

Coach your drivers to safety and success

The importance of a managed service
to an effective coaching program

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Introduction

From the youngest age, to the end of their careers, people are coached – babies learning to walk, school children mastering a new skill or professional athletes looking to better their game. Coaching is a way of life. Yet, at some point in time, many people feel that they don't need to improve – or think of coaching as a disciplinary measure.

Nothing can be further from the truth. Particularly when someone has been doing the same job for many years and gets stuck in a routine. It's easy to simply go through the motions and not realize that bad habits have begun to creep in. But, how do you introduce coaching into your work environment, how do you maintain coaching as part of your culture and how do you measure the results of your efforts?

Hundreds of thousands of drivers are coached everyday (by thousands of coaches) using the SmartDrive® video-based safety program. As experts on the impact of reducing risk through coaching and the resulting improvement of a fleet's safety metrics, SmartDrive provides insights on how to put the power of coaching to use in your fleet. As a result, you can begin to save lives, save jobs and save money.



Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.

- Timothy Gallwey,
Author, The Inner Game

Coaching as part of your safety culture

For many drivers, they began learning the skills they use today as early as 16 years old, when they got their first driver's license. Those skills were embedded in their daily routine and simply became a way of life. New skills were added when they acquired their CDL, but for some drivers, that might have been 20, 30 or 40 years ago. It's easy to develop habits that make driving easier, skip what may seem "routine" to get somewhere quicker or get through the day without even realizing that rules or procedures are not being followed.

"The speed of installation and easy-to-use, effective coaching tools were important factors for us. We knew we wanted a fully managed service like SmartDrive versus just a dash cam to actually help our drivers improve and be safer on the roads."

- Dan Banner,
Safety Director and Recruiter,
Alabama Motor Express

When embarking on a coaching program, it's important to understand where to start, which can vary depending on your role within your organization.

Once you've decided where you will start, it's important to understand what is effective coaching and how to measure the results of your efforts. Let's get started!



Questions to ask when creating a successful driver coaching program



WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO MY FLEET?

- a. Am I willing to sacrifice safety for the sake of operations?
- b. Am I willing to sacrifice safety for the sake of short-term profitability?

There is no customer or amount of money worth someone's life. If you are dedicated to operating safely, the business will come.



WHY ARE WE COACHING?

- a. Are we trying to build a file for upcoming litigation?
- b. Are we interested in improving the overall safety of our fleet and avoiding litigation by not having a collision in the first place?

There is no better fix for collisions than not having one in the first place. If you do have a collision, you've got plenty of coaching data to help make your case.



HOW ARE WE GOING TO COACH?

- a. Are you able to meet on a timely basis or will coaching be delayed due to your workload or your driver being on the road for long periods of time?
- b. Are you able to communicate openly with your driver to effect change in your fleet?

Tell drivers you care, look them in the eye and ask about what's going on that could be the cause of the behavior. Let them open the conversation and you direct the conversation toward correcting the behavior.

Putting coaching to work

Many coaches were drivers and have been promoted to a supervisory position, but never received coaching training. Having a specific method to follow during the coaching process ensures fairness and an unbiased review of each driver's performance. SmartDrive offers many tools proven to help a manager coach effectively:

- Managed Service Program, allowing you time to coach drivers, not review events
- Response Center, providing the critical information you need to coach effectively
- Easy, powerful, Coaching Workflow – 3 simple steps to success
- Driver Mobile App for remote self-coaching



THE VALUE OF EXPERT ANALYSIS IN THE COACHING PROCESS

Triggering video is only the first step in the review process. Once a video is triggered, review by an expert analyst is a necessary step to verify and quantify the risk.

With today's buzzwords, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Computer Vision, fleets are rushing to rely on data-driven technology to make life-saving decisions. Unfortunately, AI-driven analysis is not yet as effective or reliable as human review. Human review continues to provide verifiable results and actionable analysis. Expert review is essential to ensure the process is unbiased and all driver behaviors are measured similarly and consistently; it also ensures scoring and prioritization of your riskiest drivers aligns to your company's specific safety policies.

Ultimately, expert review as part of a Managed Service program eliminates the need to review and coach on every event, saving fleets time and enabling coaches to focus on the risky behaviors, drivers and sites. A Managed Service provides the information necessary for the prescribed coaching workflow, which ensures continual improvement and bottom-line results.

Putting coaching to work

THE VALUE OF A MANAGED SERVICE IN THE COACHING PROCESS

A Managed Service program supports your coaching efforts by providing the ability to coach thousands of drivers. How? By doing the “heavy lifting” of reviewing and prioritizing events, so you can focus your efforts on coaching those drivers who need it most. In addition, the program helps build rapport between coaches and drivers, helps you to recognize good driving skills (in addition to those who need improvement), and provides performance measurement to gauge the success of your efforts.

Once video is reviewed and scored, review analysis information is available in the web-based Response Center. The Response Center provides the information that helps coaches focus on the right drivers and the right skills – helping them understand:



- 1 Trends**
Historical view of driver performance



- 2 Skills**
Opportunities for biggest improvement



- 3 Benchmarking**
Skills assessment

Managers see trends throughout their fleet (or site), specific skills that need improvement (by driver) and how each site compares to other sites, the total fleet and to other fleets in its industry.

Benefits of an enhanced coaching workflow



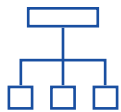
An enhanced coaching workflow optimizes the coaching process and time spent, while maximizing the impact on driver coaching sessions



Integrated contextual performance metrics throughout the coaching workflow put KPIs front and center for coaches



Driver scorecards with trended performance data, coaching history performance, and peer benchmarking pinpoint areas for improvement and facilitate productive coaching sessions



“Prep Mode” provides an easy-to-use workflow to facilitate coaching preparation, enabling coaches to add notes for review by colleagues, if necessary, or give “kudos” for outstanding driving performance



Skills-based or event-based coaching options provide the flexibility to individualize sessions to the needs of the coach or driver

Putting coaching to work

THREE STEPS TO COACHING SUCCESS

As mentioned in the previous section, it's imperative to follow a prescribed process to ensure that all drivers are coached – and measured – in a timely and unbiased manner. As outlined below, the three steps to coaching effectiveness are:

1. Prepare

Preparing for each coaching session ensures that you know what you will discuss with each of your drivers, how you will present the information and what you expect from your driver. It also ensures a level of professionalism so that drivers realize the importance of the coaching sessions and will approach them in a similar manner.

2. Coach

The best way to start a coaching session is to show the driver his/her video and ask them what they see. Let them explain what occurred and then discuss the situation. This helps ensure the driver is aware of what occurred and why you are coaching on that occurrence.

3. Summarize

It's important to make notes of your coaching session. It's easy to forget what was discussed and the agreed-to next steps to ensure safer driving. With appropriate notes, you can remind your driver should the behavior continue and need further coaching.

Each of these steps is clearly defined in the SmartDrive Response Center and provides the information necessary to ensure your drivers are coached on those areas that need improvement. You don't need to waste your time trying to find the drivers who need coached. Nor, do you need to waste time trying to understand what areas need improvement.



- 1 Prepare**
Quickly identify skills to review with driver.



- 2 Coach**
Review videos with driver.



- 3 Summarize**
Add notes for session outcome & next steps

Tested and proven “Three Steps to Coaching” method guides both novice and expert coaches, and ensures consistent coaching across your fleet.

Measuring your coaching effectiveness

Once you've begun coaching, it's important to measure the effectiveness of your efforts. The key to driving your program results are analytics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The three KPIs essential to manage your program and ensure your focus is on the right person, at the right time, are:

“ A good coach can change a game.
A great coach can change a life.”

- John Wooden



These KPIs enable your organization to align top to bottom on performance metrics, understand “better or worse” and focus on what needs improvement. This makes it straightforward and easy to operationalize – enabling your managers to actually save time because they are talking to the right drivers about the right skills that need improvement.

The impact of this approach is that fleets often experience collision frequency reductions of 50% or greater in the first year of deployment. And, they continue to see results in subsequent years because they have a standardized, consistent approach.

5 Tips to take your driver improvement program to the next level



MAKE IT PERSONAL

- Get to know each driver personally (soft skill), not their truck number
- Create a relationship based on mutual respect
- Communicate, educate and reinforce



COACH QUICKLY AND OFTEN

- Coaching is most impactful when performed close to the time of the event
- Daily coaching may be necessary, depending on the number of drivers, the number of coachable events, speed of improvement, etc.
- The Driver Mobile App facilitates self- and anywhere coaching for drivers who may not often come to the office
- Drivers typically become more involved in the coaching process over time



DON'T MAKE IT PUNITIVE

- Focus on good driving skills – call drivers regularly
- Identify areas for improvement – often you can let the video do the coaching by itself
- Tenured drivers often see bad behaviors for the first time when they see their own videos



MEASURE & REWARD IMPROVEMENT

- Let drivers know what impacts their safety score and how they can improve
- Implement monetary and non-monetary recognition awards



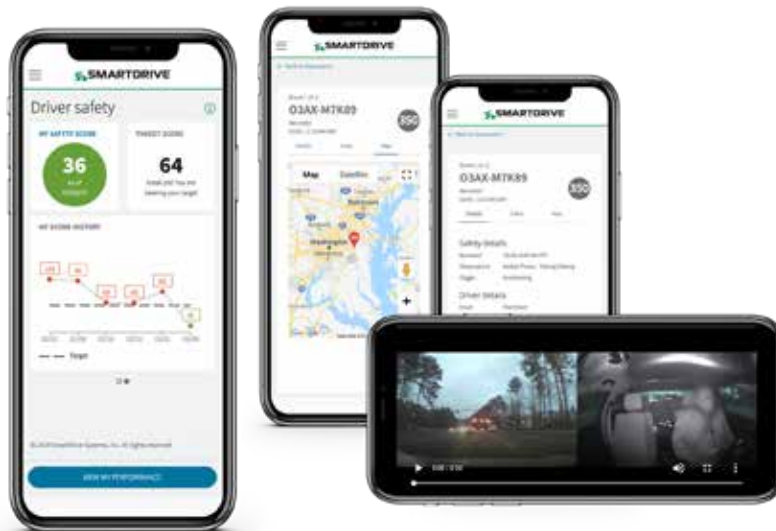
ALWAYS CONTINUE TO IMPROVE

- Continue to coach risky behavior to lower driver and fleet safety scores
- Encourage friendly competition between coaches
- Encourage friendly competition between drivers
- Continue to evolve other areas of your coaching program beyond video

Making coaching easier

For many fleets, it's difficult to coach drivers who are on the road for weeks at a time and may not have the opportunity to sit down for a coaching session.

Available for anyone, but particularly effective for these situations, is the SmartDrive Driver App that facilitates easy remote coaching, as well as self-coaching. By providing each driver's Safety Score measured against company Target Score, along with 12-week driver performance trend, observations that contribute to each driver's individual Safety Score, event details with map views and access to their individual event videos, drivers become engaged with their level of safety and take ownership for their individual safety improvement.



The Driver App allows a driver to engage in remote coaching or to self-coach based upon seeing the available information on his/her own cell phone.



Advanced analytics for coaching



A Managed Service program provides the information necessary to run an effective coaching program. There are times, however, when you will want to take your coaching to the next level by leveraging additional data from within your video-based safety program. However, it's important to not just see the data, but understand it as well. It's important you understand what actually happened, where it happened (and why), the driver's role and the likelihood of it happening again. By answering critical business questions about your fleet's performance through purpose-built dashboards and analytics applications, you can impose coaching metrics that will influence your fleet's safety performance.

Analytics programs, like SmartDrive SmartIQ provide the data necessary so ...

Executives can focus on:

- What are my top sites doing to maintain a low safety score? Can those steps be implemented in the bottom performers?
- Top observation(s)
 - Are they policy violations?
 - Do they require additional coaching?
- Deeper analysis of site Safety Scores, in addition to other metrics such as fuel and speed

Regional managers can:

- Review program results, KPIs and align goals for the next quarter
 - Who are my top drivers contributing to my Safety Score? What's my plan?
 - What are my top observations? What steps can I put in place to improve this?

Site level managers can:

- Review program results, KPIs and understand goals for the next quarter
 - How is my Safety Score trending
 - Are my drivers with the highest scores improving?
 - Are my most prevalent observations reducing – by driver?

Advanced analytics for coaching

"Once we identify risky driving behavior, we then have the opportunity to engage drivers in constructive coaching sessions based on actionable insights delivered through the SmartDrive platform.

Coaching not only allows us to focus on areas that need improvement, but also provides positive reinforcement in instances where our drivers took preemptive action or responded in a positive way to events that occurred."

- Lang Butler,
Vice President, Ruston Paving

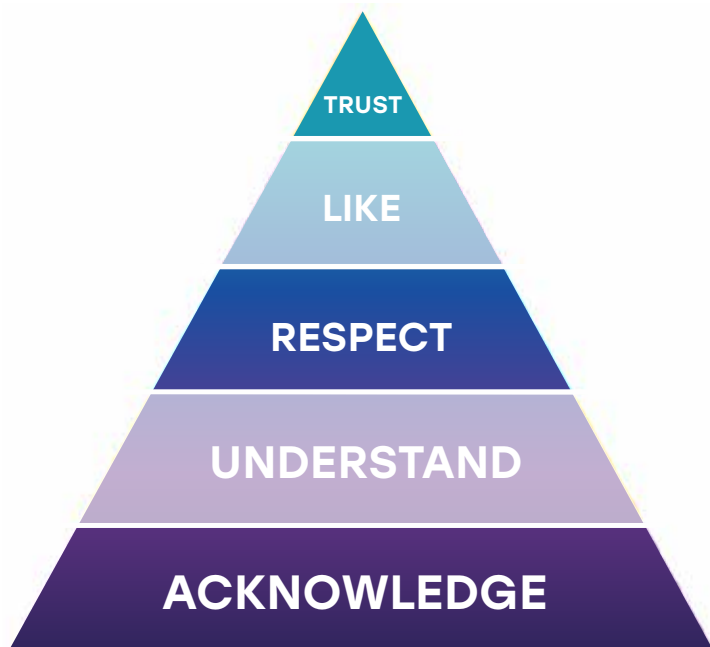


Analytics provide the essential data you need to build a strong safety culture that helps you develop and retain better, safer and more professional drivers. With the proper data, you can identify and eliminate risky driving behavior, coach drivers on specific behaviors and monitor results, and retain and recognize good drivers.

Beyond coaching

THE IMPACT OF COACHING GOES FAR BEYOND IMPROVING SAFETY IN YOUR FLEET.

Most coaches state that consistent and professional coaching sessions build stronger relationships with their drivers. This is accomplished through open and honest conversations, encouragement, commitment and trust. Relationships are not built on happenstance conversations or one-way conversations.



*Developed by Sharon Sands, an associate of Performance Coaching International

The process for creating trust is illustrated in the Trust pyramid*:

- At the base of the pyramid, both sides **acknowledge** one another, but are likely to make many assumptions about what they see and who the other person is
- For the relationship to move forward it is necessary for both sides to seek to **understand** the other — and also to seek to be understood.
- Once we understand the other person, we can start to respect why they act the way they do and also to **respect** those things that they do well.
- Respect usually leads to liking, and **liking** — on further acquaintance — can lead to trust. Of course, it can be argued that you do not have to like someone in order to trust them, but it certainly helps.
- **Trust** is the essential ingredient of any good coaching relationship — without it, your driver is not going to tell you, the coach, those confidential things that may be necessary to allow you to be of real help.

Conclusion

It's likely you've heard that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again ... and expecting different results. Unfortunately, that's what many fleet managers do every day. For those without video safety, they train their drivers but continue to experience collisions and litigation. For those with video safety, they see the same behaviors, but don't coach their drivers and wonder why they continue to experience collisions and litigation.

Coaching drivers – with video – is the best way to improve safety in your fleet. Not only will you experience fewer collisions (and near collisions), but you'll experience savings throughout your fleet and an improved safety culture.



"Without the Managed Service, we would have had to hire two-to-three additional people to review recorded incidents and provide appropriate coaching to drivers. The SmartDrive program tells us exactly what we need to do to reduce risk and exonerate drivers."

- Jeremy Collins,
Director of Business and Safety Development, Postal Fleet Services

Bonus! From good to great coaching

As you read this list, ask yourself how you measure up against each of these qualities and identify which areas could use more of your attention. If you have been receiving coaching yourself and feel like it could be more effective, this list might give you a window to a constructive conversation with your mentor to improve the relationship.



A good coach is self-aware.

To understand oneself, one's coaching style – and how it is perceived and received by employees – is a critical first step to becoming a valuable and effective coach.



A good coach brings specific and well-defined issues to the attention of others.

Being unspecific about problem areas – or failing to bring them up with the appropriate parties – suggests a reluctance to affect positive change and a lack of leadership.



A good coach prepares for each session with information, examples, ideas, etc., and is ready for discussion.

Coaching sessions should be scheduled in advance, and the coach should have a solid agenda for each session that lays out the mission for the day. Without structure, the coaching session can devolve into a casual conversation with no real substance or direction.



A good coach treats individuals as partners in the organization, encouraging their input and trusting them to carry out assignments.

Some coaches are fans of “tough love,” while others are more lenient, but what all good coaches have in common is respect for others. Contempt and resentment have no place in an effective coaching relationship, and only breed further conflict.



A good coach knows the strengths and weaknesses of his or her drivers.

Much like the coach of a sports team, he or she knows how to tap into the individual strengths of employees to get the most out of them and to get the greatest amount of productivity from the team, collectively and individually.



A good coach makes expectations clear at the beginning of the coaching session.

Both the coach and the driver must have a sense that this meeting has a distinct purpose, and must agree on what that purpose is, for the session to proceed smoothly.



A good coach allows enough time to adequately discuss issues and concerns.

Blocking out enough time for a solid session, rather than squeezing it in and rushing through, shows respect for the employee's time and allows them to participate more thoughtfully. If a driver cannot come to the office for coaching, consider using a driver remote app so he/she can engage in self coaching.

Bonus! From good to great coaching



A good coach seeks out ideas and makes those ideas part of the solution.

Take it as a red flag if you're not willing to hear ideas, suggestions, or thoughts from other members of the team. A coach is there to serve the employees, not for the employees to serve his or her ego.



A good coach listens to others and tries to understand their points of view.

Rather than assigning blame or delivering unhelpful criticism, he or she allows the driver to explain things from the other side, which can often uncover the root of a misunderstanding or miscommunication.



A good coach expresses encouragement and optimism when both easy and difficult issues are discussed.

Sometimes an issue can be the elephant in the room that nobody wants to talk about. It's the coach's job to make this issue less intimidating by modeling a constructive attitude that brings the team together to address it.



A good coach directly asks for a commitment to solutions that have been agreed upon.

Coaches can't be wishy-washy about their expectations. If the employee isn't held accountable for improving, it becomes a waste of everyone's time to continue coaching.



A good coach provides the resources, authority, training and support necessary for others to carry out solutions.

Coaching doesn't end when the session ends. It is up to the coach to follow through with any additional guidance the driver might need to move forward.



A good coach offers support and assistance to those he or she is coaching to help them implement change and achieve desired goals.

Professional development is a team effort. It's usually not wise to simply cut the driver free after a session and expect him or her to achieve everything on their own.



A good coach follows up on coaching sessions in a timely manner.

It's all too easy for coaching to fall down the priority ladder among all the other demands of a manager's day-to-day job duties. At the end of each coaching session, it's a good idea to go ahead and schedule the next one, and to hold to that commitment when the time comes around. If timely coaching is not possible, a driver remote coaching app facilitates self- and anywhere coaching.



When solutions do not turn out as expected, a good coach proactively helps to define alternative actions.

If at first the driver does not succeed, it could be that there was a misunderstanding, or it could be that the original solution was a mismatch for that particular employee. A good coach is open to having a backup plan (or two).

The theme running beneath many of these qualities is this: When coaching is done in the spirit of mutual respect, the rewards and benefits for your employees and your customers are endless. What is important is to establish a positive coaching relationship between the coach and the employees that incorporates all parties' strengths.

*Reprinted from **Customer Service Profiles**

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Delivering driving performance solutions and transportation intelligence that transform fleet safety and operational efficiency through video analysis, predictive analytics and a personalized performance program improves driving skills, lowers costs and provides immediate ROI.

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