

## Chapter 8

### Lucky #6 - Coaching and Mentoring

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Over-hyped and under-executed, coaching and staff development is the primary responsibility of a business leader. Top of the list, highest priority, supremely important, A-number one. How do you coach and mentor an employee? How do you develop a staff to work together to achieve the company goals?

First and foremost, a leader must possess a sincere interest

in the success of their staff. Whether they are talented but struggling or on the cusp of a career breakthrough, the desire to see others succeed within the framework of your business strategy is paramount to effective coaching and staff development.

“Only when we help others succeed, do we ever really find success for ourselves” - me

Wanting other individual staff members to succeed requires a *massive* level of confidence in your own abilities. Without confidence as a leader, there's little chance

that staff will respect and fully buy into your guidance. After all, who wants to follow the example of a manager who comes off as uncertain about their own abilities? I said CONFIDENCE, not ARROGANCE.

Therefore, presenting yourself with the confidence of a successful leader and shedding pride and ego in passing along the critical skills which put you in a leadership position are key elements to successful coaching.

Properly coaching/training an employee means understanding and being comfortable with the concept that they may one day replace you or leapfrog you to a

higher position. That's a challenging concept to come to terms with, but it is indeed essential to success.

People often leave companies because maybe they feel close to the top of their field but also perceive they're being held back from reaching the top. Sometimes they failed to receive proper mentoring from higher-ups, quite likely from the fear of losing their lofty positions. I've seen it in action. It's quite difficult to watch. But this goes directly back to being fully invested in the company. Count on not being the brightest or best-trained team member; a successful leader coaches and

mentors the most capable people with the intent that they will take over when the time comes to move on to the next endeavor. Not all leaders are great coaches. In most cases, you should hire an executive coaching firm to assist you. I consider myself a great mentor and knew I needed help raising my people - so I brought in coaching from the outside. It was always a huge success. A lifelong friend happens to be one of the best coaches I know - and he has a strong stable of trained individuals that do the same. I'll plug Coach Tony here: [www.twrmindset.com](http://www.twrmindset.com). Sound familiar? No, not my company,

but coach and I woodshedded the concepts together. We've been talking about human development for over 30 years. But that's the next book!

Coaching and development should come from a place of desire to make everyone's lives better - easier. It helps others move up in their career and, presumably, gives you peace of mind knowing that your accomplishments won't be forgotten if you find greener pastures elsewhere.

Additionally, a well-trained, well-adjusted employee who buys into your leadership methods makes the day-to-day business tasks all the more pleasant and

easier for you and the entire organization. The company needs to evolve past you.

I once spotted a sign at a Harley Davidson dealership that read: "Train people well enough so they can leave - Treat them well enough so they don't." This encapsulates my beliefs when it comes to coaching and mentoring employees. And it has served Harley Davidson quite well for a long time, as their employees are among the most loyal and content you will ever find.

I worked with a hyper-talented employee whom I mentored to replace me ultimately. When he was tapped to lead the organization after

my departure, it became one of the proudest accomplishments of my career to have groomed my successor in passing along skills with the confidence I had in myself.

I took a sincere interest in this individual over several years and placed my agenda aside to allow that interest to give them a clear line of sight into what the job entailed. I mentored that person to appreciate my role in the company, so they would carry that appreciation forward, even knowing I would not be around much longer.

Not only was it the right thing to do for the



organization, I did not doubt that I'd move on to bigger and better things due to the experience. Another massive win of having someone who could do my job was that it bought me time away from the day-to-day and put me in critical thinking and creation mode—time to envision the “what if” and continue to focus on strategy vs. tactical. HUGE WIN!

Coaching and mentoring at this unselfish level are most effective when implemented consistently, with no regard for when or where it's implemented. I found it incredibly effective to utilize one-on-one meetings primarily for mentoring instead

of business metrics and strategy. The individual meetings did not focus on specific project details, instead focusing on direct coaching and mentoring. We had project meetings for that! How were they doing personally / professionally? Their team? Any leadership issues I could assist with in any way? Could we do some critical thinking together - bounce some ideas off one another?

Impromptu meetings in the hallway or break room or discussions over lunch are ideal for coaching and mentoring through information exchange. In many ways, it boils down to an

almost mathematical precision: a spontaneous lunch facilitates relaxing conversations about life outside of the project, creating a higher comfort level, translating to clearer thinking, leading to increased creativity and productivity, resulting in greater opportunity for success.

Formal project meetings do not promote personal discourse - How are the kids? Catch the game last night? Ready for Summer? - and therefore provide virtually no substantial brainstorming, coaching, or mentoring opportunities. Business meetings may advance project goals but fail to promote individual or staff development.

Over time, I purposefully made a significant shift in my staff interactions. I wanted to know about the person more than the project, to understand how that person is developing into a better leader and how they approach the project from a leadership perspective. Applying the Thinking Without Restrictions mindset to coaching and mentoring, I've witnessed entire staff transform into powerful teams built on positivity, honesty, integrity, and committed teamwork—unprecedented breakthroughs defined success and, of course, measurable value for the company's bottom line.

But it goes beyond having an interest in others succeeding. Coaching and mentoring also come from a place within yourself of genuinely wanting to improve the lives of those around you and your own. It's simply not enough to be content with small victories within the office building, even if those victories amount to meeting the corporate goals. Coaching and mentoring in a TWR mindset require sincere care and concern for improving the lives of your employees outside the company walls. I was blessed to have many opportunities, most of which advanced my position and earnings to the next level. If

it didn't do the same for those  
who were part of my team when  
they moved with me, I would have  
been a failure.