providing a deeper perspective of themselves and the organization. It must occur at least quarterly to really work.

But how often is coaching actually practiced? It seems to be dying out, despite its importance. Think about it: How often have you experienced coaching? I know people who never have. In the hustle to

produce and the long hours that prevailed after the tech bubble popped and the Great Recession overwhelmed us, it fell out of favor, possibly because managers felt they didn't have the time or resources to do it properly. Later, millennials moving into managerial and executive positions failed to continue the practice simply because they didn't know or think about it. I fear coaching as a corporate practice may be on its last legs due to the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, during which face-to-face meetings have been avoided like, well, the plague.

I believe it's time to start reemphasizing coaching in the corporate environment again. What do you think?

About The Author

Laura Stack is a high-energy International Keynote Speaker. Bestselling author of six books. Leading Expert in performance and productivity. Audience favorite for thousands year-after-year. Go-to resource to increase sales. Build teams. Grow customer bases. Nurture leadership. And help people achieve more in less time with more balance (and less stress) than ever before. Fun, dynamic, and driven—and perfect for your next event. Contact her at www.TheProductivityPro.com.

