Coaching as a Leadership Style

Leaders who manage with a coaching style support high performance and employee development. Employees gain an understanding of personal strengths and how to take responsibility for their performance and development. Once employees have a basic understanding of their job duties, a leader can coach them to increase performance, overcome challenges, generate new ideas and solutions, take on new responsibilities and prepare for future roles.

Coaching is about listening. Leaders who coach are genuinely interested in what others say. They understand that two people may interpret the same words in different ways. When a leader asks, "Can you have this done by Thursday?" and the employee says "I think so", the coach-like

> *"Coaching is about asking questions. Coaching is about listening."*

leader probes for deeper meaning. Questions such as "How certain are you that you will meet this deadline?' "What might interfere with meeting this deadline?" "How could I help you?" invite deeper understanding. Good listeners attend to the speaker's tone, observe nonverbal communication and give the speaker time to answer.

Leaders who coach

- ⧉ Find out what employees want from discussions with questions such as "What would be most helpful to take away from our meeting?"
- ⧉ Help employees get a clear understanding of the situation. Asking "How did you perform on that project?", "How would you describe the challenge?", "What would you like to be different?" encourages insight. Clear and objective feedback also supports understanding.
- ⧉ Encourage employees to explore possibilities with questions such as "What have you tried so far?" "What else could you do?", "How could you make that happen?" and "What could you do differently?"
- ⧉ Help employees develop solid plans by asking "What will be the consequences of your plan?" What resources will you need?" and "What obstacles might you encounter?" "How can I help?"

In sum, leaders who coach help employees grow, learn and maximize their potential.