

One-on-One (1:1) Coaching for Continuous Improvement

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**2019 NASPE Award Application for the
Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination for
Innovative State Human Resources Management Program**

One-on-One Coaching for Continuous Improvement (*1:1 Coaching*) is a simple yet effective coaching model that may be used at any level and for any role within an organization. In practice, this model helps agencies to identify and solve problems while strengthening employee problem solving skills, maintain goal alignment, quickly initiate countermeasures, improve results, and build relationships of trust between managers and employees.

TOOLS:

Coaching Standards & Guidelines provide guidance on how to (a) **prepare** (b) **facilitate** and **participate** in a coaching session, and (c) **take appropriate actions** after the discussion.

Coaching Notes Sheets provide standard discussion topics for use before, during and after the coaching discussion. The discussion topics vary by the level of an employee's role and responsibility within the organization, and include: (a) Celebrate Successes, (b) Talk Performance, (c) Problem Solving, (d) Individual/Team Talent Management, (e) Help Needed, (f) Open Discussion, and (g) Next Steps.

The manager and employee both use the discussion topics to prepare an agenda, which they then agree upon at the start of the coaching session.

METHODOLOGY:

1:1 Coaching leverages the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) method of continuous improvement to effectively coach employees. Managers and employees **PLAN** the work, setting goals for the employee to achieve. The next step is for the employee to **DO** the work and track results. Both parties **CHECK** the work against the targets, and when gaps exist between actual and expected results, the manager asks simple, thought-provoking questions to coach the employee through the problem solving process, thus enabling him or her to identify and **ACT** upon appropriate countermeasures.

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1. Please provide a brief description of this program

1:1 Coaching for Continuous Improvement's methodology is **powerful**. During these coaching discussions, managers actually develop their employees' problem solving skills through guided inquiry (e.g., "5 Why" analysis) to identify potential root causes of problems so that effective remedies can be applied. This approach builds a culture of trust and engagement for both managers and employees while vastly expanding the state's problem solving capacity and capabilities. When problems are no longer feared but seen as opportunities for improvement, employees are enabled to solve them on their own, at their level, and managers are relieved from *fighting fires* and have more time to focus on strategy.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

Since January 2017 in pilot agencies; statewide since January 2018.

3. Why was the program created? (What problem[s] or issues does it address?)

The State of Arizona is transforming the way it does business by deploying an intentional, results-driven management system to instill a culture of continuous improvement. Based upon Lean principles, the Arizona Management System (AMS) approach expects every employee, at every level, with discipline, to reflect daily on his or her performance, find waste, and determine how to do better with sustainable progress. The State recognized an enterprise-wide challenge in its lack of a standardized approach in two critical elements of AMS: problem solving and leader standard behaviors. The State's Human Resources Division (HRD) collaborated with the team responsible for deploying AMS statewide to create a simple, universal, scalable 1:1 coaching methodology and tools emphasizing problem solving for continuous improvement.

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4. Why is the program a new and creative method?

One-on-one coaching is not new, but what is new for Arizona is a structured approach and shared accountability. The stated purpose of 1:1 Coaching in the Arizona Management System (AMS) is to: (1) embed 1:1 coaching as an AMS standard and leadership capability, (2) facilitate alignment on expectations and enable quick course corrections, (3) increase problem solving capability and employee development, (4) achieve stronger results and behaviors, and (5) build stronger relationships of trust.

AMS promotes a clear line of sight for employees to understand how their work directly impacts not only their own success but also the success of their team, division, agency, and ultimately the entire State. Like athletes, every employee has a position and role to fulfill. Employees are held accountable to meet their goals, and when they fall short, managers (like athletic coaches) coach them to problem-solve and seek effective solutions. Managers in the State of Arizona are recognized for developing employees to be winners, “versus jumping in the game and doing the work for the players.”

5. What was the program’s startup cost? (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

HRD researched, designed and developed the *1:1 Coaching* model with four FTEs dedicated approximately one-quarter time to the project for about a year. This effort included three significant program pilots involving several agencies of varying sizes, two major iterations on the coaching methodology and tools, and developing and deploying statewide training. Today, the core HRD team facilitates quarterly training around the State, with the coaching tools made available via the internet. All other costs are absorbed as part of the day-to-day cost of managing employees.

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6. What are the programs operational costs?

AMS leader standard work requires managers to meet with direct reports at least one time per month, with the duration of the meeting being determined by the employee's role, tenure and need. Individual agencies absorb the cost of printing the Coaching Notes Sheets if they choose not to use the tools in electronic format.

7. How is the program funded?

Through agencies' operational budgets.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

Yes.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states?

No, we are not aware of any substantially similar, enterprise-wide coaching programs in other states.

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

The success of *1:1 Coaching* is measured by feedback from agency partners who participate in the State's Coaching Community of Practice (COP), which meets quarterly to share success stories and discuss challenges in their individual agencies. A recent COP survey revealed: (1) 96% of managers agreed that "Regular 1:1's helped them to fairly & objectively appraise employee performance," (2) 90% of managers agreed that "1:1 coaching notes helped them prepare their employee performance appraisals," and (3) 71% agreed that "Coaching enhances trusting relationships between managers and employees." Additionally, *1:1 Coaching* has been recognized nationally and internationally by: **Results Washington Lean Conference**

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(November 2018), 2018 Excellence in Practice Award issued by the **Association for Talent Development** (May 2019), and 2019 Award of Excellence issued by the **International Public Management Association for Human Resources - Western Region** (April 2019).

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

The launch of *1:1 Coaching* entailed three significant pilots involving several agencies of varying sizes, two major iterations on the methodology and tools, and developing and deploying statewide training. In the 16 months since we initially deployed the *1:1 Coaching* model statewide, agency leaders and employees have gained maturity in the practice and discipline of coaching for continuous improvement. Both are seeing positive results with consistent use. We expect continued refinement of the program through ongoing program reviews with our Community of Practice and as our agency partners share their innovations to make the program even more effective.