

McLean, Koehler, Sparks & Hammond

Certified Public Accountants/Business Consultants

Physician Services

Coaching can develop staff into winning team

If you've ever known an outstanding athlete, you know that individual's success took a combination of talent, practice, determination and the support of a coach.

In sports, people acknowledge the role that coaching plays in developing talent. The same is true in the workplace.

Coaching is based on individual staff members and what motivates them to perform, excel and grow.

While you may not be developing the next all-star linebacker or Olympic gymnast, you're working toward developing an all-star staff.

Performance coaching, as it is formally called in the workplace, is specifically directed toward helping people focus on improving their proficiency and competence at performing their jobs. Learning the skill of coaching is a powerful tool that can bring about noticeable performance improvement.

You may recognize some coaching techniques as approaches you already employ in your management style. By learning to recognize your current level of coaching and how you can improve your skills as a performance coach, you will be using one of the techniques Fortune 500 companies employ to develop their workers.

Your staff's performance impacts all aspects of your operations, from successful patient care outcomes to profitability by managing and controlling costs. Staff supervision alone is not enough to ensure your success.

You may inherit bad habits from an ineffective supervisor. Or, an effective supervisor may provide everything from setting high standards of performance to teaching the skills necessary to perform a job.

But supervision is still based on the supervisor. Coaching is based on individual staff members and what motivates them to perform, excel and grow.

Here are the goals of performance coaching:

- To improve or maintain a high level of performance
- To overcome poor supervision
- To build on great supervision
- To collaborate with staff members on their growth and development
- To contribute to employee retention

Signs that your practice may need to provide coaching might include a decreasing number of processed claims, turnover of staff hired in a specific role, general signs of poor attitude, placement of a worker on a performance improvement plan or staff complaints about the work environment.

While these performance indicators can show you reasons to coach, keep in mind that coaching does not replace the need for training in specific skills or for disciplinary action. Coaching also cannot replace orientation for new staff to their basic job functions. Coaching is designed to pull staff members forward from their current levels of performance to higher levels of achievement in their jobs.

Follow these essential steps of performance coaching:

1. Talk with the person to be coached concerning the expectations for coaching. Clearly state the expectations and goals. Be sure to discuss why they're desirable for both the individual and your practice.

2. Observe the individual's work performance and determine:

- Knowledge of what to do
- Skillfulness at execution
- Willingness and confidence level
- Barriers limiting performance

3. Base the coaching session on your observations. Aim to help improve the individual's performance in incremental stages. Coaching methods to use include:

- Giving advice and encouragement
- Discussing skill-building ideas and techniques
- Creating a challenge that pushes the individual beyond current performance
- Removing identified barriers to performance

4. Evaluate the results.

- Compare all behaviors to results and goals.
- Adjust goals based on the coached demonstrated competence level.
- Set up your next coaching session.

You may find it necessary to repeat this process to gain continuous improvement. When coaching others, always state the result wanted, acknowledge every success no matter how small, point toward solutions instead of critiquing errors and try to end every interaction with a win. Using these methods will cause the coaching interaction to be a positive event.

Coaching, like any new management technique, takes practice and planning. Contact our practice management consultants to learn how they can help you coach your staff into a winning team.

Five signs that your practice may need to provide coaching:

1. A decreasing number of processed claims

2. Turnover of staff hired in a specific role

3. General signs of a poor attitude

4. Placement of workers on a performance improvement plan

5. Staff complaints about the work environment

McLean, Koehler, Sparks & Hammond helps owners and business leaders become more successful by providing innovative financial, technology and management solutions for every stage of their organizations' life cycle. For more information on this article or MKS&H, please send an email to info@mksh.com or call 410.296.6200 and the marketing director can put you in touch with the right department.

Permission to use, copy and distribute this document and related graphics is hereby granted, provided that the above paragraph and the permission notice appear on all copies.

McLean, Koehler, Sparks & Hammond

11311 McCormick Road, Suite 100
Hunt Valley, MD 21031
410.296.6200

www.mksh.com

70 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 100
Frederick, MD 21702
301.662.2400