

Focus on Coaching – Manager’s Development Programme

What is coaching?

Coaching is a discussion-based process that can help your team member feel more empowered, make sound decisions, develop knowledge, increase skills and remove perceived barriers to success – all (broadly) without ‘telling’. It generates these things through the manager asking questions that make the team member think about the specifics of a subject. It encourages creativity in searching for solutions and clarifies decisions.

What to coach

People learn and grow the most when they discover the ‘answers’ for themselves. Because of this, there’s not many things that don’t lend themselves to a coaching approach. That said, sometimes there are faster or better ways for them to acquire those ‘answers’.

How to coach

The decision to use coaching is often, but not always made based on the coach’s evaluation of the situation and the person. It is simply a discussion, led by questions and backed up by observations and reflection. When done well, the coach demonstrates their non-judgemental approach and curious nature. This is not always easy when (sometimes) the coach happens also to be the manager – with a vested interest in the potential outcome of the coaching conversation.

Being non-judgemental encourages the coachee to be more open with their thoughts and feelings and as such allows for a fuller exploration of the subject of the coaching. This should ensure that the outcomes are well thought through and wisely chosen.

We’ve attached a sheet for you to drive your own self-study. Try using the internet to gather further detail or subscribe to our Coaching for Managers eLearning module. If you’ve received this document as part of a development programme, feel free to bring it along to the workshop – it may prove useful. We’ve also included two popular models – GROW & Egan’s Skilled Helper.



Notes from the video:

The coaching attributes

When to coach

What to coach

The micro-skills

Coaching – my self-assessment....



G.R.O.W Coaching Model

'Goal' questions

- 🌀 Talk me through what it is you are looking to do
- 🌀 When do you want it by?
- 🌀 What would you like from the next 30 minutes?
- 🌀 What area of your work would you like to focus on?
- 🌀 What impact will it have for you to achieve this goal?
- 🌀 How will you know when you have achieved it?
- 🌀 What do you want instead of the issue or problem?
- 🌀 What is important to you right now?
- 🌀 What do you want to achieve?
- 🌀 What would you like to discuss today?

'Reality' questions

- 🌀 Where are you in relation to your goal?
- 🌀 What are the risks?
- 🌀 Which is the biggest blocker & how do you get round it?
- 🌀 How much control do you have over this situation?
- 🌀 What do you need to know that you currently do not?
- 🌀 What do you already know to be true about the situation?
- 🌀 What is stopping you getting what you want?
- 🌀 What is holding you back?
- 🌀 What is the present situation in more detail?
- 🌀 What have you tried so far?
- 🌀 Tell me what is happening at the moment?

'Options' questions

- 🌀 Are you ready to make a selection from the options available?
- 🌀 What options do you have?
- 🌀 Who else do you know that has already achieved this?
- 🌀 What else can you bring from past successes?
- 🌀 What else might you do?
- 🌀 What could you do differently?
- 🌀 How can you affect the outcome?
- 🌀 What might others do in this situation?
- 🌀 And what else?
- 🌀 What can you do to change the situation?



'Way forward' questions

- 🌀 When precisely are you going to take each action step?
- 🌀 What support do you need and from whom?
- 🌀 What would move your commitment up by 2 more points?
- 🌀 On a scale of 1-10, rate your commitment to taking this agreed action?
- 🌀 What is the next step?
- 🌀 When will you have achieved your goal?
- 🌀 What potential obstacles are there?
- 🌀 When will you start?
- 🌀 Who needs to know?
- 🌀 What are the first steps?

'Recaps'

- 🌀 In summary then, you have agreed to... (repeat the actions and specific time scales or dates of the agreed actions)
- 🌀 Just recapping the session so far... (Your goal is...The current situation is...and the options so far are...)
- 🌀 If I heard you correctly... (summarise the current situation using the coachee's words)
- 🌀 So to recap; you said... (repeat the coachee's goal or objective in their words)

Nb. These are only intended to highlight the type of questions you might ask and to provide structure for your coaching conversations. Your own questions will be far more powerful and thought provoking – use those instead.



Egan's Skilled Helper Model

Introduction

This is a model used a lot in coaching situations where the object is to achieve lasting change and to empower people to manage their own problems more effectively and develop unused opportunities more fully. As much of a coach's role is to encourage, support and guide their coachee to help themselves, this is a particularly useful framework.

The model has three stages which can be summarised as:

- 🌀 Exploration - What is going on?
- 🌀 Challenging - What do I want instead?
- 🌀 How might I achieve what I want?

Since the biggest part of successful coaching does not lay in the structure but in the skill of the coach, a lot of what happens in this model is analogous to other models. The differentiation with Egan's model comes in the execution – this model does not require 'completion' of all stages. Indeed, other models would also benefit from making it clear that coaching does not necessarily require formal 'completion'. You will note that Egan's model does require the coach to facilitate a very detailed 'exploration' of the coachee's view of the situation or challenge that they face.

Stage 1: Exploration

The first task is to find out your coachee's story about what is happening in their own words and then to reflect it back to them, without judgement. This involves:

- 🌀 Attention giving - positive body language, eye contact, etc.
- 🌀 Active listening - leaning forward, nodding, focusing on what is being said not what you plan to say in response
- 🌀 Acceptance and empathy - it is vital to detach from your judgement about what you are being told. Keep your views to yourself if want to find out what's really going on. Nobody opens up in a situation where they feel judged
- 🌀 Paraphrasing and summarising - to check your own understanding of what has been said
- 🌀 Focusing - which of the issues discussed seems the most important to the coachee? Reflecting feelings - help coachee's to uncover blind spots or gaps in their perceptions and assessment of the situation. Useful questions: Is there anything you've overlooked? Any other way of looking at it?
- 🌀 Questioning - useful questions are:
 - How did you feel about that?
 - What were you thinking?
 - What was that like?
 - What else is there about that?



For some people, this is enough. Reflecting and clarifying makes the way forward obvious. However, when upset or confronted, it is often difficult to see things clearly and find one's own way out of the mire. The skilled helper can assist in identifying the blind spots, misconceptions and misperceptions. Hence stage two.

Stage 2: Challenging

This stage involves challenging existing views - one issue at a time. Encourage the coachee to think about whether there is another way of looking at the issue. The coachee is encouraged to challenge their own viewpoint and the coach will ensure that they continue to suspend their own judgement, encouraging the coachee to think carefully about those alternative perspectives. It is permissible to adopt a 'devil's advocate' view in the 'third person'. Some useful questions to do this are:

- 🌀 Some people might say....how do you respond to...?
- 🌀 What might this look like from another person's point of view?
- 🌀 What in particular about this is a problem for you?
- 🌀 What don't you know?
- 🌀 What are the risks in.....?
- 🌀 If you were describing someone else in this situation, how would you describe them?
- 🌀 What does s/he think/feel?
- 🌀 Goal setting - this is where you seek to move the person forward from being stuck, by identifying an area in which progress can be made.

Stage 3: Action Planning

Useful questions here include:

- 🌀 What are the possible ways forward in this situation?
- 🌀 What of these feels best for you?
- 🌀 What will you achieve if you do this?
- 🌀 What will you do first and by when?
- 🌀 What would someone else do in this situation?
- 🌀 What issues will remain if you did that?
- 🌀 Why wouldn't you just.....?

Your goal is to turn good intentions into actual results, so it is important to help your coachee to set realistic, practical and achievable targets. Make sure the targets are specific and measurable so the coachee can know they have been achieved.

Gerald Egan, *The Skilled Helper: a problem management and opportunity development approach to helping* (7th edition, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole, 2002) and Gerald Egan, *Essentials of Skilled Helping: managing problems, developing opportunities* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole, 2006).

