

FIELD COACHING: REPORT STRATEGY



HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND WRITING FIELD COACHING REPORTS? MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU THINK YOUR EMPLOYEES SPEND READING THEM?

On average, medical sales representatives spend just under *three minutes per document* reading coaching reports from their managers. Based on a survey with over 300 pharmaceutical and medical device representatives across multiple therapeutic areas and companies, we found most field coaching reports garnered little more than a passing glance from the intended beneficiaries of field-based coaching. In stark contrast, most sales managers spend upwards of an hour writing and editing the same documents. Why so much time and emphasis on a document with questionable return? And what can you do to help managers coach their field-based employees better?

WHY SOME FIELD COACHING REPORTS DON'T WORK

As we tell sales managers, if the document is clear, concise, actionable, and aligned with their verbal field coaching, three minutes to read a coaching report might even be sufficient. Unfortunately, “wordy coaching is all too present in traditional field coaching reports,” says Mike DeGuzman, an Account Manager with Lundbeck, who has worked with sales teams to streamline their written coaching process.

DeGuzman is not alone. As we've heard from hundreds of reps we've worked with over the years, “wordy” and “useless” are the norms, while concise and actionable are the exceptions for field coaching reports.

Some wise business person said feedback is a gift, but they forgot to mention that unfortunately, we have all gotten terribly generic gifts in the past. The best gifts are thoughtful and specific to the recipient.

- Mike DeGuzman
Account Manager, Lundbeck

And of course, “the most lasting result of poorly written and unclear coaching is that it has no impact on how the account manager performs or develops going forward,” says Candy LeBlanc, Manager of Field Sales Training at Johnson & Johnson Medical Devices Companies. What's also clear, however, is that sales managers understand the importance of well-written feedback, and more importantly, want desperately to do it well.

Unfortunately, documenting coaching is a task they've spent hundreds of hours on with little to no ROI. Compounding the frustration is that these are people conditioned around seeing and tracking results. They are also conditioned to deliver consistent messaging, and they crave motivating language that will help their employees develop.

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MAKING FIELD COACHING REPORTS USEFUL

We've found when you provide sales managers with the tools to deliver consistent written coaching quickly and repeatedly, they thrive, building strong feedback muscles quickly. With these tools, they understand their role and their accountability in delivering effective, well-written feedback. More importantly perhaps, their sales reps can actually use their feedback. And accordingly, often sales results begin to climb.

So what's the difference between a document that is concise and actionable, and one that's wordy and likely skimmed?

John McCarthy, Regional Business Manager at Bristol Myers Squibb, describes it succinctly: "Written coaching that is crisp, clear, and concise leaves little room for interpretation. Colleagues who know where they stand are laser-focused. It's that focus that leads to sales results."

Or take it from DeGuzman, who's seen a dramatic improvement in written coaching he receives since Lundbeck started training managers on effective coaching documentation, "it's now specific to my needs, I can immediately act on it, and easily reflect on whether I improved."

TAKING FIELD COACHING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The best part is that training managers on effective performance coaching is system-agnostic skill-building. In 2019, app-based coaching tools figure to increase dramatically. You might even be currently considering one of those platforms for your managers.

But whatever platform you choose, the most important factor is whether the coaching is motivating employee development. So, whether your managers use iCoach, aCoach, mCoach, or even simple email-based coaching, paying attention to the structure and actionability of field coaching reports can help better convey feedback to sales reps.

If you want to learn more about field coaching, [check out this video on evaluating performance.](#)

ABOUT WD COMMUNICATIONS

WD Communications specializes in developing and delivering seminars, webinars, and coaching sessions to develop employees, managers, and executives. Our staff is expert in listening to client needs and partnering to build learning programs.



If you or your company is interested in conducting a field coaching workshop, contact **Mike Mannon** at mmannon@wdcommunications.com



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