



**TRAIN
LIKE A
CHAMPION**

MAYHEM AFFILIATE

COACH TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

More than anything else in your business, your coaching team has the biggest impact on your athletes' experience. They are the day-to-day face of the business. Thus, it's crucial to train your coaches in both the methods you want them to adhere to and the values you'd like them to uphold.

Once you hire a new coach, the onboarding process begins. The first question you need to consider is, what is their base of knowledge in coaching CrossFit? Do they hold a CrossFit Trainer Certification? What level? We recommend that all of your coaches hold at least a CrossFit Level 1 Trainer Certification. You can view L1 courses near you here: <https://www.crossfit.com/certificate-courses/level-1>

If your new coach isn't certified yet, you may want to consider reimbursing for a portion or all of the certification fee. Another option is to pay for some/all of the course under an agreement that the new coach will work to pay you back. For example, you could offer to pay for their certification and they agree to coach their first 30 classes unpaid (if they make \$20/class, that would be \$600, which is about half of the certification fee).

The next thing to consider is their coaching experience. Have they ever coached before? For how long? Did they coach CrossFit classes or another type of fitness? Are you planning to have them coach beginners, adults, kids, teens, the elderly, adaptive athletes, or another group? If so, do they have experience coaching these groups, or do they need extra training in these areas?

Now that you know what areas need to be addressed, you need to train them in YOUR way of fitness. Even if they've been coaching CrossFit for years, they still need to be trained in how you do things at your gym. New coaches must understand your core values, core focus, and align with your brand and what you stand for.

Here are the phases we recommend for the coach onboarding process. The length of time spent in each phase will vary depending on their experience level. Remember, we recommend that they hold at least a CrossFit Level 1 Trainer Certification before continuing on.

PHASE ONE: SHADOWING A MENTOR/EDUCATION:

Shadowing: After a new coach is hired, regardless of their coaching experience, they should start by shadowing another coach. Shadowing is where a new coach observes another coach while they lead classes. This process allows new coaches to learn how to work the training floor. There are simple things to learn like how to display the workout, how to work the music, and how to set the workout clock. More importantly, this is also where novice coaches will learn how to spot movement flaws, give feedback queues, and make modifications and on-the-fly decisions that are required by coaches on a regular basis. For example, they need to learn how to address situations like when an athlete needs an alternate movement in a workout due to injury or limited experience.

During any class that is shadowed, the mentor coach should introduce the trainee coach to the class and explain that they will be shadowing as part of their coach development. This helps eliminate confusion and also shows your members that you take coaching development very seriously.

It's very important to choose the correct coach or coaches to lead these shadow sessions. It can be you or another great coach from your team.

This person should have:

- Great presence and attitude
- Good eye contact
- Great communication skills
- The ability to provide excellent visual, verbal, and tactile cues to athletes while coaching
- Great time management, both in getting to work on time and in leading the class in a timely manner throughout the session. Their classes don't run over or end too soon and they can appropriately fill the class time.
- The ability to multitask and create side conversations with the new coach throughout the class. For example, they should be able to instruct an athlete and then turn to the trainee and say, "Did you see what I did there? This is why..." - all the while still focusing on class.
- The ability to educate versus simply listing steps. What we mean here is the ability to ask questions throughout the class like, "Why do you think I just did that?" or "How would you handle this situation?". The coach should be able to give the trainee an education on the hows and whys of coaching versus simply listing the steps of running a class.

Ideally, the same coach will be their mentor throughout the shadow process. But, if for scheduling purposes, this isn't possible, then it's ok to have multiple mentors. In this scenario, choose the best qualities of each mentor and explain to the trainee what they should observe from each person

For example:

“Today you will be shadowing Brandon. He’s really good at giving coaching queues to athletes during class. This is what I want you to absorb from him today. Tomorrow you’ll be shadowing Kaitlyn. She’s really good with her presence and attitude and really showcases the brand with her personality and energy. This is what I want you to absorb from her tomorrow.”

Education: In addition to shadowing during phase one, trainees should also sit down with ideally you, the owner, weekly to learn about your unique beliefs in fitness. Discuss who you are as a company, what CrossFit is, your gym’s history, your gym’s core values, and how you promote your values to members. These sit-downs should be in your office or other quiet space, like a coffee shop.

The duration of phase one will vary greatly depending on the new coach’s experience level, coaching knowledge, familiarity with your gym, and coaching abilities. On average, 20-30 hours split between shadowing and education is needed. Once you feel that they’re ready to start leading classes, you can move on to phase two

PHASE TWO: BEING SHADOWED / ADVANCED EDUCATION

Being Shadowed: In phase two, the new coach will start leading classes while their mentor shadows them and gives assistance as needed. If possible, try to keep the same coach pairing as in the previous phase. The mentor coach should have a checklist during class that they can use to assess the trainee’s strengths and weaknesses. Then, after each class, they can review the checklist with the trainee and let them know “This is what you did really well”, “This is what we need to work on”, and “This is how I’m going to help you improve”.

What does this checklist look like? You as the owner should come up with these criteria on your own. To do this, observe 10-20 classes from your other coaches and write down all of the things you like and don’t like about how your coaches are leading classes. Then, sit down and use this information to come up with your own coach criteria checklist. This checklist can also be used as part of performance reviews for all of your coaches (discussed further below).

Advanced Education: you should continue to schedule weekly one-on-one meetings with your new coach and begin discussing more advanced education topics such as scaling options and modifications.

Again, the duration of this phase will vary greatly depending on the new coach's experience level, coaching knowledge, familiarity with your gym, and coaching abilities. On average, about 30-40 hours split between education and being shadowed is needed. Once you feel that they're ready to start leading classes, you can move on to phase two. Once you feel that they are ready to start leading classes completely on their own, move on to phase three.

PHASE THREE: COACHING ON THEIR OWN / PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Coaching on their own: Now the new coach should be ready to instruct on their own. Although they'll probably start out as more of a robot clone of their mentor, they will soon begin to develop their own creative style based on your methodologies. It's truly amazing to watch a fresh coach blossom as they find their own personality and coaching style.

Performance Reviews We recommend having performance reviews for your new coach, and existing coaches, once per quarter. You can use the checklist that was discussed in phase two to assist with these reviews.

We also recommend that you observe at least one class per month from each of your coaches. As part of your checklist, observe their:

- Class punctuality (showing up for class early to prepare)
- Time management (filling the class time effectively, not running over or ending too soon)
- Appearance (are they dressed appropriately to lead the class according to your dress code coaching standards)
- Presence and attitude
- Coaching abilities: visual, verbal, tactile queues
- Ability to correctly modify and scale movements as needed
- The average number of touch points per person per class - we recommend that each athlete be individually addressed by the coach at least twice per class. They should also be addressing each athlete by name.

You can also use anonymous customer surveys with your members to help evaluate your team. SurveyMonkey is a great option for this (<https://www.surveymonkey.com>), as is Google Forms (<https://www.google.com/forms/about>).

At these performance reviews, you should also ask each coach what they love about their coaching job and why, what would they change, and do they feel that they are being compensated fairly. Building this type of relationship with each member of your coaching team will increase their job satisfaction and allow them to feel open to providing positive feedback on ways to help your business thrive.

Once your new coach has been on their own for at least 2-3 months and appears to have a firm grasp on coaching, you can then move on to phase 4.

PHASE FOUR: BUSINESS PERFORMANCE - RESPONSIBILITIES BEYOND COACHING

Outside of coaching classes, what business functions would you like your new coach to be responsible for? It's now time to start teaching these processes.

Do you want them to create social media content? How often should they post? Should they be commenting and engaging regularly with members on the gym's Facebook page?

Will your new coach be leading free trial classes and giving tours? If so, do they know how to close a membership sale after these free trials? Will they be responsible for adding the new customer and membership information to the system after?

Do you want them to reach out to athletes in certain scenarios, such as if someone who's a regular in their classes hasn't attended in a while? Do they know how to pull a report to show this information and how to get their email address?

These are just a few examples. Now that your new coach has a good grasp on coaching, you may want to give them a few of these additional responsibilities. But take it slow, one thing at a time. You don't want to overwhelm them or compromise any aspect of their coaching.

Team-based compensation plans: Having a team of coaches who really care about the business side of things and want to see the company thrive can really help your business run smoothly from all aspects. One option here is to create team-based compensation plans.

Create a team incentive for a business metric that you want your gym to hit. For example, you could set a goal of having 20 new people try out a free trial class next month. If this goal is met, everyone on the team gets an extra \$XX in their paycheck. This gives your coaches an added incentive to make great social media posts about coming in for a free class and to talk with members about bringing a friend on "Bring a Friend" day.

Make sure this business performance team is only comprised of coaches who are all in and truly care about helping the business. You don't want someone getting paid extra who puts forth no extra effort to reach the goal.

FINAL THOUGHT:

It can be very helpful to document the entire process you go through with new coach hires. Record or write summary notes on each education session and shadow session. You can also make a list of articles and videos that you recommend new coaches review to help them become better coaches. There are a lot of movement coaching videos out there that can be a huge help for new CrossFit coaches. If you document your entire onboarding process, it can make new coach hires a much easier process. Plus, you can constantly improve the process and update your documentation, leading to the best onboarding experience possible for your gym.