



## Top Coaching Tips for Managers – Effective Communication ©

### *How to Keep Employees Engaged*

*By Rebecca Heaslip*

This is our second article in our 3 part series, **Top Coaching Tips for Managers**. Our first article outlined the **Top 5 Tips for Building a Trusting Relationship**. This article will be of interest to managers who believe that **superior communication skills** are integral to effectively engaging and motivating staff.

Poor communication is often ranked in employee satisfaction surveys as the number one issue employees have with management. Savvy managers are addressing this gap by increasing the quality and frequency of conversations with staff that focus on their career aspirations and development goals... not just their performance. As the economy improves, all managers will need to become more connected with their staff or they'll risk losing top talent.

### **Here are the Top 5 Tips for Effective Communication:**

1. **Communicate using a conversational style**, as opposed to a directive style, creating a relaxed mood, free of tension. Balance formal structured coaching sessions with casual, “speed” coaching, also referred to as ‘just-in-time’ coaching.

2. **Ask open-ended questions then stop talking** and allow time for your staff member to reflect and respond. When delivering critical feedback, begin and end with a positive comment. More than ever, team members need to hear what they are *doing right!*
3. **Listen with your eyes, ears and heart.** Stay open and non-judgmental. This is difficult since we see the world through our own lens and may find it difficult to see things from another person's point of view. Also, make a concerted effort to clear your mind of clutter before meeting with staff, which enables you to listen with true understanding.
4. **Provide regular, frequent feedback, recognition and praise.** Immediate feedback is preferable as it has the greatest impact on behaviour. If you postpone giving feedback, you may forget the nuance of what you observed and wanted to convey.
5. **Avoid bundling grievances.** Deal with issues as they arise, one at a time. 'Less is more' when it comes to delivering critical feedback. And don't sweat the small stuff. Granted, it's *not* all small stuff – just use common sense on this one.

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