



Ultimate Guide: How to Build A Timeless Retention Strategy With Continuous Coaching



What is continuous coaching?

Think performance management, but on a continuous cadence. Achieving outcomes is important, but directly connecting it to what matters most to employees is where continuous coaching makes a big difference. Because, when companies help employees to realize their full potential, they stay.

In the best cultures, coaching happens often and everywhere. It's up to an organization to equip managers with the skills to succeed first. Because when you create an environment where people feel truly supported, they can focus on delivering their best work. It's really that simple.

In this guide, we'll walk you through how a continuous coaching approach can lock in a timeless retention strategy more than any ping pong table or stocked refrigerator could. And, it all starts with three main concepts:

People. Purpose. Path.

- ↳ **Connect With Your People** –
Get to know your people, and help them get to know each other.
- ↳ **Align Their Purpose To Your Purpose** –
Create clarity around roles and goals.
- ↳ **Coach Them To A Path To Success** –
Your team members own the path, we support the journey.



Connect With Your People

Invest the time to get to know your people. Discover what they value, what inspires them and what concerns them. Use the information to focus team engagement and communication on things that are important to them. When you do this, you'll create personalization at scale and stave off unnecessary turnover.

This simple sharing exercise is a combination of science and magic. After someone presents something about who they are and what defines them, the process of colleagues connecting to things they value or asking questions to go deeper on certain topics allows them to say "I see you and I affirm you". This is the circuitry of meaningful relationships.

Successful people-leaders use this information in many ways to foster engagement and connect people with common interests. Organizations often learn unexpected things about their people that enables them to support employees in ways that create loyalty well beyond compensation and benefit plans.

Connecting people is not a one-and-done exercise. Adopt a system where people can store information about themselves. Encourage them to update the information at least quarterly. Personal goals, concerns, recognition, even superpowers can and should evolve as an employee grows. Connecting takes practice. As the practice becomes second nature, trust will be woven into the fabric of your culture.

Connect People with uMap™

Put it into practice:

Start Small. Start small with an opening exercise at the beginning of a team meeting. Ask everyone to share something that others might not know about them - like important people in their life, a favorite quote, their superpowers - take your pick. Encourage curiosity from others after each share.

Want to go deeper? Set aside a more substantial amount of time for team building. In this type of meeting, have each of your team members spend some time drawing a map of who they are as a person. As a group, ask questions and identify points of connection with the person who is sharing. Allow a solid 15 minutes per person to make it feel comfortable. As the leader, go first to set the tone for sharing. Be more vulnerable than usual to set an example. You will be amazed at the impact this will have on your team, and if you let them in, they will let you in.

Be ready to ask questions and make connections with each if the team hesitates. This will likely happen at first, but as the group opens up, hang back and offer comments last. This type of connection between people is crucial, but don't underestimate the impact of being "seen" by the boss, as well.

The more you do this, the more likely people are to stay with the organization. They'll tell their friends, and your hiring and retention strategies will fall into place. Connect people to each other, and watch something special happen.

Align Their Purpose to Your Purpose

The more clarity within teams, the better. Role clarity is a friend of autonomy and trust. It takes work, and at times, conflict. Once you have established trust, the conflict becomes healthy, and even easy! The time saved in the future via alignment will be a multiple of the upfront time investment.

The How: Begin by scheduling time with your team members to align around responsibilities and goals. In many organizations, responsibilities and goals are prescribed based on established role definitions. In these cases, there is still power in asking your people to interpret and “author” their responsibilities for alignment purposes. One of the many hidden secrets of having effective alignment conversations occurs when employees and managers share their unique interpretations of an individual role. Each role becomes personalized when individual skills are considered, and team dynamics come into play. Even well-defined roles shared by multiple employees can become unique to the person when you follow this approach. This uniqueness raises the status of the employee and aligns their purpose to your organization’s purpose. For those who experience generational dynamics, you understand that alignment to purpose is a critical element to retaining and attracting Millennials and Generation Z employees.

Use this time to also align on professional goals and development plans for each team member.

While they own the goals and plans, it’s the job of a manager to provide honest feedback. Are the professional goals realistic in the time frame presented? Does the development plan give them the skills and experiences necessary to achieve the goals?

Come prepared with these questions and your views, but don’t overpower. The more a team member owns both, the more likely they are to achieve.

Eliminate the guesswork with uMap™

Align Your Team With +2/-1

Instructions: Each team member presents their top responsibilities to the rest of the team. The audience is then asked to “add 2 responsibilities” (in addition to those shown) to the presenter on sticky notes provided. While the notes are collected and organized into themes, the team is also asked to “eliminate 1” of the responsibilities shown. These are collected and organized alongside the additions to facilitate the discussion that follows.

Inevitably, the discussion will identify multiple misconceptions about the roles of team members. Some require simple clarification or explanation while others will uncover fundamental misunderstandings, or even disagreements around role definitions.

Ask teammates to “add” responsibilities to the presenter to discover where team members’ expectations are not being met. Then ask them to “eliminate” one to identify which of the presenter’s responsibilities is viewed as the lowest priority by others. The leader’s job is to drive the discussion toward determining whether themes found in the “add” column are worthy of replacing themes identified in the “eliminate” column.

The outcome of the discussion is typically:

1. Each presenter adds/replaces one or more responsibility or,
2. Re-writes responsibilities to be clearer to their teammates.

Either way, the team emerges with clarity and shared purpose. The exercise is about practicing healthy conflict, a quality that is critical to high-functioning teams.

Note: Many leadership teams alter at least 20% of their top responsibilities (including CEOs!) as a result of +2/-1.



Coach Them To A Path to Success

Once you've connected and aligned, you are prepared to coach at a higher level. It's time to bring continuous coaching into the picture. Connection and alignment go a long way for an organization, but without a sustainable way to support people's goals and initiatives, both personal and professional, the wheels of your delicately curated high-performance culture can fall off quickly.

If you've ever been on the giving or receiving end of an annual review process, you are probably relieved to realize we are departing from this practice. Coaching your people toward a path to success starts and ends with consistent and meaningful check-ins. As the word coaching implies, the focus isn't to evaluate and score overall performance. The goal, as a leader, is to understand and support a team member's role and vision for their development. The good news is, as you regular coaching becomes your norm, both recognition and accountability increase naturally.

Try using this list as you conduct your next coaching conversation.

Creating space to have these types of conversations is what will solidify the culture you're building. Not only are you making people feel heard and understood, but you're establishing a trust base point that will make difficult discussions easier.

Make it simple with uMap™

Ready for a coaching conversation?

Here are a few helpful tips to get you started. Access the full guide, [here](#).

- 1. Listen, ask, then talk.** You're here to understand how you can realize your team member's goals and potential. Listen first, then ask questions.
- 2. Cover the bases.** Ask team members to reflect on the following topics. Getting aligned and creating clarity is essential to connecting people with their path to success.
 - Professional goals
 - Progress on their current OKRs
 - Training and development goals
- 3. End with action.** Now that you've listened, discuss actionable steps both you and your team member can take to make sure that the discussion isn't wasted.



People. Purpose. Path. **Sustain.**

Sustain The Process

Follow the three Ps of coaching, and you'll soon see your people, culture, and turnover rate reap the rewards. But, if you want to keep the progress rolling, there's just one thing.

An organization is only as good as its employees, and great employees start with great managers. We call these **people-leaders**. And, the more you have, the better your retention rate will be. Here are a few signs that let you know you're in the midst of a people-leader:

- ✓ They have the trust of their team, and their team would tell you the same.
- ✓ They're committed to a growth mindset.
- ✓ They are able to recognize and honor the talents of others.
- ✓ They're deeply interested in helping their team members realize their potential.
- ✓ They go out of their way to get to know others on a deeper level.

With the right tools, like an [Influencer Report](#), identifying the people-leaders in your organization shouldn't be difficult. From rising stars to works in progress, growing great people-leaders starts with:

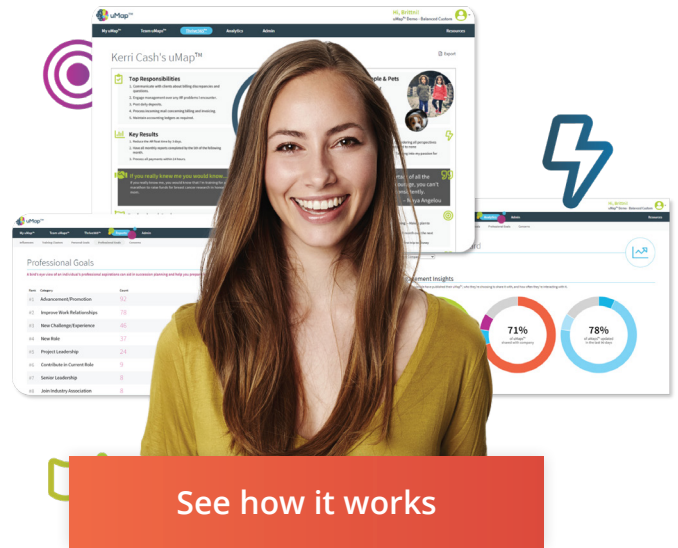
- ✓ Implementing a [platform](#) that can help them guide and support the success and well-being of themselves and their teams.
- ✓ Investing in [soft-skill training](#). Emotional intelligence is the most underrated skill in the business world. Especially when it comes to people-management.
- ✓ Committing to the process.

Make it Simple with uMap™



uMap™ makes continuous coaching simple...

With a coaching platform, high-impact engagement tools, powerful people analytics, and an unbelievably easy to navigate interface, uMap™ lets you focus on what really matters — your people.



- ✔ **Eliminate the guesswork.** uMap™ effortlessly guides managers and team members step-by-step through effective coaching tools and conversations.
- ✔ **Focus on development.** uMap™ allows managers to create development opportunities that matter most to their team.
- ✔ **Empower your people.** uMap™ allows employees to reflect on their goals, equipping their manager with the tools to coach more effectively.
- ✔ **Effectively plan for succession.** Give managers the ability to aggregate employee-authored development plans to make high-impact decisions for the future.
- ✔ **Track goals in real-time.** uMap™ prompts meaningful discussions around how to support real-time goals for actionable results.
- ✔ **Support the whole person.** uMap™ guides managers to support their team member's personal goals and aspirations, making everyone feel valued.
- ✔ **Build a people-first culture.** uMap™ forges and deepens relationships between people to connect everyone to a higher purpose within your organization.
- ✔ **Equip managers.** uMap™ sets managers up for success by offering the coaching skills necessary to effectively navigate conflict and support their team.
- ✔ **Drive performance from anywhere.** uMap™ works where you work, whether it be the office, plant floor, or home.
- ✔ **Make HR happy!** All information is stored safely and securely in the software, making it easy to see today, tomorrow, or next year.

The power of people analytics.

uMap™ helps organizations honor the whole person by equipping leaders with the information that makes work more meaningful for everyone. Here are some of their stories:

Going Above & Beyond: By gathering information about personal goals, one organization learned that a group of middle-aged men working on high-risk job sites had set personal goals to create a will. The company chose to honor their wishes by bringing in counsel, negotiating a preferred rate and paying for the service on behalf of their employees. The loyalty that was created thanks to their commitment to not only their employees, but their families, was immeasurable.

Win-Win Situation: When aggregating training needs and professional goals, an organization discovered that numerous employees listed the same training needs. At the same time, a department leader expressed interest in launching a training program around the same topic. They were able to honor the wishes of a group of employees, as well as support the professional goals of one its rising stars. When you ask the right questions, you never know what you might find.