

Leader Basic # 4

Developing Communication & Coaching Skills

As a Leader your role is to positively influence others to be more successful in their L'BRI business — and ultimately be more successful yourself.

How effectively you influence others depends on how well you communicate, coach the people on your team, and use your skills to build relationships with them. A simple approach is to explore two key communication skills – influencing and coaching others. By developing these skills, you will work more effectively with the Consultants on your team and lead them to take action steps that will move them toward their success.



Influencing

As you think about your interaction with your Consultants, is your approach to “manage” or “influence” them? The tendency is to manage Consultants, or “tell” them what to do, because we want success for them. Developing skills to “influence” the direction your Consultants take is more effective Leadership, more empowering to the Consultant, and has long term benefits because it develops self-motivated people who are internally driven to gain the success they want to achieve.

There are three key areas where you influence your Consultant most often:

1. Mentoring – Your one-on-one, face-to-face time with Consultants
2. Weekly Coaching Calls – Your phone time with Consultants
3. Team Training Meeting – Your time every month to influence your entire team.

Read each scenario below and the two Leader responses. Each response addresses communicating in a different way. This exercise will help you discover the difference between communicating to manage and communicating to influence.

<i>Consultant says:</i>	<i>Leader # 1 response:</i>	<i>Leader # 2 response:</i>
<i>“I can’t get anyone to book a Show.”</i>	<i>“You need to make a contact list.”</i>	<i>“What are you currently doing?”</i>
<i>“I’m not getting any bookings at my Shows.”</i>	<i>“You should use the ‘Book to Look’ idea.”</i>	<i>“How are you talking about the Hostess Program at your Shows? How are you sharing how simple it is to have a Show?”</i>
<i>“I had a terrible Show. Only three people came and the sales were low.”</i>	<i>“You need to Hostess coach more effectively.”</i>	<i>“In looking back, was there anything you could have done differently to increase the number of guests attending the Show.”</i>

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Compare the Questions and Responses

Leader #1: Actually the normal tendency in trying to influence people is to manage their response by telling them what to do – what would be best – how they might do something – what they should do.

Leader #2: This Leader's responses use two communication skills that are highly effective.

1. She communicates from where the Consultant is coming from rather than where the Leader is and what she knows would be an effective thing to do.
2. She asks open-ended questions. Open-ended questions most often start with "What" and "How". These questions don't lead to yes or no answers, but get the Consultant to think and discover the answers on her own and then take ownership of the solution. When she owns the solution, she is more likely to act upon it. The decision is a 'good' one because it's 'her' decision.

Do you see how much more effective Leader #2 is, both in the way she communicates and the outcome for the Consultant? More often than not, the Consultant will end the conversation with a solution because of your questions versus the solution being a result of you telling her what to do.



Now you try it! Fill in Leader # 2's responses with 'influencing' open-ended questions:

Consultant says:	Leader # 1 response:	Leader # 2 response:
<i>"I can't find anyone who wants to become a Consultant."</i>	<i>"You should offer the opportunity information to at least 2 guests."</i>	
<i>"I can't find the time to work on my business."</i>	<i>"You need to make a list of what you have to do."</i>	

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There are many good open-ended questions that could be asked:

Possible responses to the first question:

- “What are you currently doing to create interest in the Consultant opportunity?”*
- “How many people have you approached?”*
- “How are you approaching your Hostesses about the income opportunity?”*



Possible responses to the second question:

- “How are you currently managing your time?”*
- “What 2-3 things can you do to create a few hours a week for your business?”*

It is always effective to ask a Consultant to write down 2-3 action steps she will take to create her success.

*“People are generally better persuaded
by the reasons which they have themselves discovered
than by those which have come into the minds of others.”*

— Pascal

Have a Positive Influence

The way you communicate also impacts the influence you have on others. Try these tips for a positive influence.

- Make people feel special and important. When people feel valued, they will do amazing things, even things they thought were impossible!
- Have a positive attitude. See the best in everyone. Look for qualities in people.
- Catch your Consultants doing something right and recognize them for it – privately and in public.
- Encourage involvement, effort as well as results.
- Actively seek others' opinions and ideas.
- Avoid taking sides or showing favoritism.
- Create a safe atmosphere where Consultants feel comfortable sharing opinions even if they are different than yours.
- Encourage and reward creative thinking.
- In times of frustration, vent to your upline, not your downline.

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What is a Coach?

The Consultants on your team look to you for support to reach their goals. Learning to become a better coach allows you to better influence their growth and success. Look at some of the characteristics of an effective coach defined by Charles Mallory:



- A coach is a Leader, not a boss. A coach never flaunts position or authority.
- A coach relentlessly recognizes activity, progress and results.
- A coach is someone who guides and is trusted. She coaches to build relationships on honesty and mutual respect.
- A coach demonstrates a high level of interest in the people she coaches and believes in their abilities and goals.
- A coach is forward thinking and keeps others thinking about what's next.
- A coach creates an atmosphere of achievement, enthusiasm and camaraderie.
- A coach never avoids confrontations or dealing with problems.
- A coach does what is right, not what is popular, when needed and in a way that is respected.
- A coach never criticizes; she helps others see problems and find solutions.
- A coach gives the credit due to others.
- A coach is her team's biggest fan!

*“Treat people as if they are what they ought to be,
and you can help them become
what they are capable of becoming.”*

— Johann von Goethe, German Poet, Writer and Scientist

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Listening Skills

Listening is key to your effectiveness as a coach and leader. You can ask the best questions, but they mean very little if you aren't an effective listener. It is estimated that you should spend more than 50% of your time listening to be effective.



Here are a few helpful listening tips:

- Offer your opinion after you've given the other person a chance to share her views.
- Listen for ideas, not just facts. This often prevents you from misunderstanding the speaker's meaning.
- Listen with your whole self – physically as well as mentally. Always look at the person speaking,
- Lean forward, nod your head, be involved in the conversation.

“The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.”

— Peter Drucker, American writer, professor, management consultant

What kind of listener are you? Test yourself by answering these questions. Give yourself a 3 for USUALLY; 2 for RARELY; and 1 for NEVER.



Do I allow the speaker to finish without interrupting?	
Do I listen “between the lines”?	
Do I repeat what the person just said to clarify the meaning?	
Do I avoid getting agitated when I disagree with the speaker?	
Do I tune out distractions when listening?	
Do I make an effort to be interested in what the other person is saying?	
	TOTAL

SCORING

If your total score is 15 — 18, you have above average listening skills.

If your total score is 12 — 14, you have room for improvement here.

If your total score is 11 or lower, increasing your listening skill will increase your effectiveness as a coach.

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FIVE Step Coaching Process

You can use your coaching skills every time you have an opportunity to talk with Consultants on your team. These 5 Steps can help you positively move Consultants forward.

Step 1: Determine her goal and why she wants to reach it

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Both you and your Consultant write her goal down.

Step 2: Define reality – where is she now?

- Affirm her strengths – those are the things she does well and how those strengths can help her reach her goal.
- Identify obstacles – decide what may stop her and how to solve it now. Write down obstacles and proposed solutions.
- Pinpoint what she needs to learn that will help her reach her goal.

Step 3: Create an action plan

- Agree on a plan that is attainable and measurable.
- Write the specific activities and the time frame needed to achieve the goal.

Step 4: Establish expectations and accountability

- Ask Consultant to define her expectations.
- Ask Consultant how she wants to be held accountable. How often will you be in contact with each other?

Step 5: Reward and acknowledge each effort and each success

- Recognize her with personal calls, e-mails, or cards.
- Recognize her efforts as well as results in front of her peers whenever possible.

Coaching Tip: When coaching, ask permission to give constructive feedback.

“If I thought I knew something that was getting in the way of your success, would you want me to tell you what it is?”