

COACHING QUESTIONS

Asking coaching questions is an effective way to help employees discover their strengths and figure out how to use those strengths to create opportunities for development. Coaching questions assume the employee already knows their own answers, they just need help finding and applying them. Asking coaching questions takes more time and skill than simply giving advice, but it's worth the investment because the outcome is owned by the employee.

Marcus Buckingham wrote in the Harvard Business Review "Although we label weaknesses as 'areas of opportunity', brain science reveals that we do not grow the most in our areas of weakness. In fact, the opposite is true: we grow the most new synapses in areas of our brain where we have the most pre-existing synapses. Our strengths, therefore, are our *true* areas of opportunity for growth" Harvard Business Review, 2013

Coaching questions can be used in each of the three steps of the Performance and Development Cycle. The list below provides some samples for each step, but feel free to mix them up or create your own as needed. It helps to ask permission to coach. "Can I ask you a coaching question?" is a great way to start the conversation.

Helpful Hints:

- ✓ Put questions into your own words.
- ✓ Don't be afraid of silence. Give the employee time to think and discover their own answers.
- ✓ A good coaching conversation should have the coach talking no more than 20% of the time.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Step 1 - Looking Forward: Goal Setting Conversations

- What do you love about your job? What is most important to you in your current role? What do you see as being most important to the unit? Do they align?
- What do you see as your strengths? How can you best apply these strengths in your work?
- Which skills would you most like to develop in this role? To help you develop, what do you want to do more of? What do you think you could do differently? What would you like to do even better than you do now?

Step 2 – Checking In: Feedback and Coaching Conversations

- Since our last check-in, what has been working well?
- Since our last check-in, what has been tricky? (challenges, obstacles, unexpected changes)
- How can I best support you?

Step 3- Looking Back: Summarizing and Next Steps Conversations

- Thinking back over the past Performance and Development Cycle, what do you think have been your greatest successes at work? Can you give me examples of things that you were proud of?
- What contributed to those successes? What allowed you to do your best work?
- What success or strength would you like to build on as we move into the next Performance and Development Cycle?