

ROCHESTER

Democrat and Chronicle

November 11, 2013

Coach workers for peak performance

WOMEN AT WORK

Sally Ward

What is the best approach when an employee asks for advice or help solving a problem?

Leader A is a commander. He thrives on giving direction and tells the employee what to do.

Leader B is a fixer, and sees this as an opportunity to make things right.

Leader C is stressed and preoccupied. She suggests a solution to the employee in order to bring rapid closure to the challenge at hand.

In each case, the leader fails to empower the employee and the organization bears the cost of underutilized resources.

Leader D takes a coaching approach. This leadership style holds that employees are creative and capable. It encourages their professional growth, responsibility and autonomy.

For coaching that results in peak performance, there must be investment in thoughtful dialogue with the employee that leads to learning and action.

The leader establishes the employee's agenda and goals, and then she asks about the current reality and listens for limiting beliefs and patterns. Powerful questions take the employee to a new place of thinking, exploring options and considering possibilities. The leader then asks the employee to commit to action steps with a specific time frame. Leader and employee agree on how the employee will be accountable and what measures will be used to gauge success.

Employees who are coached say that they feel valued and supported. They show greater engagement, motivation and productivity. Seventy percent improve work performance, according to a global coaching study by the International Coach federation.

John Russell, managing director of Harley-Davidson Europe Ltd. says, “I never cease to be amazed at the power of the coaching process to draw out the skills or talent that was previously hidden within an individual, and which invariably finds a way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable.”

Sally Ward is President of Ward Leadership, an executive coaching and leadership development company. She may be reached at www.WardLeadership.com/contact

Copyright © Rochester Democrat and Chronicle. All rights reserved.
Reproduced with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. by NewsBank, inc.