

ASTD Coaching Self-Assessment Form

INSTRUCTIONS:

The purpose of this activity is to assist you in learning about what you need to be successful as a coach and to help you create an action plan for self-improvement. Write an **X** in one of the boxes to the right of each competency, depending on how you see yourself right now. No one will see your ratings unless you voluntarily share them, so please be honest in your assessments.

	One Of My Strengths	Doing Okay On This	Need To Develop This	Lacking This Skill
Communicating Instructions. Showing the person you are coaching how to accomplish the task and clarifying when, where, how much, and to what standard it should be done.				
Setting Performance Goals. Collaborating with others to establish short- and long-term goals for performance on particular tasks.				
Providing Feedback. Carefully observing performance on individual tasks and sharing these observations in a nonthreatening manner.				
Rewarding Improvement. Using a variety of means to provide positive reinforcement to others for making progress on the accomplishment of important tasks.				
Dealing With Failure. Working with others to encourage them when they do not meet expectations.				
Working With Personal Issues. Listening empathically and without judgment, and offering emotional support for nonwork difficulties.				
Confronting Difficult Situations. Raising uncomfortable topics that are impacting task accomplishment.				
Responding to Requests. Consulting with others on an as-needed basis. Responding to requests in a timely manner.				
Following Through. Keeping commitments. Monitoring outcomes of the coaching process and providing additional assistance when necessary.				
Listening for Understanding. Demonstrating attention to and conveying understanding of others.				
Motivating Others. Encouraging others to achieve desired results. Creating enthusiasm and commitment in others.				
Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses. Identifying root causes of individual performance. Probing beneath the surface of problems. Keenly observing people and events. Defining and articulating issues effectively.				
Building Rapport and Trust. Showing respect for others. Acting with integrity and honesty. Easily building bonds with others. Making others feel their concerns and contributions are important.				

Review your self-assessments above and on the following pages to understand why those 13 competencies are important for coaches. Then, outline an action plan for self-improvement on the final page. Make sure it is a plan to which you are completely committed.

Why These Competencies Are Important

The 13 competencies that make up this assessment are of particular importance for those with a coaching role. They represent areas in which you need to excel in order to fulfill your coaching role successfully.

- **Communicating Instructions.** Showing the person you are coaching how to accomplish the task and clarifying when, where, how much, and to what standard it should be done.

The role of coach often involves teaching a skill or procedure to another person. The ability to break down a task into easy-to-understand steps that you can articulate to another is vital to being an effective coach.

- **Setting Performance Goals.** Collaborating with others to establish short- and long-term goals for performance on particular tasks.

Effective coaching sometimes starts with pointing someone in the right direction. First, you work with the person to set broad goals; then you become very specific in agreeing on desired outcomes and how they will be measured.

- **Providing Feedback.** Carefully observing performance on individual tasks and sharing these observations in a nonthreatening manner.

Giving others feedback on their task performance is critical to improving their performance. In order to do this effectively, you have to observe the person performing the task, noting what the person is doing well and what can be improved. Then you work with the individual to ensure that he or she understands your feedback and uses it developmentally.

- **Rewarding Improvement.** Using a variety of means to provide positive reinforcement to others for making progress on the accomplishment of important tasks.

Timing of rewards is important. Don't wait until you see either perfection or failure on the task. Look for growth in task accomplishment and reward that soon after you observe it. Although coaches don't always control formal rewards (pay, perks, or promotions), they can make frequent and effective use of informal ("pat on the back" or other nonmonetary recognition) ones.

- **Dealing With Failure.** Working with others to encourage them when they do not meet expectations.

When an individual demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to perform a task according to expectations and standards, you need to be able to deal with the result. This can mean encouraging, reprimanding, redirecting, retraining, or otherwise affecting his or her ability or willingness. Patience can be a virtue or an enabler of more failure. Use it wisely.

- **Working With Personal Issues.** Listening empathically and without judgment and offering emotional support for nonwork difficulties.

In general, coaches are not expected to function as counselors or psychotherapists. Few are qualified to carry out such responsibilities, and the context of the organizational relationship might preclude this type of interaction. Faced with an individual whose personal situation is interfering with his or her performance, however, you need to be able to intervene. A good rule of thumb is that whenever you feel "in over your head," you are. Be prepared to refer the person to appropriate sources of professional assistance and adjust the coaching process to support getting through the situation humanely.

- **Confronting Difficult Situations.** Raising uncomfortable topics that are affecting task accomplishment.

Coaching often involves situations in which performance has not met expectations. Unmet expectations often lead to finger pointing, denial of personal responsibility, and other dysfunctional behaviors. Talking about these issues can make people uncomfortable. Good coaching requires the ability and willingness to confront difficult and uncomfortable situations head on, but with tact and diplomacy. When the best interests of all concerned are at heart, the honesty and courage to confront difficult situations are welcomed.

- **Responding to Requests.** Consulting with others on an as-needed basis. Responding to requests in a timely manner.

Timely response to requests is a tangible indicator of respect. To build and maintain a healthy coaching relationship, make sure your responsiveness reflects a high level of priority.

- **Following Through.** Keeping your commitments. Monitoring outcomes of the coaching process and providing additional assistance when necessary.

Trust is a critical component of any coaching relationship. Keeping your commitments helps build and maintain trust. Showing an ongoing commitment to the long-term success of the person you are coaching also builds a strong relationship.

- **Listening for Understanding.** Demonstrating attention to and conveying understanding of others.

Listening is another indicator of respect. It requires keeping your mind open to what others say, attending well to both the content of what they say and the feelings they may be expressing (sometimes unconsciously). Listening effectively almost invariably involves checking your understanding of others' messages by reflecting what you hear, using such phrases as, "What I hear you saying is..." and, "You seem to be concerned about..."

- **Motivating Others.** Encouraging others to achieve desired results. Creating enthusiasm and commitment in others.

The right button to push to help motivate another person differs widely. There are no hard-and-fast rules to what motivates anyone. You can be effective by knowing what motivates the person you are coaching and tying his or her desires and goals to the task at hand. This requires continual assessment and reassessment of the person and situation. "Reading" the person can be inaccurate. It's better to ask what is important to him or her and how the task at hand relates.

- **Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses.** Identifying root causes of individual performance. Probing beneath the surface of problems. Keenly observing people and events. Defining and articulating issues effectively.

Properly identifying the abilities and interests of the person you are coaching directs your coaching efforts to the most critical areas. This involves keen observation and attention to detail. It also means distinguishing between symptoms and root causes of problems. Without accurate assessment, your coaching efforts might all be spent on addressing the wrong problem or a nonexistent one.

- **Building Rapport and Trust.** Showing respect for others. Acting with integrity and honesty. Easily building bonds with others.

Making others feel their concerns and contributions are important. Rapport and trust are the cornerstones of an effective coaching relationship. The person you are coaching needs to trust that you have his or her best interests at heart so he or she can be honest with you regarding shortcomings. There also needs to be a bond of mutual respect so the advice, teaching, and counseling of the coach will be more readily accepted.

Coach's Plan for Self-Improvement

1. Which, if any, of these competencies are especially relevant to your particular coaching role (guide, teacher, motivator, mentor)?
2. Which two or three competency areas do you need to improve most?
3. What's in it for you to better yourself in these areas?
4. What have you tried before?
5. What steps can you take personally to improve in these areas?
6. What support do you need to improve in these competencies?
7. How will you monitor your progress in self-improvement as a coach?
8. Who needs to know about this?
9. How will you tell him or her?
10. What are your first few steps?

Reference: Chen, Chris, *Coaching Training*, ASTD, 2003.