

# Employee Advisory Service Newsletter

## Helpful Resources for Supervisors and Managers



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Page 1



## The 8 Key Skills for Effective Coaching

The power of coaching has been recognized in many areas for many years. Astute managers and leaders are starting to see coaching skills as a vital addition to their personal effectiveness toolbox. So what are the key skills that managers need to develop?

### 1. Listening

When growing up, we received formal education on reading and writing but not how to listen. Yet when it comes to business, listening is probably one of the most important skills to have. If as a manager you take on the role of coach, you need to learn to listen with real focus, suspending all of your judgements and opinions. You also need to be listening not just to the words but also to the non-verbal signals such as body language.

### 2. Questioning

Most of us can ask questions. When coaching, you need to be using powerful questions. These are questions that:

- Are short, typically 7 words or less
- Are open rather than closed
- Deepen the learning of the person being coached
- Move the person forward towards a goal

Examples include:

- What do you want?
- What's important?
- What's the first step?

### 3. Constructively Challenging

Challenging constructively is about not holding back but at the same time not destroying the relationship. Many people associate coaching with helping, which it clearly is. At the same time if the coaching never rocks the boat it just becomes another nice chat. Playing back contradictions is a great way of constructively challenging.

For example:

"I hear that you want to get your MBA, but at the same time, you seem to be resisting making the time for assignments."

### 4. Holding To Account

Accountability is one of the most powerful aspects of coaching. It has been suggested that people have a 95% chance of achieving an objective when they have accountability in place. When someone gives a commitment to doing something and they know that they will be held to account, it drives them forward.

How effective are you at holding people to account as a manager?

[www.state.nj.us/csc](http://www.state.nj.us/csc) | (866) 327-9133 | [EAS\\_help@csc.nj.gov](mailto:EAS_help@csc.nj.gov)



### 5. Seeing different perspectives

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where it feels like you are pinned into a corner and there is no where to go? If so, chances are you were stuck in a perspective. When coaching, you need to be able to help your client to explore different perspectives, so that they can choose those that are most powerful.

### 6. Encouraging and supporting

Encouraging and supporting when coaching can be the difference between someone keeping going or giving up. Acknowledging another person is an incredibly powerful way of keeping them motivated.

### 7. Trusting and using intuition

We all have a hunch about something from time to time. Chances are that you have probably started to analyze it and make it logical or not. When coaching, your intuition is a powerful tool. Throw it out if it might be of benefit. The worst that can happen is that it is off the mark.

### 8. Keeping the focus on your client

When you are in the role of coach, your focus needs to be 100% on your client and their agenda. What this means is putting all of the attention on the client and keeping your agenda out of the way.

These 8 key skills can not only help you when coaching but also make you an even better manager or leader. Take time to assess where your strengths lie and where you need to develop.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## *Webinar Reminder*

### *Emotional Intelligence for Supervisors*

Our emotions can bring us joy and happiness, but also pain and frustration if we don't manage them well. This important presentation discusses the steps necessary for supervisors to build and maintain a balanced emotional life at work to improve relationships with employees, and achieve greater levels of success as a leader.

Thursday, May 25, 2017 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EDT

To register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6264014882991462913>

# Moving From Manager to Leader

Supervisors and managers become most effective in their roles as they fully develop their leadership skills. Early in their careers, there is a tendency for supervisors to be more functional in their management approach. As they gain leadership skills, supervisors often become more strategic and experience greater degrees of success.

## **The Difference between Functional Management and Strategic Leadership**

Functional management focuses on shaping today, tries to control the environment, and is tactical in approach. Functional supervisors are often directive in their interactions with employees. Strategic leadership on the other hand focuses on shaping the future, tries to influence the people, and is open to taking risks when appropriate. Strategic leaders are often collaborative in their interactions with employees.

## **How to Become a More Strategic Leader**

First, develop a vision for your team's future. Collaborate with your employees on creating the vision so that you are working together towards common goals. Brainstorm and agree on the steps it will take to get there. Also, an important part of maximizing your team's future success is to focus on employee growth and development. As part of your vision, create a plan for helping each individual employee reach their highest potential.

The next step in becoming a strategic leader is to become less directive in your daily interactions with your employees. Use more of a coaching approach which solicits employee input and ideas. When employees are encouraged to provide input into project planning, problem solving, etc., they typically become more engaged and productive.

Finally, a supervisor can become more strategic in their approach by looking to leverage their efforts and resources whenever possible. For example, when a leader is working on solving a current business problem, they should think about how a potential solution (purchase of new software, etc.) could also be used for other purposes by the team. In addition, a leader can strategically leverage the deployment of staff to a particular task or project in a way that not only meets the need of the situation but also helps in the growth and development of the employees involved.

# Ask EAS!

The following are answers to common questions supervisors have regarding employee issues and making referrals to the Employee Advisory Service (EAS). As always, if you have specific questions about referring an employee or managing a workgroup issue, feel free to make a confidential call to EAS for a management consultation.

*Q. My employee has been absent for three weeks since the death of his mother. He phones to say he is dealing with estate issues. He has an attorney and family support. He is far past the five days of funeral leave we offer. I think a leave abuse issue exists, but should I refer him to the Employee Advisory Service?*

A. If you have a bereavement leave policy, consult with your HR advisor regarding suspected abuse. Employees on funeral leave, responsible for managing the affairs of the deceased, may experience additional distress or suffer from grief that affects them later because they postponed self-care while attending to the needs of others. Suggesting the EAS is always a good idea for any problem. Dozens of things could explain the absence, but you can refer your employee to the EAS based on a finding of funeral leave abuse. EAPs have discovered that problems like this often are multifaceted. An employee may be grief-stricken, depressed, abusing leave, relapsing into an addiction problem,, taking vacation, or all of these things at the same time! This is why EAS exists—to help sort out the issues and help organizations retain valuable workers.

*Q. I would like to identify employees who appear to have the most creativity and drive. Is there a way to spot these employees in a work environment that does not allow for much of either?*

A. Employees with creativity and drive tend to have skills often associated with entrepreneurial thinking. Meet with your employees regularly, and talk to them about what makes them excited and what makes them feel engaged. Keep the following in mind: Do you have employees who like dreaming up new ideas? Are any employees naturally prone to spotting new business opportunities? Do any employees consistently demonstrate their ability to spin positivity out of disappointment and see the silver lining? Do you have employees who take initiative on the job to undertake something new without being asked? Evidence of these behaviors can often be spotted even in the most controlled, uninspiring, and limited work settings. Employees who are unafraid to think outside the box will find a way to get their needs met, even if it is not in your company, so working with your managers to create opportunities is one key strategy for retaining them and reaping the benefits of their talent.

*Q. We have a diverse work group of about 50 employees and it is obvious that everyone gets along well. I never get complaints, and I witness no inappropriate interactions. Is diversity awareness education or training still needed?*

A. Diversity and inclusiveness awareness can be suitable for any workgroup, not necessarily because of existing problems but to reinforce and strengthen a positive work culture that already exists. Think “preventive maintenance.” Remember, if you have 50 employees, turnover is a natural part of the organizational process, and this alone could support a rationale for ongoing education. Many education programs enhance and reinforce existing strengths. A seminar on workplace communication is a good example. There is always more to know about it. Although you perceive a high-functioning and inclusive workgroup, you can never be sure that covert, unspoken, or unacknowledged biases exist and that they have been felt. Diversity awareness plays an intervening role in averting potential problems.

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