

Coaching Virtually

When coaching from a distance, the need for an established communication routine is especially critical – ensure the lines of communication stay open and people feel comfortable bringing challenges or coaching needs to you.

- 1 Set Communication Protocols** – Written ground rules are more critical in virtual coaching than face-to-face to avoid misunderstanding and miscommunication. Establish when to use e-mail and when to videoconference, what is coaching and how it benefits the team, how much time should be devoted to coaching, who should contact whom, and how information should be shared.
- 2 Prepare For Each Meeting** – Preparation in advance of regularly scheduled conversations is crucial. Communicate an agenda and the required individual preparation before the session.
- 3 Customize Interaction Technique** – Calibrate coaching approach to the individual’s learning style.
- 4 Offer Undivided Attention** – When coaching over the phone, do not do other things at the same time. Remove all distractions and treat the conversation as seriously as you would a face-to-face meeting. People can tell when you are multitasking.
- 5 Maintain Awareness of Morale** – It may be harder to detect when you cannot easily view body language and nonverbal reactions indicating that someone is upset. Ask more questions to probe how they are doing and reacting to the feedback.
- 6 Use Coaching Documentation** – Provide substantive materials to the coachee in order to ground virtual conversations. Maintain a record of coaching progress by keeping all documentation (call agendas, coaching expectation charts, notes, and meeting planning), which can also be used to inform future coaching sessions.