

**The
Manager's
COACHING
Handbook**

**A Practical Guide to
Improving Employee Performance**

David Cottrell and Mark Layton



To order additional copies of this handbook or for information on other WALK THE TALK® products and services, contact us at
1.888.822.9255
or visit our website at
www.walkthetalk.com

Like a complimentary training guide for this book?
Go to www.walkthetalk.com and click on
Free Training Tips for Our \$9.95 Handbooks

The Manager's Coaching Handbook. Second Edition

©2002 CornerStone Leadership Institute. All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher. International rights and foreign translations are available only through negotiation of a licensing agreement with the publisher.

Inquiries regarding permission for use of the material contained in this book should be addressed to:

The WALK THE TALK Company
2925 LBJ Freeway, Suite 201
Dallas, Texas 75234
972.243.8863

WALK THE TALK books may be purchased for educational, business, or sales promotion use.

WALK THE TALK® and The WALK THE TALK® Company are registered trademarks of Performance Systems Corporation.

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Edited by Jill Mason
Printed by The Graphics Group

This book is printed on recycled paper.



ISBN 1-885228-46-5



“**C**ongratulations . . . You are now a manager!”

Remember the thoughts and emotions those words evoked the first time you heard them?

“Wow! It’s about time. My team will be enthusiastic and hard working. Finally, everyone will be happy working here. The sky’s the limit!”

Then your boss continues: “By the way, you have some performance issues on your team that you need to address. We have known about them for some time, but we thought it would be best for the new manager to fix the problem. This should be your number one priority. Congratulations, again, and good luck.”

Whether that conversation took place 10 days ago or 10 years ago, you still remember the ice cold sweat and the stinging harsh reality of being thrown into a situation that you may not have expected.

So ... what happened?

Of course you hoped your leadership would immediately transform the team members with “performance issues” into the organization’s best producers. Surely your positive example would turn their performance around. Yes, it’s a new day. Let’s see, a refocus of goals. That will make a difference, right? So will a change of management style, renewed enthusiasm, improved communication, and your passionate commitment. You were right. All of these do work ... sometimes ... for a little while.

However, deep down you probably knew that “new management” rarely changes a person’s behavior. Many times that same perform-

ance issue now staring you in the face has survived numerous managers. So, you can’t count on that person – or persons – improving just because you’re their new leader.

Many times, that same performance issue now staring you in the face has survived many managers. So, you can’t count on the employee improving just because you’re the new leader.

The excitement of your promotion to manager began to fade as the reality of addressing performance discrepancies and coaching others to improve sunk in. It wouldn’t be a problem except that you have never been a coach, and, chances are, you haven’t received all that much coaching yourself.



If you’re like most, the reason you’ve been promoted into management is because you have consistently been a top performer. Your performance reviews have reflected your achievements – as well


they should. But your manager did not formally “coach” you to improve. Sure, he or she may have offered some suggestions, but formal coaching? No way – mainly because there was no real need. You’re good. Your boss knows it ... and so do you.

So, congratulations. You have joined the countless others before you enrolled in the “baptism by fire” management school. The increased responsibilities may seem staggering – and the priorities overwhelming – as you begin to confront the challenges ahead.


This handbook will help! It will guide you to becoming an effective coach and outstanding leader, even if you’ve been managing for years.

But, before you turn another page, here is some “inside” management information you need to know and remember:


-  **There is a work climate already existing on your team.** It may be negative and cynical, or just the opposite – positive and exciting. Or it could be a little of both ... or somewhere in between. Some kind of climate does exist, however, and it is constantly changing. It’s your job to monitor the climate and make any adjustments necessary to improve performance.
-  **Most employees are not exactly like you.** Many managers assume that their co-workers share the same desires, motivation, passion, and pride. Wrong! People are different, and you shouldn’t expect them to be exactly like you. If you make the assumption that just because you are motivated, your people will be motivated, LOOK OUT ... you’re taking a wrong turn in your management career.

 **Coaching is not a popularity contest.** Coaching is about enhancing your team's performance. Everyone likes to be liked, but that shouldn't be your first priority. "I want my people to respect me," you say. Sure, who doesn't? But remember, as a leader, one of your most important responsibilities is to effect change. And people typically resist change. Be ready to acquire more than a few critics and detractors as you coach your team to success.

You'll soon discover, if you haven't already, that the best way to earn respect is to help others succeed.

 **Coaching poor performers will not be easy or fun.** It's just as tough to point out performance problems as it is to hear about them, so don't expect coaching poor performers to be fun. People do things for reasons that are logical to them, even though those reasons may appear to be totally illogical to you.

Effective coaching begins with thorough preparation. If you do your homework up front, you will have an excellent chance for a productive performance improvement session. If you try to "wing it," both you and the employee will end up very frustrated.

 **Your team is depending on you!** The biggest obstacles to effective team performance are people who don't carry their share of the load. You may be tempted to avoid issues until they become serious. Fight that feeling! It doesn't take long for morale and productivity to erode, and finally disintegrate, because of one poor performer. So, it comes down to this: Your team is counting on you to address employee performance problems ... now!

**Changing employee performance isn't *your* responsibility.**

Your responsibility is to coach and provide feedback. The employees must make the decision to improve their performance ... or change where they work. It is *their* call.

Okay. Now you know some of the inside scoop.

“Congratulations ... You are now a manager,”

was great news. Now the work begins.

Obviously, people think you have the talent and ability to be a terrific coach and leader. This book provides tools to help you live up to those expectations.

Enjoy and apply!