

Be a boss!

Be a coach

Your job isn't to correct mistakes, find fault, or assess blame. Your job is to achieve productivity goals by coaching your staff to peak performance.

You can do that best by being more of a coach and less of a boss.

A boss talks; a coach listens. A boss tries to fix a problem; a coach keeps problems from happening. A boss gives orders; a coach issues challenges. A boss works on his employees; a coach works with them. A boss passes out blame; a coach takes responsibility.

A good coach is positive, enthusiastic, supportive, trusting, respectful, and patient.

That's not to suggest that you're supposed to be a buddy and a pal. You're still in charge; you're just seeing your charge in a new way.

To lead them, you must serve them, anticipating their needs.

Being supportive means a lot more than providing an encouraging word and a pat on the back. As a coach, your job is to get workers what they need to do their jobs well. This includes tools, time, instruction, answers to questions, and protection from outside interference.

Do you trust your employees to be conscientious, to tell the truth, and to give a reasonable day's work for a day's pay?

You'd better. You shouldn't hire them unless you're willing to trust them. Most people are conscientious and honest; they want to do their jobs well. Tell them what to do, and then get out of the way and let them do it.

Respect them. Respect their rights as employees and as human beings. Learn who they are and treat them as individuals.

Here are three keys to being an effective coach for your employees:

Take responsibility: Being trusting and respectful doesn't let you off the hook; managers have to manage. Harry Truman said it best: "The buck stops here."

Be assertive: Seek results, not excuses or reasons. Be a strong presence. Make sure your "yes" means "yes," and your "no" means "no."

Work with your employees, not on them: You're in this thing together, and you share common goals. When they do well, you do well.

“You can choose your attitude—if being a better manager means enough to you. Learn by doing, one trait at a time.”