

The Coaching Sandwich (+/-/+)

a One Page Business Briefing

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SOME people believe themselves to be pretty tough, coping well with constructive criticism delivered in a very direct manner as they are being coached. These people might even be heard to say something like, “give it to me straight”. However, in my experience these tough guys are often not as tough as they make out.

Most people, though, are a little more sensitive than that, and might enjoy a slightly more subtle approach to allow them to take on board ideas for improvement without ruining their self-esteem.

Either way, the humanistic school of thought would have us take a more sensitive approach in order to achieve the optimal outcome of real change while coaching someone's performance.

In sales, this approach is described as The Benefit Burger: wrap palatable benefit statements around the cost of the product or service, in order to make it an overall more enjoyable (or at least digestible) proposition to swallow.

Coaches advocate the same approach: mention something positive to the person about specific activities or skills and their value to the team or organisation overall, then ...

- + Lead with something positive,
- Focus on the area where improvement is required, and

- + Finish on something positive again.

Too soft an approach will not achieve realisation and acceptance of the real need to change, whereas too harsh an approach might achieve the complete rejection of any suggestion for change.

Additionally, there are situations where too soft an approach is inappropriate, such as where team or organisation values have been breached, and/or where illegal activities have taken place. In these more extreme and less frequent situations



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it would be entirely warranted to be more explicit and direct regarding the degree of unacceptable behaviour to ensure the recipient is in NO doubt they are outside the acceptable boundaries. **b**