

By Dori Soukup

A Winning Team

Looking to step up your spa's game?
Achieve success as head coach with these four easy steps.

COACHING IS NO LONGER LIMITED TO SPORTS. MORE than 80% of Fortune 500 companies provide professional coaching to their management teams. Through this popular management technique, a business can increase profits, grow its market share and achieve greater overall success. If you wish to build a high performance team, you must be as effective as a winning coach.

Professional sports teams spend millions of dollars developing their coaching models. Spa professionals can learn useful strategies from them.

Who's the head coach for your organization? Who's coaching your team to excellence? Let's explore the sports coaching model and discover which components can be applied to your spa.

1. Focus on recruitment.

Sports coaching model: Team-building is about recruiting the right people, according to Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great* (Collins Business, 2001). Each sports team has starters and backups. Starters

are the stars who account for most of the team's productivity. In fact, 80% of plays are often generated by 20% of the team—this is called the 80/20 rule. Professional teams focus greatly on recruiting and scouting new stars. It's the head coach's job to evaluate and manage team members to identify the best players and maximize overall results.

Spa coaching model: The spa's head coach must focus on utilizing the starting team and recruiting new employees. Refrain from trying to give all team members equal guest rotation. Instead, identify starters and assign them more clients. This will exponentially increase your spa's performance.

Identify your starting team through:

- Guest satisfaction
- Performance and skill
- Work ethic and professionalism
- Continuing education
- Attitude and teamwork

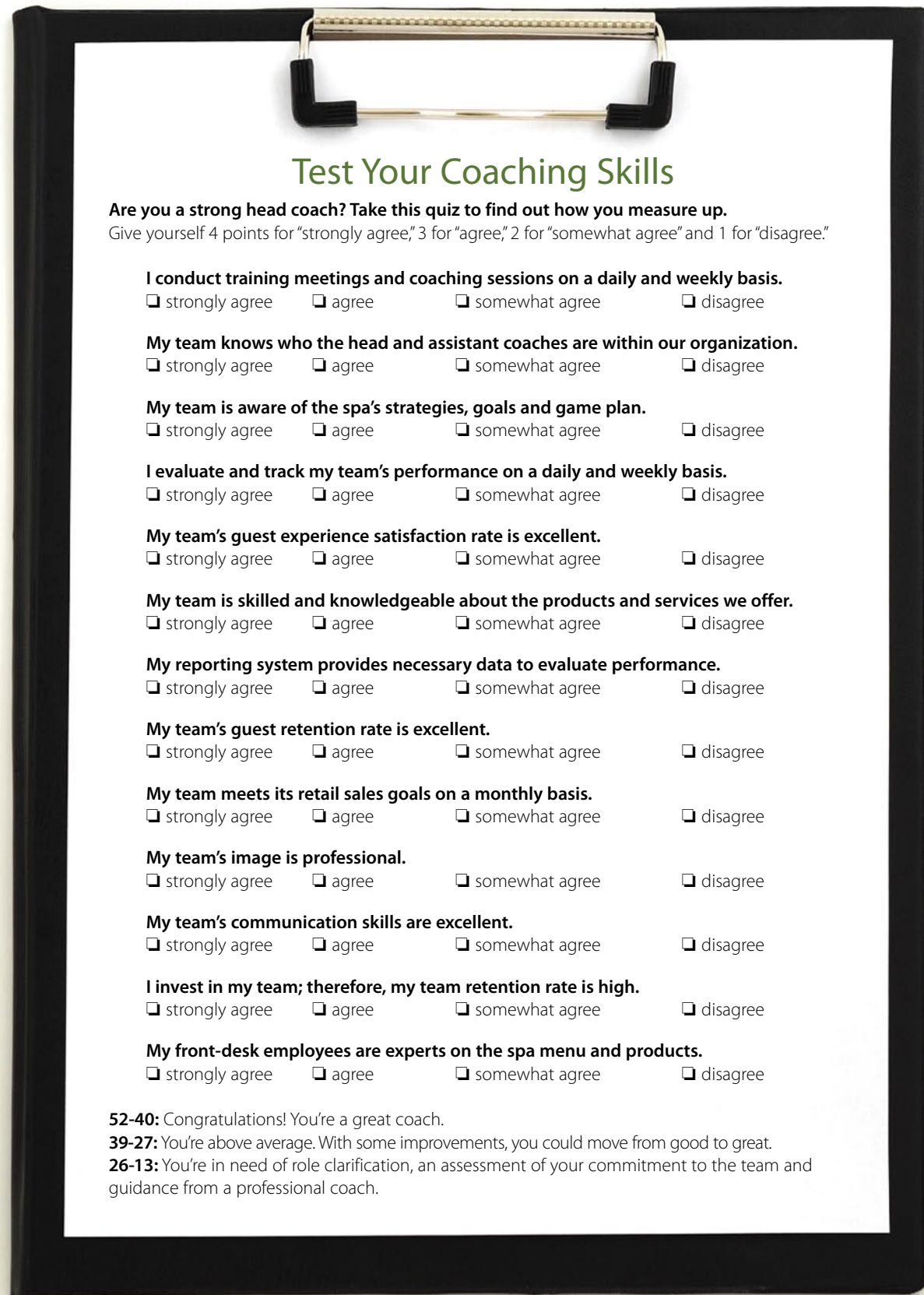
2. Embrace responsibility.

Sports coaching model: In sports, the head coach is ultimately responsible for his team's performance. If the team wins games, the head coach receives recognition. If the team is producing poor results, the head coach is usually terminated.

Prior to the start of a season, players attend boot camp to review plays, learn to work as a team and run practice drills. During this process, the coach constantly seeks ways to improve the team's game and assembles a playbook of offensive and defensive strategies. After boot camp, the team maintains a training schedule for the entire season, during which the coach provides mental and physical workouts so they can stay fit and maximize performance.

During the game, where's the coach? On the sideline watching, supporting, motivating





Test Your Coaching Skills

Are you a strong head coach? Take this quiz to find out how you measure up.

Give yourself 4 points for "strongly agree," 3 for "agree," 2 for "somewhat agree" and 1 for "disagree."

I conduct training meetings and coaching sessions on a daily and weekly basis.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My team knows who the head and assistant coaches are within our organization.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My team is aware of the spa's strategies, goals and game plan.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

I evaluate and track my team's performance on a daily and weekly basis.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My team's guest experience satisfaction rate is excellent.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My team is skilled and knowledgeable about the products and services we offer.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My reporting system provides necessary data to evaluate performance.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My team's guest retention rate is excellent.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My team meets its retail sales goals on a monthly basis.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My team's image is professional.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My team's communication skills are excellent.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

I invest in my team; therefore, my team retention rate is high.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

My front-desk employees are experts on the spa menu and products.

strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree

52-40: Congratulations! You're a great coach.

39-27: You're above average. With some improvements, you could move from good to great.

26-13: You're in need of role clarification, an assessment of your commitment to the team and guidance from a professional coach.

To excel in business and generate profits, you must take responsibility for continually improving the guest experience.

and strategizing—not in the office or locker room. The coach communicates with the team throughout the game, calling for a time-out to refocus or change the plan.

Spa coaching model: As the spa's head coach, you're responsible for the team's performance and skill level. Your decisions influence your team's ability to win or lose the game. To excel in business and generate profits, you must take responsibility for continually improving the guest experience, and maximizing retail and service opportunities.

Use the following tips to be an effective spa head coach:

- Define leadership responsibilities
- Formulate a game plan and spa curriculum
- Hold an annual spa boot camp that emphasizes coaching and training
- Establish a continuous training schedule
- Develop and analyze profit strategies
- Incorporate coaching observations into operations
- Utilize time-outs to focus the team
- Conduct strategic planning meetings

3. Assess your team's performance.

Sports coaching model: In professional sports, performance is everything. During each game, statistics are tracked—points scored, blocks, steals, fumbles, turnovers, strikes, runs, batting averages, etc. In addition, players and coaches set aside time to watch game tapes, so they can evaluate performance and identify areas that need improvement. After coaches review statistics and tapes, they adjust the team's strategy accordingly.

Why all the focus on tracking statistics and measuring performance? If a team can't identify what's broken or weak, it's nearly impossible to improve.

Spa coaching model: Track your staff's performance on a regular basis by establishing daily, weekly and monthly goals. Compare actual performance to targets, then

make adjustments to keep the team focused and aimed toward success.

Here are a few key indicators of employee performance:

- Volume per guest for service and retail

MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

- Guest retention rate
- Upgraded services
- Cross-team marketing
- Training participation
- Guest experience, protocols and rituals
- Attitude, attendance and work ethic

Reading List

Check out the following books for more tips on becoming a successful spa coach.

- *Co-active Coaching* by Laura Whitworth, Henry Kimsey-House and Phil Sandahl (Davies-Black Publishing, 1998)
- *The Coaching Bible* by Ian McDermott and Wendy Jago (Piatkus Books, 2006)
- *The Portable Coach* by Thomas J. Leonard and Byron Larson (Scribner, 1998)



4. Recognize your team.

Sports coaching model: In sports, super-stars are recognized by the head coach, asked to endorse products and services, invited to play in all-star games and given personalized merchandise—among other perks. Recognizing players' accomplishments is vital to maximizing motivation for achievement.

Spa coaching model: Employees today are looking for a lot more than a paycheck. They want to be valued and recognized. Implementing an awards program is essential to a spa's success—it drives the team to excel and enhances performance. Generating positive morale among your staff will elevate productivity and profits.

Recognition provides your team with:

- Clarity
- Focus
- Productive results
- Maximized potential
- Improved performance

Remember, if your facility isn't achieving its goals, it's time to hire a professional spa coach. ●

Dori Soukup is the founder of InSPAration Management (insparationmanagement.com) consulting firm.