Manager Support Planner

There is a significant gap between the time and money spent on leadership development and on-the-job application of new skills. The breakdown is often the result of managers not investing the time to set expectations or to support them afterwards.

Do You Face Any of These Issues?
• Do managers want to support their staff’s development but are not sure how to do it?
• Do development efforts fall short because of lack of manager involvement?
• Do leaders go back to their jobs after training with little guidance on how to apply their skills and monitor their progress?

What tools do you provide managers to reinforce and sustain learning?

- **Manager’s Guides**
  A brief outline of key content their leaders will learn

- **Mobile Support**
  A coach-in-their-pocket for help as needed

- **Online Simulations**
  Additional practice in a safe environment
**Excite**

**Generate a high level of interest and anticipation before the training.**

Discuss time, priorities, workload, and especially any resistance leaders might have to attending the training and collaborate on workable solutions. Provide the time and resources leaders need to complete any pre-session assignments. Explain why the organization chose the training topics or courses and the link between the training and the business impact for the leader, department, and organization. Schedule a post-training meeting to identify how each leader can specifically use his or her new skills on the job and the potential challenges of doing so. Review an outline (e.g. a Manager’s Guide) for each course in the program so that you can become familiar with its concepts, skills, and techniques. Point out how the training targets specific development areas from leaders’ development plans. Explain the benefits of learning and using interaction skills such as empathy, involvement, and support (Interaction Essentials℠) to increase employee motivation and engagement.

Help leaders gauge their current strengths and development areas by:

- Discussing the feedback from assessments they’ve participated in, such as multirater 360 assessments or behavioral assessment, like DDI’s Manager Ready®.
- Asking, “What do you think you are good at now?” and “Where do you need to improve?”

Share personal examples of how you benefited from a similar development opportunity. Ask leaders to identify a specific situation they need to address and link it to what they will be learning.

**Engage**

**Ensure leaders’ full attention and focus during the training.**

Reinforce why leadership development is a priority and the anticipated impact on business success as well as each leader’s personal success. Encourage leaders to network during the training and identify peers with whom they can follow up. Offer to personally kick off the training event to promote the benefits of the skills being taught and to establish expectations. Check in periodically during breaks or at the end of the day (if a multiday event) and:

- Provide encouragement and offer support.
- Ask, “How will this help you in your job?” and “What ideas do you have for applying the new skills?”
- Hold leaders accountable for completing interim assignments.

Remind leaders to focus on the training and to not become distracted by requests that others can handle. Ensure each leader’s work is covered, including who will handle emergencies. Refrain from interrupting or leaving non-urgent messages if at all possible.
Encourage
Support leaders immediately after the training and provide ongoing feedback as they take responsibility for applying their new skills.

Immediately after the training
Recognize leaders for completing the training event or program.
Emphasize the need to practice new skills right away to make them part of the daily work life.
Work individually with leaders to identify viable opportunities to apply their new skills.
Follow up to ensure that leaders are gaining confidence and are better equipped to handle ongoing interactions with team members, peers, and customers.
Ask leaders to share the highlights of what they learned, including action plans and training aids.
Ask leaders, “What surprised you the most about what you learned?” and “How will you use the new knowledge and skills in your job?”
Openly discuss any reluctance or concerns leaders might have about applying their new skills.
Make sure each leader’s development plan includes ongoing development activities and measurement methods, then discuss how you will provide support.

Ongoing
Check in with leaders to discuss their progress and ask what help or support they need; coach them if they’ve missed an opportunity to use their newly learned skills.
Collect specific, timely, and balanced feedback, both positive and developmental.
Discuss any barriers leaders might be facing and collaborate on a plan to address the barriers.
Incorporate leaders’ performance data into performance reviews or compensation discussions.
Help leaders identify methods they can use to monitor and measure their progress by asking:
• “Which of the skills you learned in the training will you focus on next, and why?” and “How will you know that you are effectively applying your skills?”
• “How are you going to track your progress?”
• “How will you gather ongoing feedback on specific skills and development areas, and from whom?”
Encourage leaders to seek peer support and leverage social media (per organizational policies) to facilitate learning transfer and ongoing feedback.
Provide opportunities for leaders to learn from experience (e.g., new responsibilities, developmental assignments, and cross-functional tasks).
Establish personal goals for reinforcing your leaders’ development, such as how often you’ll follow up and seek their feedback.
Be patient and encourage patience, particularly if leaders fall back into old practices after making initial progress. (Changing behavior often can take longer than anticipated.)