

manager-tools-2018-04-29.mp3

[00:00:00] Welcome the Manager Tools soft coaching running meetings. Part 2. Here we go. This case answers these questions. How do I help someone improve without the coaching model. What if I need more than feedback. But less than coaching is it OK to give lots of feedback at one time. Will one answer these questions more more he polis in and communication skills. It's one of those things that's really easy to overlook. Since we do it all the talk I mean how bad can you be. You are literally practicing constantly. People seek help less often on communication unless they know that they're struggling to attend. One of our effective communicator conferences you don't have to be struggling. We help individuals of all skill levels to enhance and better their communications with others. Communication matters getting better at it is something we could all invest in from time to time. Register today at manager Desch tools dot com forward slash training to join us at an upcoming event blast. Mark we talked about what is off coaching in particular right. Something a little bit more than feedback but not the full blown coaching model and folks finished it in the full coaching model please we have plenty of podcasts on that. So feel free to go listen to those and when we talked about getting soft coaching agreement from our directs and now we talk about the next thing our list is no need for goal setting and brainstorming. This is a significant departure from the full full on coaching model. And just for those people maybe join in this week.

[00:01:37] I was in Palo Alto this week delivering a public conference which I don't think I'd done in five years. And we had some new listeners and I asked them sort of how they learned about us. And you know one guy did say you know if I join a four part thing in the middle I'm a little confused. So if you're just joining us if you're wondering what SOF coaching is basically our SOF coaching guidance means giving relatively high levels of feedback to one of your directs over a fairly short period of time not days but maybe weeks to help them improve in a specific area. It's an intermittent step or an in-between step between feedback which you do with all of your direct positive or negative. I actually shouldn't say that migrate because But coaching is a goal directed self development effort by one of your tracks that lasts usually three months. It's intensive because you're probably going to be talking about it every week. And there are tasks and deadlines involved. You have to listen to our coaching guidance and to give you an idea you can do it all in five minutes a week. It's that easy. Most managers just make some fundamentally bad assumptions about coaching and my guess is you're probably one of them. No offense was I it was Mike and so coaching is for something that'll take more than just a little bit of additional attention for a few weeks. If you just think you need a little bit of attention for a few weeks then that's what soft coaching is for.

[00:03:14] We could have also called this focused feedback meaning hey for the next few weeks how many of you focused feedback in this one area. We decided to call SOF coaching because I told somebody about focus feedback and said who that sounds bad like she's okay great. All right so we don't need goal setting we'd only brainstorming brainstorming. It shouldn't. We don't need brainstorming for something that's going to last a couple of weeks brainstorming is for generating lots of ideas for you know that's going to last we might use five six seven eight 10 different resources in our coaching model but we don't need that here. We did gain agreement but it doesn't require that 15 minute upfront investment. The coaching does and part of the reason for doing that is we know for many of you having to sit down with your direct. Even when we spelled it out how to set a goal how to brainstorm. For many managers the moment you say that with somebody you're committing to three or four months of talking to them almost every week about their performance in a particular area and it creates the opportunity for failure. I think one of the

underlying principles that most managers have is let's not set goals. Because if I don't have goals if I don't have numeric targets if I don't meet them I can't be punished for them. And that's true for a lot of managers in their overall job not just in their relationship with an individual direct. So we understand that there's some risk of failure if you sit down with the direct and say okay in four months you're going to be able to do X particularly if you've never done coaching before.

[00:04:51] So with SOF coaching there's no risk of failing against the goal there isn't a goal. There's only improvement. Always be careful. Be careful of somebody who says the goal is to improve because that's not a goal that's a measure of incremental progress. So what we're trying to do is use feedback to drive some improvement in behavior more good less bad behavior on the part of the direct and it's going to be in a specific area in this particular cast. I think we're talking about running meetings and we'll do other SAAF coaching examples where we talk about different things. But you're going to give a more positive and negative feedback probably in general. You'd hope that in the beginning maybe maybe it's 80 20 negative feedback to positive by the end it's 90 10 positive to negative which would be pretty great. I think for a direct to sense that over time that they're gradually getting rid of their weaknesses and then maximizing their strengths. Yeah. Brady likes that. Yeah. Yeah. OK so does that mean though that we're not using additional resources like we do in coaching. We're not sure that that's true. So in that coaching model you're right.

[00:06:09] You and your Drachten identify a bunch of different resources the brainstorming that the director could avail themselves of to help them improve books training mentors volunteering special projects specific assignments task delegation classes podcasts online education coding camps feedback video peer input etc. etc. etc. and I have Mike Army combat with you that in the next four months are on the road somebody can come up to me and say hey that little bit you put it in a safe coaching realist and some of the brainstorm things you've come up with in coaching that was really helpful for my future coaching education and of course folks if you're a licensee you can download the show notes and just copy that list into your next coaching model template. I have a note taking app Notational Velocity free you geeks that's kind of what. But regardless I have in there a note that just has a list it must have probably at this point sixty coaching resources that I can use when I go to a coaching you know Yato one of my directs. I refer to that list of 60. During the brainstorming session. Frankly as a manager I. I don't. I'm not the first ones to suggest them but when there's a lull in the brainstorming although some of them out there and I just use it over and over and over again. Very useful to have those. By the way folks there are many paths to enlightenment just like there are many people in your life. Most managers think I'm going to coach them using tools that make sense to me. Well of course it's not about you it's about them. So yeah that's good. Always helpful and you know what I'm on the road I'm afraid people all the time. Hey look if you need to coach somebody and you're not really sure how to do it in a particular E-Plus. If you're licensee email us right. I'll give you my list. I've coached a person on that before so hard and you need all that stuff if you're doing a 3 to 6 month project on the front end.

[00:08:01] You don't want to be running out of resources or essentially using up a resource by going to an online class and a week and then going OK what do I do now. So you want to be able to go back to a previously thought of that list. But when you talk about soft coaching how that happens and the improvement with soft coaching doesn't need to be planned each time. The only real tool in the joint effort between you and your direct helping direct improve is their behavior and your feedback to them on their behavior. The assumption and by the way this function pretty well proven in they are human development

human performance arenas. Is that the intention and measurement of feedback causes performance improvements without requiring a plan or a gap analysis or resource planning or or even budgeting. You just don't need that stuff. If you think you can see a relatively straightforward path over a short period of time when I say short I mean weeks not months to get your direct from where they are to where they need to be. Now that said there's nothing wrong with the direct saying I'd kind of like to supplement feedback here with some self development stuff. You know they might say hey do you know a book. Yeah I know a book. I got books. And again folks if you need a book recommendation for licencee email me. Happy to do it. No you wouldn't then say Hey here's who directs us. You know I kind of like to read about this. Okay good. You wouldn't sit down to go let's come up with a plan for you reading the book.

[00:09:38] If they're motivated to read a book and they suggested recommend a book and don't track whether or not they read the book because in fact if they read the book and are successful in reading the book but their behavior is not changing that's a distraction from them focusing on the behavior. There's nothing wrong. Some people would say I really rather spend a couple of months studying the problem. Often these are for those who are just people these are high seas. These are folks who say no I don't I don't want to run that risk of having to change my behavior until I've come off the plan in my mind or thought it through or talk to somebody else who's known all the options and so on and they wouldn't say talk to somebody else did they not. I know when I say talk somebody else I mean talk to an expert writer. Yeah but there's nothing wrong with that per se. Now somebody who you say look I really need to help you with meeting deadlines and they see I'm uncomfortable with the South coaching approach. Can I have six months to study. You know deadline management and tracking software and task management processes. And then the answer is yeah no you can't. You can't delay for 6 months because you're going to study and beaten to death with knowledge but a path that's both of them were where the direct says you yeah I kind of like to supplement this and I think that's a good word to use supplement right. In other words.

[00:11:03] The primary thing is going to be me assigning work you doing it and me paying attention and giving you plenty of feedback about it. And then the other thing could be read books go to classes. Those are all good like online courses maybe. Yeah absolutely not. But again I wouldn't I wouldn't track their performance in that online course. Right. Just like you and the reading the book. Things are more involved that I think of as our no longer term game. I think that the coaching model the full coaching model when I think about things like Toastmasters but could Toastmasters apply here as well. It could I mean look if you've got a direct who said Yep I'd love it and I'd like to do a little bit more. And we recognize the first thing we have to do is get all of our work done. So yeah. If they want to do more I would. If you were my boss Mike and you said yeah you got an area here where you need to get better. Be like OK. Remember guys. By the way there's there's two classic reasons why you coach someone one the one that springs to everyone everyone's mind is that in some area that they are measured in they are below standard and they're below the minimum they're at risk. Their performance in that area makes them at risk more broadly. That's classic right. And that's why coaching has a negative stigma.

[00:12:22] The other one is a performer who's doing fine perhaps better than fine perhaps even outstanding but needs yet more in order to go to the next level or to expand the repertoire or just developed himself generally or to be considered for a different position somewhere else or is a classic example of self-improvement and professional development. Either one of those things can be true. And why would you want to say oh no SAAF coaching. No we can't use any additional resources. If the director says gosh this

is important to me I'm willing to do it. So yeah. Again though if you're talking about Toastmasters you don't expect bi weekly updates you know and track whether or not they're going and how many times it was they've given in speeches and so on. That's not to say you can't ask every couple of weeks he has the truest funds is good you know good people in the group. That's not measurement. That's care and concern for your direct. Yeah. And regardless of whether it's coaching or soft coaching. If my direct ask me their suggested they want to go to Toastmasters I would absolutely encourage them to do so. I can't imagine Segall now don't do that as a waste of time. Yeah I don't crazy crazy he said. Yeah I think we said before Toastmasters may be the best at least for me the best quazi professional association that I know of. And you mentioned you absolutely encourage it. I pay for it right now. Here I go. I'll pay your dues. Go. Absolutely. OK. We've kind of talked about that roaches suggest Taskin and they give tons of feedback. That's the heart of the coaching model. Yeah. Oh that's the heart of the Safka. Yeah right. Yeah. Yeah look we've taken too long to get here. I apologize.

[00:14:10] We're filling in backfill so people can understand we're SAAF coaching fits in in the P.A. system and tools guidance by the way I mentioned Palo Alto. Like I heard from several people there's just so much stuff out there. When do I start axes. I feel terrible. Okay good. Then I can stop writing podcasts. There's too much. So the heart of the model is to suggest tasks your direct can do that you feel like you can give them feedback on right. We're focusing on one specific activity between manager interact and that is essentially targeted feedback. So let's get right to it. How would it sound. Okay I might say okay look glad we've agreed about running meetings. Here's a good way to start. Let's have you run the next draft meaning I'll watch you and I'll give you feedback later that day or an hour one on one the following day. Draco's. Okay so during the staff meeting you make notes about things that go well and things that don't. Now I'm going to make another side here and I'm going to say this for probably the tenth time which is not enough and when I say it to people their eyes kind of open up folks. If your meetings don't start on time and on time and are efficient Chris and when you have gas come in don't go wow you know how to run a meaning. You are absolutely underperforming the standard. If you're listening to this podcast you are capable of running a kick tail meeting. Seriously awesome meeting.

[00:15:48] Some of it is you don't know how and that's fine but I'll tell you another underlying reason when you're running a meeting. Let's say your staff meaning or project meaning there are three things you're probably doing. Number one you're running and facilitate in the meeting. Number two you're probably wanting to provide content to the topics that are on the agenda whatever surface the agenda which is probably in your ad. No wonder people can't follow it. And the third thing is you're paying attention to how people on the team interact who trusts who. Who listens to who. Who interrupts Hu who's a little jerk and sits in the corner and whispers and complains and so on. Three things. Now the first thing running a meeting a monkey could run a meeting. Of the three things the one that's least important the one that's most likely given is somebody else the one that is least valuable is running the meeting. When you start delegating you teach other people to run meetings after you've mastered it which will take you six weeks after you've done that you will then focus on the two most important things which is providing content and watching how your team interacts with one another and you will be able to do it in a massive sense of calm. The idea that we have managers all over the world still running meetings and running them poorly and haven't figured out this is a classic case for delegation. In fact you don't really like running meetings because there's some stuff you've got to do and you never have time to create an agenda.

[00:17:21] Even though we have a podcast about how to create a quick agenda and like two minutes or take notes which is also super easy there's a podcast about that whether we've made it easier or not doesn't matter if you think it's hard and you haven't proven. And all we have to do is look at your behavior to tell if you haven't proven the urge to mastering it give it to one of your tracks who will see it as you tap on the shoulder and saying I think you're capable of doing more. And if you're a manager that's how you felt when you weren't a manager. You wanted people to recognize that you felt you were capable of doing more. Let's take advantage of that. I don't mean advantage in the negative sense. Let's honor the people who want to grow and develop because professional growth and development is the engine of productivity which is the engine of profitability in your firm. OK so we're going to assign the task and then we're going to pay attention to the direct and during the staff meeting were to make notes about things to go on things that don't. And it's really simple during the follow up discussion maybe the next day maybe you just hold them back at the end of the meeting. Maybe you do it two days later in their one on one. It doesn't matter terribly but don't do it a week later more than a week later because your memory will be bad. Basically what you do is use our event based feedback model to give a bunch feedback and there's a cast for that called event based feedback where you can get a lot more examples.

[00:18:44] But the Kito event based feedback is you asked one time about giving feedback about an event where there might be multiple infractions or or or successes and then you just do lots of when you hear what. So it's not like this didn't have some feedback when you started meeting on time. That's good. Well done. When you don't send out an agenda folks don't know how much time they have. And that's like I can work on them. When you put the agenda on the first slide the agenda goes away when you move to the next slide. Can you posted or send it out next time that we get when you take 10 more minutes on the first agenda item that you had planned for. It makes getting the meeting done on time much harder. Can you pay more attention to the clock for each agenda item when you shift Bob when he interrupts. Miguel that's good enforcement of the ground rules. We all agree to that. Good work there. I know that sounds really like mundane but it's really good. Yeah those are all behaviors associate with meetings. Do more of this stuff and less of that stuff and pretty soon you won't be doing any stuff that gets in the way people are going to allow you learn to do that. I get some coach using a lot of feedback. If you'll notice the tasks we assigned here is an activity related to the performance rather than a learning task or preparatory tasks or performance tasks right. So in the coaching model where we think it'll take a little bit heavier lifting something more significant. They may have to do some learning.

[00:20:15] They may have to do some some some personal development in order to prepare for the performance tasks that we're going to measure. But in this case Insaaf coaching you just sign the tasks and it's just like getting reps. You just want to get more reps. That's all right. The task is not. Read a book about lifting the it's lifting weights and then I'll watch you and give you some feedback. Yeah exactly. Again if the direct wants to study or learn or prepare that's great. Don't just don't assign task force because it starts to lard down the coaching model. Don't hesitate to help them think of ways to prepare bright if they want to do that but don't require it. I would also say if they start struggling to get work done they've created a bunch of self preparation self development tasks. Dude you can't he can't have it both ways right. The South coaching is going to pay attention to give you lots of feedback but you don't need to be doing all that stuff. And if you're going to do all that other stuff and then complain that you don't have time get your work done. I'm going to tell you your work's more important than the self development tasks. The heart of soft coaching is them doing tasks that require them to use the skill that they want to improve

and then the last part of SOF coaching is assessing performance regularly sit back and say okay this is this is where I think you are. Yeah General Rule if you're trying to improve something but you didn't set a goal. More frequent comparisons of where we are versus where we wanted to be. Necessary. Right.

[00:21:44] If there's no clear goal you better periodically check in my head in the right direction. Do I feel good about where I'm going. It's like the difference between heading east if you're in California and going to Times Square in New York City in the former case since there's no clearly defined goal which therefore you can't attain it's more necessary to review frequently whether you're doing what you said you're doing going to do which is how East otherwise the lack of a goal and the lack of checking your progress is going to lead to lack of continued effort particularly if you discover you're starting to go in the wrong direction. In the other case until you get to Times Square you know you're not there and therefore you know that more effort is required if you know where Times Square is. So the way you do that in the case of South coaching is to have a discussion about how you and your draft feel about what level of performance they are and how far they've gone and whether it's enough. So in the example of this situation we're talking about running meetings. It might sound like like this. I'm feeling pretty good about how far you've progressed. I know there's more to do. But in terms of how long you've been at it for meetings or so in the last three weeks that you've run you're getting pretty good at meetings you're starting on time every time you've gotten out an agenda. I do think you're still struggling with cutting off folks who ramble on. Maybe you can pay particular attention to that in the next to me two to three meetings.

[00:23:18] And by the way I might then privately go to a couple of my people and go Hey dude will you ramble on in the next couple of meetings. I mean why not. If I'm operating in my own ecosystem which I have the ability to influence significantly I'm going to create situations that support my goals and objectives. And look you keep doing that. And look if you thought it would take three weeks and it takes 10. Don't worry about it. Yeah ok maybe it was a bad time for them. Maybe you were off your game a little bit. If you're going to use soft coaching that soft word is important. Don't say we're going to be done with this in four weeks simply because you believe that. How long it's going to take them and then discover that they've got a learning weakness or you've got a Gitomer blindspot for Matt Detlef or something and it takes 10 weeks. And you say now you're failing. There's no failing here. If I'm heading east from California and I'm continuing to head east I'm not going west. I'm not failing. If you define success as achieving a goal and not achieving a goal is failing you're failing but that's an overly simplistic definition. If you have a goal failure is not achieving the goal within the time you describe. If you don't have a goal making progress in the direction you hoped to make is success and there is no failure right. It's like teaching your kid to walk. Yeah he called out for three days they don't get there they fall down. You failed. That's it.

[00:24:45] He started out as a failure he is going to be a failure. I mean why try. Why try. Yeah. So yeah but at some point hopefully your assessment is going to cause you to say look I think you got it. There wasn't a precise thing I mean it wasn't like we had a micrometer out here doing this but you're running Meany's now perfectly well enough for day to day life in this organization. Now when you could have signed your first cross-functional project now when you get promoted to be a manager. Meetings will be one less thing to worry about and in fact if people see you doing this now. If my boss pops in for some reason you're running meeting because I'm gone and he sees you killing it. That's a notch in your belt in terms of you know being perceived as somebody who's ready for more responsibility whatever form that more responsibility might take. But my boss doesn't

know that I can run him in. He thinks that it's just my direct that's creating all the success in my organization. Yeah this is not a psychiatric podcast yet. Sorry how you feel is your fault. So let's summarize real quick SAAF coaching that allows you to help a direct improve by paying attention to their work their performance their their behavior and just giving them lots of feedback about it. It doesn't require a lot of preparation virtually none and it can be done in two to three minutes a week. If you're wanting some improvement some professional development among your staff with minimal time investment try some coaching. All right. Thanks my friend.

[00:26:20] You bet. We'll see you next week or maybe tomorrow maybe tomorrow. All right so long.