



The Key to Great Coaching: What Spot Coaching is and how to use it

Dr. Susan Cain, Ed. D | Corporate Learning Institute

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Harry, a CEO of a prominent Chicago company was having a bad quarter. Morale was down, and to make matters worse, several key people that he counted on were quitting the firm. He had a regular coach who had completed a 360° leadership evaluation with him. He was engaged in a plan to optimize his strengths, use emotional intelligence, and know how to manage his challenges.

What Harry could really use is an unbiased partner to use as a sounding board—to check things out and decide the best way forward in situations like the one he was embroiled in. Harry could use what we call spot coaching.

CLI partner Dr. Susan Cain, a trained clinical social worker from the University of Chicago, developed the approach.

Essentially, spot coaching is a type of coaching done in the moment around a topic that is occurring in real time. It is easy to see the need for spot coaching every day at work; people struggling to get results can often benefit from a time-out and some spot coaching. But often, others are unwilling to accept feedback or unready to accept help. Effectively done, spot coaching can change that.

Below are the steps to effective spot coaching:

1. Ask the person if they would be open to thinking together about solutions to the problem they have encountered. Ask, "Could we look at this topic together? "
2. Once face-to-face, start with "Tell me more about this, " and name the issue.
3. If more clarification is needed, ask; "Just because I am unclear, can you clarify more about this for me to better understand the problem?,"
4. Move further into alternative ways of resolving the problem with " What is another way you might do this?" Use your expertise carefully, with "I can offer some insight about this," or "I do have an idea about this, " or "you might want to hear more about options I know about."
5. Then decide on the best way forward and agree to check back on r progress at a specific day/time.

Spot coaching provides in-the-moment redirection and feedback in a subtle but useful way.

CLI provides coaching, personalized training, and strategic planning services to help your organization grow.

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