

Bobby Knight, May we all Aspire to Be Him

Now that's a catchy title. If nothing else you are going to read this article just to find out what I am going to say. Who is Bobby Knight? Well for the non-sports fanatics he was a very well known basketball coach who coached at United States Military Academy, Indiana University, and just recently Texas Tech. He just recently resigned from Coaching and has massed over 900 wins breaking a title held by Dean Smith. Also, for you non faithful sports fans you must know when the name Bobby Knight comes up you either will get tales of a crazy, outspoken, opinionated Coach who crossed the line many of times or you will hear tales of a man that was a coaching genius.

So, why am I writing this article? First off I wanted to grab your attention about something that is vital to every organization but is so many times overlooked. Coaching. Every manager, every owner, every person that supervises people must be a coach. Why? When you don't coach your people don't grow. The only way for your business to grow is thru your people. Anyone who has owned a business or managed people knows that they can't do it themselves. They must rely on the talents of those who work for them. The ones that think they must do it themselves are stifling the growth of their business and probably are extremely overwhelmed and dread getting up in the morning and headed to work. Those who are on the front line do work. Managers, owners, and supervisors are there to create an environment for the front line associates to accomplish their tasks. So it is we must be coaches.

Webster's dictionary defines Coach as "A private instructor (noun), To teach or train (verb)." Why should we coach? I conducted a course and the following were some of the reasons presented why we should coach:

Follow Process	Teamwork
Keep Associate Focused	Show Care
Drive Improvement	Leadership
Reinforce Good Behavior	Motivate
Tracking and accountability	Correct Poor Behavior
Keeping the Leader Focused	Sharpen Skills
Confidence builder	Feedback from Field
Two-way Communication	Foresee things that can improve

Pretty good list don't you think? The items listed are positive and will definitely help grow and improve a business. Coaching should be for both good and poor performers. Think of the best sports teams, they still have a coach even when they are winning. The best performers need attention and need to know where they can improve.

So if there are so many reasons to coach that are positive and will help a business why isn't everyone doing it. The same class listed some reasons why we don't coach:

Fear	Training
Lack of Confidence in Coaching Skills	Distractions
Fear of Hearing Something you don't want to hear	
Fear it will hurt more than help	Complacency

Assume they already know the problem Control
Limited Information Making it a Priority
Time, Too Busy with Day to Day Business
Intimidated by negative attitude or the chance of confrontation

Wow, another great list. I challenge most of us to look at this list and not pick out a few that have not happened to us personally.

The reasons to coach are great, the reasons we don't are realistic, and how do we overcome the Why Not's and grow are people and our business?

First, training is key. Sign up for a Coaching Course or go out and buy a book. I recommend Coaching for Improved Work Performance by Ferdinand F. Fournies. Obtain knowledge; you must take the first step. Second, practice. As with athletes all must practice to improve, so must the coaches. How do you practice? Role play with another supervisor or trusted confident. Take situations that you have been faced with and role-play what you would do and ask for input on improvement. Third, make the time. The initial investment takes time but the pay off will more than pay for itself. Think of a situation when you know you should have coached an employee and think how much time you spent on it without coaching. Did you have to fix the problem, did it happen more than once, and did it cost you a customer or an associate? Now would it have been worth the time. And when time is a factor reevaluate it and is it truly time or the fear of expanding out of your comfort zone? Track your time and see where it is really going, I bet you'll find you do a lot to keep busy by doing things you are comfortable with and avoiding things you fear. Fourth and one I feel is very important begin Coaching for good and poor performance. Once you begin coaching for good performance as well as poor performance people will be less defensive. Most of us feel we only get attention when it's negative, wouldn't it be nice to get attention for the great stuff we do also.

Love Bobby Knight or hate him, he was not afraid to Coach. Challenge yourself and help make your people better. You owe it to them and yourself.