THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & COACHING

The ability to facilitate and support the professional growth of others by acting as an advocate and accountability partner.

LEADERS LEAD OTHERS

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & COACHING MATTERS

Employee Development & Coaching is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & COACHING LOOKS LIKE

- You identify strengths and weaknesses accurately, then design development that works
- Your people take charge of their own growth rather than waiting for direction
- Your organization builds the talent it will need before it needs it

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Employee Development & Coaching matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & COACHING

THE DEFINITION

The ability to facilitate and support the professional growth of others by acting as an advocate and accountability partner.

Like any skill worth mastering, Employee Development & Coaching rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Accurate assessment**

Identifying someone's strengths and weaknesses, evaluating them against the requirements of a job or goal, and designing a program that elevates their skills to the level success requires.

2 **Partnering, not directing**

Partnering with employees in their development planning so they take charge of their own growth. Serve as a guide and coach, not a director.

3 **Well-timed feedback**

Feedback, both positive and negative, is critical to development. Timed well, it reinforces desirable behaviors and keeps people on track.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I have a professional development plan that includes being coachable and seeking specific feedback from others.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I regularly use the coaching skills of providing clear expectations, giving timely feedback, and asking questions that build clarity and accountability.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I help others think more clearly about what they want, what they're doing, whether their plan is working, and what to change.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I am actively involved in mentoring two or more people, helping them leverage their natural talents.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I give feedback close to the event rather than saving it for a scheduled review.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I ask people what development they actually want, and act as a guide rather than directing their plan.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

REFLECT

Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?

SECTION 04

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & COACHING IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 — 40 min

Recognizing Others' Potential

Coaching starts with seeing one person's specific strengths and problem areas clearly.

TRY IT

1. Choose someone who has asked for your advice or mentorship, and list three of their key strengths.
2. Write two ideas for encouraging or promoting each strength.
3. List three problem areas, and write two ideas for modifying each.

ACTIVITY 02 — 60 min

Training and Coaching

Ask your team what development they actually need, then act on it.

TRY IT

1. Survey your employees on the training and coaching needs they perceive in your department.
2. Act on their recommendations: arrange training, or offer more of your own time if that's what they need.

3. Review existing training materials and update them, or work with staff to create them where none exist.

ACTIVITY 03 60 min

Goal Setting

Regular performance conversations are where development plans become real. Hold one meeting with each person you lead.

TRY IT

1. Schedule regular meetings with each employee using your performance assessment tool.
2. For each, note what they've said they want to improve, what job changes require new skills, and what issues appeared in their appraisal.
3. Where your perception and theirs differ, work to understand why.

ACTIVITY 04 20 min

Encouraging Others

Set a deliberate goal for positive, specific encouragement. Run it for a week.

TRY IT

1. List the people you want to encourage.
2. Determine something specific and positive you can say or do for each.
3. Complete as many of those actions as you can by the end of the week.

ACTIVITY 05 30 min

The Post-Assignment Debrief

Conduct assessment meetings after important assignments so the experience becomes learning.

TRY IT

1. After an important assignment completes, meet with the person who led it.
2. Discuss both the strengths they showed and the mistakes made along the way.
3. Agree on one thing they'll do differently next time.

ACTIVITY 06 20 min

Be a Role Model for Development

People take development seriously when they see you doing it.

TRY IT

1. Be open with your team about the risks you take and the learning you pursue.
2. Accept compliments gracefully, give credit where it's due, and take constructive criticism just as gracefully.
3. Provide concrete resources: books, courses, financial support for after-hours education.

SECTION 05

COMMON EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & COACHING TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Directing instead of guiding**

Taking charge of someone's development for them prevents the ownership that makes it stick. Partner with them instead.

02 **Being reactive**

Dealing only with the immediate needs at hand, without planning ahead to develop contingent talent, leaves the organization exposed.

03 **Breaking confidence**

Coaching relationships run on trust. Keep confidences, give honest and forthright advice, and don't gossip.

04 **Feedback only when something goes wrong**

Positive feedback is as much a development tool as correction. Acknowledge and praise improvement when you see it.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Employee Development & Coaching over the next 90 days?

1

2

3

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1

Q2

Q3

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Employee Development & Coaching with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK

The Complete Leader, Ch. 3.11: Employee Development & Coaching

The full framework and examples behind developing others.

PODCAST

The Complete Leader Podcast

Episodes 3, 26, 48, 54, 78 & 116 explore developing others.

ONLINE

Employee Development & Coaching competency library

Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS

As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Employee Development & Coaching?

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Employee Development & Coaching is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.