

Coaching Your Way to Excellence

One of the most important responsibilities of any hospitality general manager is coaching your team to success. The business concept of coaching is one borrowed from the sports world as can be seen from the following Merriam-Webster definition:

“Coach – one who instructs or trains; especially one who instructs players in the fundamentals of sports and directs team strategy.” *(Note the words “fundamentals” and “strategy.”)*

Given the sports origins of coaching, let’s look at the role of coaches by using the National Football League as an example. In this highly-competitive arena, the measure of success is winning. As legendary football coach Vince Lombardi said, “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.”

Every team in the NFL is loaded with talented players who by their athletic prowess, physical conditioning, and demonstrated abilities over years of competition, have risen to the pinnacle of their profession. Yet despite their talent and experience, these players are guided by a team of experts – the coach and assistants – who instruct players in the fundamentals of their positions, mold individual talent into a team for optimum performance, and plan the strategy for each game of the season.

This analogy could not be more appropriate for hospitality general managers who have a team of assistants – the individual department heads – and the players – the line employees who interact daily with customers/guests/members and whose performance is critical to overall success. The general manager and department heads are responsible for instructing their line employees in the fundamentals of their positions and establishing plans for success – the enterprise annual plan and each departmental plan.

Recognizing the key role of coaching in the excellence of any enterprise, why is it so often neglected in hospitality operations? I suspect the main reasons are the busy pace of daily operations, the time-consuming involvement of managers in the basics of the business – basics that should be made routine by organization and structure, and the lack of ready materials to organize and convey instruction to managers and employees alike.

Hospitality Resources International has created a number of proven coaching tools covering the fundamentals, structure, organization, and disciplines for success. These that can be used in short, easy-to-absorb sessions to focus any hospitality team on the fundamentals of the profession. When used in conjunction with well-thought out strategy and plans, they become powerful conveyances on the road to operational excellence. Here’s a list and brief explanation of each:

[Leadership on the Go](#) – 53 coaching topics for the most fundamental and critical foundation of success; the perfect tool for coaching a consistent, service-based style of leadership.

[Values on the Go](#) – A means to constantly and consistently remind your management team of the operation’s underlying values. Includes topics on Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, and Operating Standards.

[Service on the Go](#) – The 54 topics in this book cover such topics as The Foundation of Service, Principles of Service, Attitude, Teamwork, Etiquette, Common Courtesies, Body Language and Tone of Voice, The Pre-Shift Meeting, Suggestive Selling, Engaging Members, Dining Service Tips, Service Recovery, Wow Factors, and more. Taken together they form an incredibly effective tool for

coaching new employees and reminding long term employees on the basics of service and service delivery.

[Management Disciplines on the Go](#) – 130 topics to coach your management team on the essential disciplines of hospitality success.

[Employee Development and Discipline on the Go](#) – This 65 topic, wire-bound book is directed at the necessary disciplines to find, hire, develop, and retain the best talent for your operation. Includes detailed principles and procedures for counseling, disciplining, and discharging problem employees.

[Food Service Management on the Go](#) – 136 best practice topics to remind and reinforce the necessary disciplines for running a high-quality and high-performing food service operation.

[Accounting on the Go](#) – A great teaching and coaching tool for managers and supervisors with bottom line responsibility. Use these 46 short topics in a wire-bound book to remind your managers of their important fiscal responsibilities, as well as to help standardize the accounting functions of your operation.

[Human Resources in the Go](#) – 84 Human Resources coaching topics covering employment laws, hiring, onboarding, employee development, training, performance reviews, and necessary club HR policies. These topics are designed to assist your club's management team in meeting all regulatory requirements and HR best practices.

Each of these coaching tools can be purchased individually on the HRI Marketplace store. As an alternative, all eight can be purchased at a 25% discount [here](#).

Hospitality enterprises that engage in a formal program of coaching experience significant benefits, ranging from improved morale and engagement from people who recognize their employer's commitment to their development, to enhanced performance resulting from a focus on the fundamentals of the business, and to pride in belonging to a high-performing operation.

Lastly, there is no greater satisfaction than that of the coaches who share their knowledge and experience in a meaningful way with those following in their footsteps.

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