

Interpersonal skills

- and human relations

2. Supportive trainer

Introduction

One of the most important behaviors of a leader to be effective in his or her training of others is support.

(Dr. Steve Stowell, Dr. Matt Starcevich. 1986, "A leader behavior study")

According to Stowell and Starcevich supportiveness is not an option, success is determined by a person's perception of a trainer's supportiveness. No other factor is as important as this. Highly effective leaders, in the study, devoted half of their time and attention to express some sort of supportive message.

Support and the strong emphasis that we give it constitute the most distinguishing feature of our training process. A person always has a perception about the supportiveness of his or her trainer, and because of that a training leader has no option, this perception can't be avoided. A wise leader seeks to engage in behaviors that result in being viewed as supportive. In order to improve our effectiveness as training leaders, we need to increase the level of support as perceived by others.

Of course, the level of support varies from person to person depending on each individual's competence and need. The objective of supportive training is people who are capable of working autonomously, but who feel comfortable seeking support when they need it.

A supportive trainer adopts a thoughtful, empathetic and customized approach to people for long-term success. This approach involves building trust, providing inspiration and helping others to overcome the challenges they encounter. Overall, a supportive trainer offers guidance to help others making the best decisions and navigating their professional journey with confidence.

Acting as a supportive trainer is vital in helping an empowered person to develop the professional skills and to possess the ability to work autonomously. To be more specific, a supportive trainer should

- **establish a positive work-environment**

When we express supportive behaviors, it creates a sense of psychological safety that can strengthen a positive work environment.

- **drive professional development**

A supportive trainer puts a person's learning and development front and center. He or she looks at what another individual needs, and works with him or her to find solutions.

Notes

A supportive trainer's way of working

There are two main factors involved in a supportive trainer's approach. These factors can help us to better understand the key principles involved in this kind of training style

Trust

Today leaders across industries are navigating a complex landscape of economic uncertainty, technological advancements and evolving expectations. Earning and maintaining the trust of the own colleagues, business partners and stakeholders is paramount for success. Trust, which can be defined as a belief in the abilities, integrity and character of another person, is often thought of as something that personal relationships are built on, but according to research, trust is the foundation of most successful organizations.

"Begin with trust", Frances X. Frei and Anne Morriss, 2020

Coaching

A supportive trainer coaches. Coaching involves two areas to be focused, performance and development.

Performance coaching focuses on influencing people via feedback on the results he or she produces. This entails reinforcing good, desirable behaviors and calling individuals out when they are off track

Development coaching offers people feedback and guidance that will help them to learn from their experiences and gain better expertise and judgment. This may involve offering guidance on how someone can use his or her strengths to identify a viable solution

Coaching helps us to adopt a more flexible approach, and enabling us to strike the right balance between performance and development. This balance can ultimately bring in higher productivity and revenue.

*"Departments with a strong coaching culture experiences a 14 to 29 percent increase in profits",
Center for Management & Organization Effectiveness, 2024*

Supportive leadership style is a crucial aspect of a successful and thriving organization. It is a leadership style that fosters trust, encourages open communication and promotes a positive work environment. By embodying a supportive leadership, we can empower people, build strong relationships and cultivate a culture of collaboration and innovation. A supportive leader is guiding another person towards achieving his or her professional goals. It goes beyond traditional leadership methods by acknowledging the personal needs and aspirations of individuals. By trust and coaching a supportive leader can create a sense of belonging and empowerment among business partners.



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Building trust

Leaders play a crucial role in building trust in an organization. Leaders set the tone for the culture and establish norms of behavior. If leaders aren't focused on trust, communication, collaboration and innovation will suffer. When trust is instilled in an organization tasks get accomplished with less difficulty because people are more likely to collaborate and communicate in productive ways. As a result, outcomes tend to be more successful.

According to a study people working with high-trusted leaders report 106% more energy at work, 50% higher productivity and 76% more engagement than people working with low-trusted leaders.

"The Neuroscience of Trust", Paul Zak, 2017.

As a leader, you want people you are working with to trust you, and that with good reason. However, creating trust isn't always that straightforward. Fortunately, by looking at data from assessments of 87 000 leaders, it's possible to identify three key clusters of items that are often the foundation for trust.

"The 3 Elements of Trust", Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman, 2019.

The three elements of trust

By understanding the behaviors that underlie trust, leaders are better able to elevate the level of trust that others feel towards them. Below are the three elements.

Positive relationships

Trust is in part based on the extent to which a leader is able to create positive relationships with other people. To install trust a leader must:

- Stay in touch on the issues and concerns of others
- Encourage results
- Generate co-operation
- Resolve conflicts
- Give honest feedback

Good judgement/Expertise

Another factor in whether people trust a leader is the extent to which the leader is well-informed and knowledgeable. This means:

- The leader uses good judgement when making decisions
- Others trust the leader's ideas and opinions
- Others seek the leader's opinions
- The leader's knowledge and expertise help in achieving result
- The leader can anticipate and respond quickly to problems

Consistency

The final element of trust is the extent to which leaders walk their talk and do what they say they will do. People rate leaders high in trust if:

- Leader are role models and set good examples
- Leaders walk the talk
- leaders honor commitments and keep promises
- Leaders follow through on commitments
- Leaders are willing to go above and beyond what needs to be done

Notes

Most important element

The assessment showed that when relationships are low, even if both judgement and consistency are high, trust goes down with 33 percent. This may be because many leaders are seen as occasionally inconsistent. We all intend to do things that don't get done, but once relationship is damaged or if it was never formed in the first place, it's difficult for people to trust.

We don't need to be perfect to be excellent leaders, but when it comes to trust all three elements need to be above average. If we as leaders have a preference for a particular skill, we are more likely to perform better at it. Think about which of the three elements of trust you have a stronger preference for, and which you prefer least. As you need to be above average on each of them, it is probably worth your time to focus on improving the latter.

Some questions to be considered

Answer the questions below and reflect on how you think the leaders in the organization, including yourself, are regarded by business partners. Finish by rating how business partners trust the organization and the organization's leaders in general, in the scale from 1 to 10. (1 = low trust, 10 = high trust)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>No</u>
a) Are you as leaders in the organization demonstrating competence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Are you as leaders communicating effectively with transparency and openness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Do you as leaders actively listen to the concerns of business partners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Are you as leaders consistently acting ethically and with integrity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Is the decision-making process regarded as being reliable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Are you as leaders effectively providing support for professional growth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Are leaders transparent in sharing information about goals and challenges?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Are you regarded as always having the best interest of business partners in mind?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Are you as leaders regarded, by business partners, to be accountable for the actions and outcomes, they produce?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Do you think that business partners feel aligned with the company vision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Are you as leaders effectively providing clear directions for achieving goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Are you as leaders admitting mistakes and taking responsibility for them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Are you as leaders effective in providing feedback to business partners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall, how satisfied do you think business partners are with their trust in the organization's leadership?

Low level of trust

High level of trust

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discuss the answers to the questions on previous page. What are the reasons for answering “Uncertain” or “No”?

Which of the different points, a - m, can you agree on, being most important to focus on, in the continuing trust building process?

Which of the three elements, on page 3, are most important to focus on, to make you being more effective in creating trust in you as a leader in the organization?

Notes

Benefits of coaching

Promoting a coaching culture

Organizations are seeking strategies to help their sales managers outperform to attain revenue goals. Implementing a coaching culture should be a vital component of any such strategy because it can impact performance at every level of customer-facing roles. The purpose of coaching in the workplace is to help improve an individual's job performance while enhancing their current skills or helping them acquire new ones. Within a coaching culture, training and development are provided thus creating an environment for managers to develop their business partners. It is with this type of strategy that organizations begin to thrive.

A coaching culture embraces the skills of listening and conversing. In this mindset, when asked for their input, people feel that they can challenge and provoke thinking or offer solutions that might not have been considered.



Research shows that individuals perform better with coaching and this performance translates into increased business results:

- 10% to 19% increase in sales
- 14% to 29 % increase in profit
- 9% to 15% increase in engagement

“Conversations That Matter”, Ed Ross, 2018

Increased commitment, loyalty and communication

One of the main reasons for having a coaching culture is the increased engagement. This gives a sense of empowerment and insight, which results in better performance. Without this performance and development coaching it's difficult for people to understand how to better achieve their goals. Using coaching will also develop us as managers and leaders to be more responsible and effective.

A coaching culture is the fastest and most effective way to increase engagement and to build authentic relationships. People who are coached on a regular basis have higher level of engagement and commitment.

By encouraging this type of culture we will ultimately improve creativity, thus leading to better decision making abilities and communications that support our strategies for not only surviving but thriving.



The effort and time invested in creating a coaching culture are highly rewarded with measurable business outcomes. When it comes to improving productivity, engagement and development, there is simply no better activity than having a leader that coaches and develops individuals on a regular basis.

Notes

What coaching is about

Coaching is a skill, maybe even an art that demands for deep understanding and extensive training if we want to reach real and important results. We need to understand the performance-oriented principles that coaching is based on if we are going to reach the intended achievements.

Keywords of coaching

An important keyword in coaching is **awareness**. Awareness means seeing and hearing, but it is far from everything. This also includes collecting and clearly notice relevant facts and relevant information, as well as being able to determine what's relevant. The ability to do so includes an understanding of dynamics and relationships between people. Coaching increases the awareness and highlights the unique characteristics of each individual.

The coaching's other key concept is **responsibility**. When someone really accepts, chooses or takes responsibility for his or her thoughts and actions the commitment increases as well as the quality of the performance. To take responsibility always means choosing.

A coach is not a teacher or adviser. He or she is more of a facilitator. Coaching for awareness and responsibility leads in the short term to a task being performed and in the long term to increased quality of life.

Reasons for coaching

Coaching is a way to help others to succeed. A little more precisely, coaching means, through conversations, helping a person to develop his or her talents. This is done first and foremost by

- asking question
- calling for action
- conveying feedback

A person must take responsibility for the own life and actions, for what he or she wants to use the time and how the development should be carried out. The responsibility for success can't be transferred to anyone else. However, in the coaching process, a coaching leader will use his or her creativity, energy and attention to help another individual.

In the process of trying to reach desired result a coaching leader contributes with his or her questions, calls for action and delivers feedback. A person is encouraged to reinterpret the situation, reformulate the goals, test new ways and reflect on the results. The intention is to inspire processes where a person learns from the own thinking and the own actions.

Through coaching, a leader can help another individual to develop his or her way of thinking (questions), the way of behaving (actions) and the way of learning (feedback), so that he or she can realize set up goals.



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Strategies for effective coaching

As a business coach, you want to help your business partners to discover new opportunities for growth. Here are some coaching strategies that help you as a leader and your business partners to identify and capitalize on new opportunities.

1. Be an active listener

A coaching leader must focus all the attention on the coached person. If a leader doesn't do this, confidence is damaged and in addition, the coaching leader won't know what kind of questions may be good to ask. Being able to act in such a way, a coaching leader needs to be a good listener. We deceive ourselves and those we are coaching if we don't listen and look at them seriously, that is, maintaining eye contact with them. It has been said that since we have two ears and one mouth, we should be listening twice as much as we are talking. Perhaps the most difficult thing for a coaching leader is learning how to be quiet! For the same reasons that the coaching leader should listen, he or she should also observe the coached person's body language, not to be able to make smart remarks, but to get help in choosing questions to be asked.

2. Ask powerful questions

As a coaching leader, one of the most important skills is to ask powerful questions that challenge, inspire, and provoke your business partners to think differently and creatively. These questions should be open-ended, not close-ended, curious, and exploratory. By asking such questions, you can help another person to reflect, imagine, and generate new insights and possibilities. For instance, you could ask them what they are curious about in the industry or market? Or what emerging trends or needs they can address? What strengths or assets they can use or improve? What assumptions or beliefs they can challenge or test? And what opportunities they are overlooking or avoiding?

The question: "Are there any other problems?" Invites the answer "No".
(close-ended)

The question: "Which kinds of other problems could there be?" Invites to reflection
(Open-ended)

3. Use a framework

A way to help a business partner identify and capitalize on new opportunities is to use a framework that can guide his or her thinking and actions. An often used model will follow four stages. The model is called GROW-coaching

- **G**oal-formulating, both in the short and long term
- **R**eality-control, where the actual situation is examined
- **O**ptions, different alternatives and lines of action
- **W**illingness, (and even What, When and Who) to do something

With this sequence, we assume that it is desirable to go through all four stages, which for the most part is a fact. However, coaching can also be relevant in processes that may have already been started. In such cases, coaching can begin and end at any of the four stages.

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4. Foster a growth mindset

A growth mindset is essential for identifying and capitalizing on new opportunities, as it helps people to embrace challenges, learn from failures, seek feedback, and persist in the face of obstacles. As a coaching leader, you can foster a growth mindset in your business partners by praising their efforts, strategies, and progress instead of just their outcomes or traits. Additionally, encourage them to set challenging but realistic goals and to celebrate their achievements. Furthermore, provide them with constructive and specific feedback that highlights their strengths and areas for improvement. Moreover, help them reframe their setbacks and mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth. Lastly, model a growth mindset yourself by sharing your own challenges, learnings, and successes.

5. Create a supportive environment

Finally, to identify and capitalize on new opportunities, it is essential to create a supportive environment that nurtures and sustains your business partner's motivation, confidence, and creativity. As a coaching leader, you can do this by connecting them with relevant information that can help them research, develop, and implement their ideas and opportunities. Celebrating their wins and acknowledging their efforts and contributions is also important. Furthermore, providing emotional support and empathy when they face challenges or doubts as well as holding them accountable and reminding them of their vision and values can help create a supportive environment.

Importance of supportive leadership in business

Supportive leadership is an important and valuable leadership style for business. Not only does it foster positive relationships, but it also ultimately empowers people to develop their professional skills and work well autonomously. The supportive leadership style values development and training with the expectation that those investments will pay off with high productivity and excellent performance.

Balancing authority and support

One of the challenges that supportive leaders face is finding the balance between exercising authority and providing support. It is important to set clear expectations and boundaries while still remaining accessible and approachable. Supportive leaders must address performance issues and provide constructive feedback when necessary. By approaching such conversations with empathy and understanding, leaders can help individuals grow and develop without undermining their supportive approach.

Key traits of a supportive leader

The key traits of a supportive leader include trust and coaching, with special notice of active listening and providing of constructive feedback.



How could we be more of coaching leaders in our way of working?

Which strategi for effective coaching is most important for us to develop?

What is most important for us, as supportive leaders, to focus on to be more efficient when addressing performance issues among business partners?

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