



BUILDING CHAMPIONS®

COACHING LEADERS IN BUSINESS AND LIFE | ON PURPOSE

A GUIDE TO

COACHING LEADERSHIP

A step-by-step guide to boost employee engagement and drive results

IN THIS GUIDE:

Employee
Engagement

1

It Starts On
the Inside

6

Sharpen
Your Skills

9

Focus Your
Efforts

12

Build a
Structure

16

Wrapping
It All Up

19

If we're to accept that 66% of our employees are "not engaged" or "actively disengaged," as Gallup research¹ suggests, we as leaders have to bear some of the responsibility.

After all, it's easy to believe we're doing things right, that it's other managers who have challenges, but not us. That's where the disconnect occurs. Consider this data: 77% of leaders think they do a good job engaging their people, yet 88% of employees say their leaders don't engage enough.²

People don't leave companies, they leave leaders.

It's really kind of crazy if you think about it. We can believe wholeheartedly that we are leading our people well and that our actions and behaviors inspire and motivate them. Yet, they think we're not doing nearly enough. Often, it's the employees who we think need nothing from us—those who have been around the longest—who need it the most. Engagement tends to drop off rapidly after the first year, a clear indicator that leaders aren't being intentional enough about keeping employees engaged.

So, how do we bridge this gap between what we think we're giving and what they think they're getting? First of all, it starts with believing that engagement is important. A study conducted by DecisionWise³ found that while 84% of people are familiar with the term "employee engagement," only about 39% of managers found it "very important." People in the C-Suite value it a bit more, with 51% viewing it as "very important."



What do all those numbers tell us? That we know what employee engagement is, but not enough of us see the value of it—and we're certainly not doing enough to foster it.

77% of leaders think they do a good job engaging their employees.

88% of employees say their leaders don't engage them enough.

WHY IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SO IMPORTANT?

It's critical that you understand the distinction between a happy employee and an engaged employee. Happy employees might seem content, rarely complain, show up, do the work and leave. The paycheck is enough to keep them humming along. Sounds perfect, right? Not so much. Employees who work only for the money—even if they do so with a smile on their face—will be more likely to hit the road when a better offer comes along.

On the other hand, we know engaged employees:

- Are committed to the success of the business.
- Are emotionally invested in their work.
- Put in effort to understand personal, team and organization goals and do their part to meet—and typically exceed—them.
- Experience pride and satisfaction when they face and overcome a challenge.
- Work hard to see the big picture and act with the best interest of the team or organization in mind, rather than focusing on a personal agenda.
- Want other people to succeed.
- Believe in the organization's missions and values.
- Openly communicate their ideas and opinions and are eager to share feedback to make improvements.
- Aren't happy with the status quo. They want their coworkers, supervisors and customers to have positive experiences, and they go out of their way to make it happen.
- Are dependable.
- Maintain a realistic—but positive—attitude.
- Take advantage of opportunities for personal and professional development.
- Want to know how they're doing—and crave feedback to do better.



Employees who work only for the money are **more likely to hit the road** when a better offer comes along.

Engaged employees can be happy, too, but it goes much deeper than just liking a job or “whistling” while they work. Engaged employees care deeply about the organization and the role they play in it all, and they want to continually improve. They are more productive and stronger performers. They are more likely to hit their goals and boost profits—and overall, they produce greater results.

Happy employees are great. Engaged employees are assets.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENGAGEMENT?

Leaders are responsible for engagement. While employees do hold some accountability for putting in the work, it really is up to us, as leaders, to find ways to keep our people invested in the job and committed to the company. If that feels a little unfair to you, we’re going to let you in on something that is going to be hard to hear: according to one survey 65% of employees would forgo a pay raise to see their leader fired⁴.

Process that for a minute.

We’re talking about people who think making less money would be better than having a boss who doesn’t lead effectively. Study after study supports the idea that most people leave their bosses, not their companies, industries, or customers. They leave because their direct supervisor doesn’t give them what they need to feel excited, motivated, accountable or loyal—or worse, makes them feel actively disengaged, frustrated and unappreciated.



You know what turnover can do. You know how much it costs, how disruptive it is, how much of a pain it is to recruit, hire and train new employees. **However, presenteeism—when employees show up to work, but they are not working at full capacity due to being disengaged, stressed out or tired—is costly too.** Perhaps even more so, as disengagement and negative attitudes are often contagious. Bottom line: You don’t want people to just show up and go through the motions.

The good news is that it’s all fixable and even leaders who haven’t made engagement a priority can turn things around. It starts with building authentic relationships with each of your employees, taking time to understand what makes them tick and investing in them.

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES NEED TO FEEL FULLY ENGAGED?

In decades past, many employees were primarily motivated by opportunities for more money and more perks. Back then, throwing more cash at people was a key retention strategy. But times have changed. Today's workforce is looking for more than just a paycheck.

Additionally, companies have gone to great lengths to overhaul their workplaces to make them seem more hip or lush or cutting edge. We have companies with ping pong tables and Kegerators in the break room. Nap pods. Chefs and masseuses on retainer. We're offering flex time and casual dress policies. Gym memberships and four-day weekends. For what? To keep our people onboard and to attract new ones.

Certainly, those fast fixes are something people notice and appreciate, but what if we told you that building engagement is much easier—and cheaper—than all that?

To feel fully engaged in their work, employees want, no need, the following:

- **Direction and clear goals.**
- **Feedback**—both positive and constructive.
- **To feel respected by their supervisors.** If they do feel respected, they will reciprocate.
- **Support and encouragement** from their supervisors.
- **Knowledge of how they contribute to the overall goals of the organization.** They want to feel that what they do and how they spend 40+ hours per week matters.
- **Autonomy**—empowered to self-direct and freedom to do their jobs.
- **Connection to peers**—they like who they get to work with.
- **High-performing peers**—they want to be pushed and challenged while working with other top performers.
- **Opportunities to grow and develop.** This one is really important. According to HR consulting firm Robert Half, businesses that have a strong learning culture experience employee engagement and retention rates around 30-50% higher than those that don't. Yet, sadly, only 21% believe professional growth and career development opportunities are available to them at their organization.⁵



Businesses with a strong learning culture experience employee engagement and retention rates around 30-50% higher than those that don't.

What do all those things have in common? You can make them all happen. You. Without a huge budget and without having to run “engagement ideas” up the ladder for approval. You have the power to do all those things just by changing how you invest in and interact with your employees.

It requires you to stop seeing yourself as a manager of people and to start seeing yourself as a “Coaching Leader.”

Full disclosure: The change won’t happen overnight. You will miss the mark from time to time, but we believe that if you make the switch, not only will you help employees reach their fullest potential, but you will also improve productivity, performance and results.

But please be aware—this will come with a cost, or maybe better said, will require an investment. In order for it to pay off, you will need to invest your time, your attention, your mind and your heart. You must believe that coaching and developing your people is one of your greatest responsibilities.

“

“Developing leaders is one of a CEO’s greatest responsibilities.”

JACK WELCH

Former CEO and Chairman of GE



IT STARTS ON THE INSIDE

If you don't have your beliefs and mindset right, you won't succeed. Being a Coaching Leader is not just something you do—it must be something you are.

Let's take a step back before we move forward, because we want you to really think about your role as a leader, and more importantly, your purpose as a leader. Do you exist in the workplace to drive results? Make processes and people more efficient? Hit goals? Make money?

Likely, you answered "Yes" to all those questions. And while these are all probably important parts of your job, there is more. Your contribution to the organization goes beyond just numbers and bottom lines. You have the ability—the great opportunity—to help people become better versions of themselves. To mold them to be more valuable to the organization and to help them, yourself and your organization succeed. It's a powerful position to be in.

It can be hard to think of yourself that way—and it can be extremely difficult to transition from a more traditional directive management style to a coaching leadership style—but it's a mindset shift that must occur if you want to be the type of leader who gets long-term, sustainable and meaningful results.



See yourself as more than a manager. "You are a career- and life-improver."

COACHING LEADERS ARE:

- **Caring.** They care for and value all in their organizations, not just those they need to care about.
- **Better listeners than talkers.** They know that listening is how we value and care for each other.
- **Patient.** They invest the time needed to guide a teammate so he can discover the best solution instead of just telling him what to do.
- **Discerning.** They can read between the lines. They look beyond just the words people are using and consider how outside pressures impact performance. They don't just know what questions to ask but when to ask them. As a result, they can dig a little deeper and get to the root of performance or behavior issues, without making employees feel threatened.
- **Accountable.** They hold the responsibility of coaching people to improve—and then ensuring they succeed.
- **Self-disciplined.** Coaching Leaders are disciplined, with healthy habits and positive routines. As a result, they encourage employees to shed bad habits and develop routines that lead to success.
- **Vision-oriented.** Coaching Leaders see and believe in the vision of the organization—and they can help their employees see who they need to become in order to achieve it.
- **Trustworthy.** Their actions match their words. They hold information in confidence. And they demonstrate that they are for those they lead.



Before you do anything else—and in order for this whole thing to work—you must believe that you have the important role of shaping people, coaching them to reach their full potential and providing them with the tools they need to grow and to exceed expectations.

Remember: Whoever put you in this leadership position didn't just put you in charge of numbers, projects or strategic initiatives. That person also put you in charge of people.

Now if you're thinking "No one helped me on my way to the top. I earned it. They can too," just know that kind of "Self-Made Leader" talk is usually a death sentence for promising leadership careers today.

For one, leaders who believe that often burn out pretty quickly because the pace they run at is often not sustainable for them or those around them. And two, because they refuse to invest in their people, they never really drive the type of performance and results that are possible. They fail to reach their full potential and the full potential of the team.

A Coaching Leader, one who sees him- or herself as a developer of people, finds meaning in their work, and they succeed because their people succeed. In addition, It can also improve your leadership effectiveness.

**A Coaching Leader
finds meaning in
their work, and
they succeed
because their
people succeed.**

When you commit to coaching your people you:

- **Improve efficiency** by reducing time-consuming—and often costly—performance problems.
- **Build employees' skills.** That means that you delegate more so you can focus on high-level, big-picture work.
- **Boost productivity and efficiency.** People are more motivated, so they work a bit harder, and everyone looks for ways to work smarter.
- **Improve decision making.** Through consistent coaching and communication, you teach people how to handle issues. They feel more empowered to make decisions, and don't need to come to you for every little thing.
- **Increase retention.** When you invest in your employees, they feel more valued, appreciated and needed.
- **Develop a bench of talent.** You build leadership capacity in the organization.

You can develop the skills, the confidence, and the drive to be a Coaching Leader, but it all starts on the inside. Figure out why it is important for you to coach your people. Believe you have a unique opportunity to invest in them, and know that your people are worth it. This is the foundation for your success as a Coaching Leader.

PERFORMANCE VERSUS POTENTIAL—AND WHY BOTH MATTER

It's not enough to just want your people to become better versions of themselves. You need to set the example. Prove that you are willing to put in the time, effort and energy to continually learn and improve yourself, as a leader, as an employee, and as a human being. If they see you practicing what you preach, they'll be more likely to take your coaching to heart.

Of course, performance matters. You need your employees to hit their goals. You need them to meet the requirements of the job—and ideally exceed them. Those things must happen for your business to be successful.

However, Coaching Leaders focus not just on short-term results but on potential as well. Potential is an employee's capacity to grow, to become the person they need to be in both their professional and personal life. Coaching Leaders realize that by investing in employees' development and helping them realize their full potential, they can, ultimately, become high performers who can meet the team's and organization's objectives.

Commit right now to helping all your employees grow professionally and personally. Start by evaluating each of your employees, not just on their performance, but on their potential. Every single person who reports to you has potential. It's your job to help them realize it. It takes an ongoing, consistent investment of time, but the payout is so worth it.

Don't see your employees as people you must hold on to and manage. Instead, develop your people so that they can take the next step—even if that takes them off your team.



Part 1: Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- Do you believe “employee engagement” is important? If so, why?
- What are some current ways you are engaging members of your team?
- Do you believe that developing your people is one of your greatest responsibilities as a leader? Think about your answer and explain why.
- Think about a time when someone personally invested in helping you grow as a leader. What did the person do and how did it make you feel?
- Where is your greatest opportunity to improve as a “Coaching Leader?”

You have the right mindset. You know you want to help people help themselves. Now what? Most leaders need to work on themselves first if they want to be exceptional coaches. It's not enough to just want it. You also need to develop some critical skills.

Effective Communication

Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw once wrote, "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." Coaching Leaders understand the challenges in effective communication and take extra steps to ensure that information isn't just sent, but also received and understood. They are committed to being master communicators and invest time and energy to improve this part of their skillset—especially in these four key areas.

- **Active Listening:** This skill is all about being able to focus completely on what the other person is saying—and not saying. This requires the ability to block out competing thoughts and give the other person your full attention. You are picking up on not just the words but also the meaning behind them. You are aware of their body language and behavior and the cues they are sending you. You communicate that you not only hear but understand and feel what the other person is sharing.
- **Powerful Questions:** Rather than always sharing their opinion or offering advice, Coaching Leaders are experts at asking powerful questions. Questions that stop a person in their tracks and force them to think about the answer. Instead of just accepting an answer, they ask insightful follow-up questions that clarify points and drive to better understanding. And they are okay with allowing the sometimes awkward pause that can follow these questions.
- **Insightful Storytelling:** This is more than just being able to retell a funny story about your weekend. We're talking about the ability to educate people through the use of stories. Rather than offer solutions when employees come to you for advice or with a problem, you can sometimes tell a story to guide them in the right direction. It's illuminating rather than instructive, and it can be more effective in helping employees build their decision-making skills.
- **Driving to Clarity:** Coaching Leaders avoid ambiguity in discussions and conversation. They push for a level of clarity that ensures everyone on the team knows what needs to be done, by whom and by when. They don't leave things up in the air—but instead continue to push until they are sure everyone is aligned and on the same page.

2 Ears, 1 Mouth

Aim to do no more than 30% of the talking and ask the right questions to keep your employees talking 70% of the time.



Download our list of [30+ Powerful Coaching Questions](#) to build stronger relationships and connection.

To be an effective communicator and connect with employees through meaningful conversation, you must meet them where they are. That means understanding your employees and how they communicate and interpret messages, so that you can adapt your communication style to meet their needs. We recommend the [D.I.S.C. behavioral assessment](#) as a great tool to gain insight into your team members' communication styles.

Powerful Feedback

Countless surveys have shown that the majority of employees want more regular feedback—and such feedback has been proven to boost employee engagement. But if you still aren't a believer, then this stat may help change your mind: 98% of employees will fail to be engaged when managers offer little or no feedback.⁶

If part of the case for being a Coaching Leader is to improve engagement, you must focus on providing regular, effective feedback—both on challenges and strengths.

When giving feedback on where someone can improve, you are demonstrating that you care enough to invest in them. While these types of conversations can be uncomfortable at times, they are essential. Rather than waiting for a situation to escalate—or worse, explode—step in when you see an opportunity for someone to adjust. Share what you see (sometimes it can be a blind spot for the person) and offer your support.

In terms of recognizing strengths and achievements, never hold back. Never assume that they don't need to hear it or that others already know. Be quick to call out what you see and how it is making a difference.

And here's where modeling really matters. Be open to feedback and ask others around you—especially on your team—how you can improve. By showing that you welcome feedback yourself, you can create a culture where others expect it and are open to it as well.

Leveraging Goals

Goals can be highly useful in motivating people and keeping them on track, if they are used appropriately. Too often, leaders spend all of their time setting goals and not enough time on two overlooked components: how they will achieve them and how they will monitor them.



**98% of employees
will fail to be engaged
when managers offer
little or no feedback.**

Achieving Goals

When talking through goals with your people, make sure they have thought through everything necessary to actually hit the goal. These questions are a great place to start:



- Are we clear on why this goal is important?
- Do you believe you can achieve the goal?
- What has to happen to hit the goal?
- What resources do you need?
- What barriers could you encounter?
And how could you plan to overcome them?
- How can I best support you throughout the process?
- Are we clear on what success looks like?

Monitoring Goals

Rather than waiting to see if their people hit their goal at the deadline, Coaching Leaders stay involved during the process. They ask great questions about the progress and how things are going. They help their people understand the milestones and key steps along the way, so they have a true picture of where things are at.

Rather than waiting to see if employees hit their goal at the deadline, **Coaching Leaders stay involved**, asking questions and troubleshooting if needed.



They are available for questions and troubleshooting, if needed, and are constantly asking, “Is there anything I can do to help?” This type of involvement not only improves the ongoing accountability but also greatly increases the likelihood of success.

Part 2: Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- What Coaching Leader skill do you consider a strength – and how could you leverage it more?
- If improved, which skill would have the greatest impact on your leadership and people?
- When was the last time someone gave you effective feedback, and what was the outcome?
- Is there someone on your team who needs to receive feedback from you now?
- Is there anyone you have avoided or neglected to give positive or constructive feedback, and if so, why?
- What is one way you could better leverage goals to drive results on your team?

Now it's time to think about where you focus your time, energy and efforts. Without a clear focus or framework, you could end up investing a lot of time but not get the results you're looking for.

We've been at this a long time, and we've discovered that these core areas are most likely to promote connection and relationship-building between you and your employees, boost employee engagement—and drive improved results.



Well-being

First and foremost, it is critical to differentiate between wellness and well-being. Wellness can very much be a part of well-being, but what we are talking about here can't be fixed by just free gym memberships and healthy-eating initiatives.

When we say "well-being," we're referring to how employees feel satisfied and fulfilled with their current lives and where their lives are going. Well-being includes their physical, emotional and mental health.



Helping your people create a practical plan to improve how they lead and live is a key step to addressing and improving well-being. Download our complimentary [Life Plan](#) guide to share with your team.

Should that be the organization's—and more specifically—your responsibility? We say "Yes," at least partially, and a study by O.C. Tanner Institute backs us up.⁷

It found that organizations that successfully improve employee well-being should expect to see a large increase in work productivity both on an individual and a team level. During the study, employees were asked to rate their current output compared to what they think they are capable of producing. The results were surprising:

Employees with poor well-being report that on average they're only producing about 64% of what they could potentially produce. They also viewed their teams more negatively and believed that the team was only producing, on average, 61% of what it could. Juxtapose that against employees with excellent well-being: They rated their work output much higher (83%), as well as that of their team (81%).

What does it all mean? Well-being has the potential to boost personal and team output by 20%. That's game-changing productivity.

Ensuring the well-being of your employees starts with building relationships with them and knowing them well enough that you pick up when something is not quite right. Support them through the ups and downs in life—and, most important, show you care. If you accomplish that, they will be more receptive to your coaching.

Coaching Leaders help their employees figure out what they want in their careers, and then they work with them to chart a path for their own personal and professional development.



Vision

It is your duty to keep a clear vision in front of your employees—and it's necessary to keep them engaged in the work. Your organization likely has a vision. As a leader, you need to make sure you are regularly reviewing it and owning it at both a personal and team level. Then, you can consistently communicate and share it with your team to ensure that employees understand:

- The organization's vision, strategic bets and goals.
- How the team helps the organization realize the vision, bets and goals, specifically.
- How each individual's work contributes to organizational vision, strategic bets and goals.

When employees understand how they contribute to the overall vision, they'll find their work more meaningful. They'll be more likely to buy in to the message and do what it takes to meet personal and team goals.

Understand that this isn't a one-off task. You must regularly review it to ensure it still accurately reflects the organization's priorities, and—this is important—repeat it often. When you start a new initiative or team project, when you delegate work, when you problem solve and brainstorm, tie those activities back to the vision.

Help employees with their personal vision. Coaching Leaders help their employees figure out what they want in their careers, and then they work with them to chart a path for their own personal and professional development. Most importantly is that they support them as they work to make their personal vision a reality.

Execution

This step is all about making sure each member of your team knows what a “win” looks like. It’s about creating alignment between the company’s goals, your team’s goals and each individual’s goals. They need to know what’s expected of them and have clarity around the specific deliverables they are responsible for owning and driving.

In today’s fast-paced and ever-changing environment, this can prove very difficult at times. Competing priorities, projects and politics often get in the way. One of your jobs as the leader is to help break through the clutter and ensure your people are in the best position they can be in to succeed.

Rather than using complicated systems and planning structures to make this happen, help make it as simple as you can for your people to focus on what’s most important and tune out the things that get in the way. The key areas to focus on are:

- What you will accomplish
- Where you need to make improvements or adjustments to reach your goals
- What repeatable actions must you take to accomplish those goals
- When specific aspects of the plan must be completed (deadlines)

While it’s important to make sure the plan is in place, you can really leverage your role as a Coaching Leader by making sure that employees have all the support and resources required to execute the plan. So, once you have laid it all out there, make sure you keep the conversation going. Ask:

- Are you clear on the goals, what has to get done and your role?
- What do you need to make it happen?
- What concerns do you have?
- What barriers do we need to overcome?
- Where are you getting stuck?
- How can I help you?
- How can the organization help you?

The plan provides the framework for any goals your team and employees have, but your ongoing support and guidance is what will put them in the best possible position to succeed.



A great way to help your people ensure they are staying focused and getting the right things done is by using a Simple One-Page Business Plan. [Download our complimentary guide](#) and share it with your team.

Productivity

This last area is where things all come together. You've helped your people create plans for their well-being and business goals. They have clarity on their roles, how they contribute to the success of the team and organization and where they will invest time to grow and develop themselves. But getting everything done can often be easier said than done.

This is where you can flex your coaching muscle and help ensure your employees have clarity on what's most important for them to focus on, that they've created the time and space to get it done and that they are ruthlessly empowered to say "no" to things that could get in the way.

Here's some ways you can help them do it:

- **Understand their high-payoff activities.** These are the activities that bring the most value to their role, team and/or organization. Make sure they see these with clarity and push them to either delegate or delete those tasks they can that get in their way.
- **Figure out what's stealing their time.** Most of us have ways that we could improve our efficiency. Encourage your people to monitor how they spend their time for a week and see what activities are pulling them off task. Then, you can work together to create a plan to either eliminate or reduce those distractions.
- **Set boundaries.** Empower your people to say "no" to activities that will get in their way of adding the most value. Whether it be a meeting or a new project, coach them to think through the implications of taking on something new. Make sure they count the cost that will have on them both professionally and personally if they spread themselves too thin.
- **Picture their "Ideal Week."** Block out time to focus on the high-payoff activities—and protect it. Coach them to create an "ideal week" of how they would want to invest their time if they could spend it in the most efficient and effective way possible. While they may not always be able to achieve it, having a target to shoot for is the first step.



If you don't schedule your priorities, everyone else will.

Part 3: Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- How could you better invest in the well-being of your people?
- Do you have a written vision for your team that you share with them regularly?
- Are your people clear on their top priorities—and are you doing everything you can to support them?
- What are the main distractions getting in the way of your team getting things done?
- How would you rate yourself in each of the above areas (well-being, vision, execution, productivity)?

4

BUILD A STRUCTURE

You can know exactly what you need to do as a Coaching Leader, and you can have the very best intentions, but the literal act of coaching is not going to happen by accident. Unfortunately, the best intentions fail, especially when leaders become bogged down by the latest crisis.

Being a Coaching Leader requires you to be more focused and intentional in how you interact with employees. It requires you to prioritize connection and build it into your routine, even if that is scheduling time each day to informally connect with an employee to show that the person matters to you.

Beyond that, you need to hold yourself accountable for coaching employees—and as important, you need to hold them accountable for learning and applying what they learn from you.

To do so, you need systems that ensure you are methodically and consistently coaching employees, even when your schedule is full and your to-do list is long. What are systems? They are any repeatable actions and best practices you follow religiously. It can be systems that your organization has put into place or ones you customize to suit your needs.

Becoming a Coaching Leader requires you to prioritize connection and **build it into your routine**, even if that is scheduling time each day to informally connect with an employee to show that the person matters to you.



Here are five critical examples:

1. 1x1 Meetings



You should be scheduling regular one-on-one meetings between you and your employees that are specifically dedicated to their personal growth, career development and performance. If you manage remote employees, consider using video conferencing software so you can not only hear but see each other. Make such meetings a priority by:

- Blocking out time on your schedule regularly to meet with people for 1x1s.
- Creating a general structure for each meeting. For example, you might start each conversation talking about what has gone well and what hasn't since your last meeting. Then move into conversation about the most important items that need attention from both their and your perspective. Then end with action items or goals to work on before the next conversation.
- Setting follow-up protocols. Determine how you will check in with employees, confirm they resolved a problem or monitor their progress. For example, after each session, make it a practice to immediately schedule a follow-up chat in your calendar.

2. Note-taking



You won't—can't—remember every single thing about every conversation you have with every employee. That's why you need a standard set of processes for how you document your coaching sessions, record what matters most to employees, follow up with them, measure their progress, and ultimately, hold them accountable.

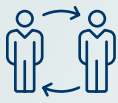
Pick a system that works for you—whether that is a simple folder or an effective app—and use it consistently.

Plus the simple act of taking notes has added benefits. It forces you to pay more attention to what the other person is saying and focuses your attention. It also helps identify follow-up questions to press in on after the session.

A lot of the issues surrounding employee engagement exist because leaders **do not create the space to connect with their people 1x1** to listen, coach and encourage them in their work.



3. Prioritize Connection



While regular 1x1 meetings are the foundation of your structure, informal connection opportunities are also key. And while it may seem spontaneous or impromptu, great Coaching Leaders create a plan to make sure they happen.

They schedule time to walk around the office and connect with people, asking specific questions to make sure they feel heard and valued. They create a list of people they need to connect with and are intentional about finding time to make it happen. Utilizing drive time can be a great opportunity to check in with people.

Coaching Leaders take advantage of travel time or bump-ins in the break room to not just shoot the breeze but to engage in meaningful conversations that will improve connection and performance.

They genuinely want to know their people and are relentlessly curious about learning more about them, their jobs and their perspective. It's not just something they do—it's who they are as leaders.

4. Demonstrate Your Care



Be on the lookout for ways to add value to your people on an ongoing basis. Send them notes of encouragement or praise. Share articles and books that you feel will help them – and include a personal note explaining why. Be intentional about demonstrating that you are committed to their long-term growth and development. And don't underestimate the value this simple action can have on people. We've seen notes that employees have received hanging up in offices years later because of the impact it had on them.

5. Invest in Yourself



Make your own growth and development a priority. Create a Personal Development Plan for yourself that calls out how you will grow in your role, leadership, skills and influence. Identify gaps where training or development could help. Consider finding a coach or mentor to guide you on your journey. Be sure to include development that helps you improve as a Coaching Leader. Set the standard for your team that development is a priority for every team member. After all, you can only give away what you possess.

Part 4: Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- Are you currently meeting 1x1 with your direct reports on a regular, consistent basis? If not, what barriers seem to get in the way?
- What process are you using to ensure you and your people are best prepared for these meetings?
- How do you currently track and store key information about your people, meetings, updates and decisions? Is there room for you to improve?
- How do you intentionally connect with people outside of formal meetings and opportunities?
- What items could you add to your Personal Development Plan to improve how you engage with your people?

Now, asking you to change your mindset, purpose for leading and approach to how you interact with your employees can seem a bit much. But for more than 20 years, we've seen leaders transform themselves, their people and their organizations by following this framework—all while delivering extraordinary results.

By adopting a coaching style, you can improve engagement, deliver better results and ensure your team can meet the inevitable challenges that lie ahead. On a more personal level, coaching improves your own skills and makes you a stronger leader and employee.

Rather than being a zero-sum game, coaching your people has proven to be a win-win-win—your people win, the company wins and you as a Coaching Leader win.

Here are some keys for improving engagement:

- **Get to know them**—as employees and individuals.
- **Offer them the tools they need to succeed**—whether that is resources, time or guidance.
- **Be honest about how the company is doing.** They are the backbone of the organization, so be transparent. Talk about the struggles, and invite them to work on solutions. They want to see the organization do well.
- **Help them grow and encourage personal development.** Offer them plenty of learning opportunities. Coach and train them to reach their full potential—even if that means they move on to bigger, better roles.
- **Recognize them.** Praise the results—but also the effort. Let them know what an asset they are to the organization.
- **Promote failure.** Encourage innovation and risk taking, knowing that failure is an opportunity to learn and a vital step in the process.
- **Show them the way.** Your job as a Coaching Leader is to help them see what is possible for them and the organization. Whether it's asking great questions or sharing some helpful advice or direction, always look for ways to help them succeed.



ABOUT BUILDING CHAMPIONS

For more than 20 years, the executive coaches at Building Champions have helped individuals and organizations understand the beliefs and behaviors of great leadership, so they can build dynamic cultures that drive organizational excellence and extraordinary results for all stakeholders.

And a key part of that is how you invest, develop and coach your employees. From training [workshops](#) to one-on-one [Executive Coaching](#), learn more about the programs, tools and resources we offer to help you better engage your people.

Contact us to learn more about how we help organizations leverage this strategy to improve results by [Building a Coaching Culture](#).



BUILDING CHAMPIONS®



www.buildingchampions.com



503-670-1013



info@buildingchampions.com

¹ Gallup 2017 State of the American Workplace

² Mind of the Leader by Hougaard and Carter

³ DecisionWise 2017 State of Employee Engagement

⁴ 2012 Survey conducted by Michelle McQuaid

⁵ 2018 Employee Engagement Trends Report

⁶ Driving Engagement by Focusing on Strengths, Gallup

⁷ The Impact of Excellent Employee Wellbeing, OC. Tanner Institute

