

A Key Coaching Skill

Ask Not Tell

We've talked about the characteristics of effective coaches in previous Leadership Minutes, so now let's take a look at one of the specific *skills* you need to develop and apply to be a truly results-focused coach.

Coaching can be a one-on-one conversation or a group conversation. Mostly we think about coaching as one-on-one but either way, it's a conversation you are having with someone.

And if the purpose of your coaching conversation is to help your team member develop and improve their performance you must be sure your coaching interaction is one that *empowers* them. By that I mean helping the person being coached to identify solutions and options themselves.

- ✓ If a person owns a solution they are much more likely to make a real effort to apply it. More so than if you *told* them what to do.

Think about this as the Ask Not Tell – A.N.T. - concept.

By asking the right questions of someone who has the appropriate skills there is a very good chance they will identify what they need to be doing differently and make a genuine effort to do it.

If they own it they will be more invested in it and more likely to try it.

This doesn't mean you can't do some "telling" if you really need to, but look for opportunities in your coaching sessions to ask what the team member can do rather than automatically telling them what to do.

You can use this **Ask Not Tell** approach when a team member asks you how they might solve a problem, what action they should take or what they should do next. Rather than automatically giving them the solution – which is tempting, particularly when you're busy – ask them a question or two, like:

How do you think you should deal with that?, or

What do you think is the best option?, or

What are some of the options you have?

You might be surprised at the outcome.

Take action now:

Use the worksheet and write down some of the things that you would like to tell a team member(s) to do differently (or more of or less of). Then, next to each "tell" write down a question(s) you might use to have them address the issue/opportunity. Try it out, ask the questions and see what happens. At the very least it will start a coaching conversation that will move you both forward.

