“COACHING”

Coaching is an activity through which managers work with subordinates to foster skill development, impart knowledge, and inculcate values and behaviors that will help them achieve organizational goals and prepare them for more challenging assignments. Coaching is often the byproduct of performance appraisal. Most of the time, however, it takes place in the course of everyday business; whenever a perceptive manager sees a way to help subordinates do things better. The importance of coaching has grown as organizational structures have flattened and the necessity for continual learning is recognized.

Preparation is the first step. Everything worth doing is done better with preparation, and coaching is no exception. Have you identified people in your funeral establishment who would benefit from coaching? If not begin with observation, followed by listening and then start asking questions. Next, you will need to see what needs fixing which is basically - direct discussions with the employee. It’s learning how to use open-ended and closed questions to obtain the information you need to be an effective coach or employer. You must also be a good listener and know how to move discussions regarding the causes for bad performance problems or deficiencies you want to remedy or work on. Once you understand the person who needs help and the situation itself, you will be ready to begin your coaching sessions. This is where the wheels meet the road.

Good coaching is often the product of personal qualities and social skills that cannot be taught in any book or educational session. Nevertheless, you can learn some things that will make your coaching experiences better’ for example. Knowing when to coach and, because problematic situations are better resolved through other means, when not to coach. Sometimes coaching may need to be delegated to competent subordinates, saving time for busy funeral service managers. Listen carefully, because you can learn a number of do’s and don’t that can make you a better coach.

Executive coaching provides a one-on-one customized approach to altering the behavior of senior people, with the goal of improving on-the-job performance. You’d think the people at the executive level would not need coaching, but in fact many executives have bad habits that need correcting. Some executives create ill will and low morale through arrogance- about which they are clueless. Still others do not know how to collaborate with people in other functions; such as drivers, funeral attendants, secretaries, embalmers, cemetery personnel, florist and the list goes on, and they need to learn to collaborate with others. Because it is generally cheaper and less disruptive to cure these habits than to replace top important people, many companies cure these faults through coaching.
A Manager’s job is to get results through people and other resources. The funeral service profession is very reliant on knowledge and service, people and their skills and performance both, professional and compassionate. Funeral homes have a huge interest in the capabilities of their employees, which they attempt to develop through formal training and on-the-job training and progressive job assignments. Everyone has a role in executing a well-organized organization. Make sure you understand the definition of “Coaching”. Coaching is an interactive process through which managers and supervisors aim to solve performance problems or develop maximum employee capabilities. The process relies on collaboration and is based on three components: technical help, personal support and individual challenges. Because coaching is a person-to-person experience, this sort of bond must be present—and it must be positive if coaching is to succeed and can lead to an emotional bond within your funeral establishment and your management team.

**BENEFITS:**
- Helps overcome performance problems.
- Helps to develop employee skills.
- Helps to increase productivity in your establishment.
- Helps create promotable subordinates for more important roles.
- Improves retention and creates loyal and motivated employees.
- Fosters a positive work culture-job satisfaction & higher motivation.

**THE FOUR-STEP PROCESS:**
- Step 1 - The preparation
- Step 2 - Discussion
- Step 3 – Active Coaching
- Step 4 – Follow-Up

Remember: Coaching takes time and energy. So pick only those coaching opportunities where you truly can make a difference.
- Keep your Prejudices in Check
- Create a Comfortable Setting
- Create a Partnership Spirit
- Begin with the Easy Things
- Delegate Coaching Tasks
- Be a Good Role Model

This concludes your first Mini-Session on Coaching. We hope this information will help you to be a more effective Manager in your Funeral Service Establishment or Organization. Our goal is to bring topics to our funeral service colleagues that will help them become better funeral service professionals. Our next Mimi-Educational session will discuss Mentoring and Management. If you have some topic suggestions or wish to be taken off our email list, please email us at Hundredbwfs@aol.com. Thank you for your attention and time as we continue to strive for Excellence in the Funeral Service Profession.

_Eleanor C. Starks, CFSP-Publisher_

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