**1234 Coaching**

1234 Coaching is intended to provide a manager or trainer a method to improve performance with the input and acceptance of the Counselor. This coaching method is based on the belief that performance improvement will occur most effectively when:

* Effective performance is recognized and strongly reinforced.
* There is acceptance of and agreement on opportunities for improvement.
* An action plan is developed to improve the area.
* A follow-up plan is in place to evaluate the progress.

1234 coaching helps you to reach agreement with the Counselor on areas of strength and improvement. It is most often used during progress review sessions but can be utilized effectively in many situations.

The following chart illustrates how using 1234 coaching could be used for any area of improvement identified with a Counselor. It’s important, however, that the list of improvement opportunities that fall in the Quadrant 4 is not so long as to be overwhelming or discouraging. These should be major areas of improvement to address.

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  **Recognizes** |  **Does Not Recognize** |
|  **Strengths** | 1. Agree on and Reinforce | 2. Identify, illustrate and point out importance |
|  **Improvement Opportunities** | 3. Agree on and Reinforce | 4. Identify, illustrate and point out importance |

**Quadrant 1: (Step 1)**

After the Counselor has completed the entire self-appraisal process, **agree** and **reinforce** the Counselor’s assessment of strengths. Make sure to give specific examples.

Coach: “Keith, what has been going well this week?”

Counselor: “I think I did great with my appointment show-up rate. I set 4 appointments and 3 of them showed up.”

Coach: “I agree. This was a strong week for appointments showing up for you, that’s a 75% show-up rate. I also noticed that you copied me on your call to action emails to those appointments set. I bet that helped to increase your show-up rate. Good job, Keith.”

**Quadrant 2: (Step 2)**

During Quadrant 2, cover the strengths that are not recognized. Counselors often overlook one or more of their strengths. Make sure to give specific examples.

Coach: “Mandy, did you realize that your interview to application rate increased from 40% to 65% from last week?”

Counselor: “No, I didn’t even notice that!”

Coach: “You are not only getting your appointments to show up but they are applying as well. 25% is a significant improvement, I’m impressed.”

**Quadrant 3: (Step 3)**

Agree on and reinforce recognized improvement areas. Make sure to do this in a positive manner. In addition, provide specific examples of how improvements in this area will help the Counselor achieve desired results.

Coach: “John, what areas do you think you could work on or improve this week?”

Counselor: “Getting resumes during the interview. I haven’t received any for two weeks.”

Coach: “That’s an area that I agree we should work on together. Other Counselors have struggled with that in the past so you are not alone. Getting more resumes during the interview will only help to increase your interview effectiveness and the number of prospective students who then apply. Let’s make a plan and set up some training time…”

**Quadrant 4: (Step 4)**

Identify improvement opportunities not recognized by the Counselor. You will want to do this in a way that does not jeopardize the progress you have made during the meeting. It is important to watch for defensiveness on the part of the Counselor.

Coach: “Denise, I noticed that your contact rate has taken a dip in the past two weeks. You were at 90% inquiries to contacts but are down to 50%, have you noticed?”

Counselor: “Yes, but I didn’t mention it because I don’t think I’m doing anything different so I thought it was just a fluke.”

Coach: “Would you like to see it go up again?”

Counselor: “Of course.”

Coach: “Alright, let’s set up a time this week so that I can observe one of your inquiry-calling sessions so we can pinpoint where any improvement can be made, then I can help you create an action plan with steps you can take to improve the conversion rate.”

Make sure to identify the area, use specific examples, and seek recognition, but do not force acceptance. Use questions to help the Counselor recognize the evidence of the improvement opportunity. If the Counselor disagrees, accept this fact rather than arguing – you do not have to agree with the Counselor or force them to agree with you. If the Counselor becomes defensive, you have the option of returning to the items on which you agree.

**Ending the 1234 Coaching Session**

To properly close out the 1234 coaching session, reinforce the areas of agreement established during the meeting. Use the agreed-upon improvement opportunities as starting points for action planning.

The basic principle underlying the model is that performance improvement will occur most effectively if:

* + Effective performance is recognized and strongly reinforced.
	+ There is acceptance of and agreements on improvement opportunities.

**Application**

1. After reading this module, what steps do you think should take to prepare before using 1234 coaching for it to be effective?
2. Quadrant 4 can be tricky for Counselors who are defensive. What can you do to minimize a defensive reaction on the part of a Counselor?
3. Use 1234 coaching during your next session with a Counselor. What went well? What, if anything, would you do differently?