

Preparing for Follow-Up Meetings

In between sessions, preparation is about continuity: carrying forward the thread of the last coaching session and making good on your promises for the next one. In each of the following steps, you should model the kind of accountability and personal investment you desire from an employee.

REFRESH YOUR MEMORY. Review your coaching plan to remind yourself what action items your employee is working on and what feedback you've already given him.

EXECUTE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES. Make sure you've done whatever you've promised to do to facilitate your employee's action items, whether that means making a key introduction for him or reviewing a work project. Follow up with colleagues as necessary to seek feedback for your employee.

PLAN YOUR FEEDBACK. If you have a difficult message to deliver, think through the language, location, and timing of that conversation. What staging will give your employee the best chance of internalizing what you have to say? Ask a colleague to practice with you.

TEE UP YOUR QUESTIONS ... AGAIN. Good coaching is improvisational, but you can prepare the general flow of conversation. Start with questions like these:

- “How can we make the best use of our coaching meeting today?”
- “What outcomes would you like to achieve in today's meeting?”
- “What would you like to share with me about [X goal or action item] since the last time we met?”
- “What update would you like to give me about [X goal or action item]?”

End with questions like these:

- “What action steps do you commit to as a follow-up to our discussion today?”
- “What will success look like for you?”
- “What resources do you need to make this happen?”
- “What can I do to help you follow through?”
- “What might prevent you from following through? What can you or I do to lower that barrier?”

REVIEW YOUR COACHING TOOLS. With your employee, prepare your priorities for the next meeting with **Follow-Up Meeting Agenda**. Drum up more good questions with **Asking the Right Questions**. Look over **Getting in the Coach's Mind-Set** to get into the right frame of mind for coaching.