

Why Coaching Works

Research shows that there are three factors that make all the difference:



Autonomy

The belief that you can control your own life.



Relatedness

Feeling connected with others in a positive way that encourages trust and liking.



Competence

Knowing that you have and use valuable skills, qualities and abilities.

Coaching works because it is entirely based on psychologically proven principles: the more you encourage **autonomy, relatedness and competence**, the more confident people will be and the better the work they will do.

The opposite is also true: the more you rob people of autonomy through excessive controls, neglect to create mutually positive relationships and deny them opportunities to develop competence, the worse their performance will become.

Coaching is now widely recognised as one of the most effective ways of developing people, and a powerful approach to managing performance.

Unlike training, which will normally involve a group of people and is time-limited, coaching is a focused, one-to-one method that can take place any day, any time. It is about sustainability and long-term impact on both the individual and the organisation.

When Coaching isn't the Answer

It is equally important that the coach knows their limitations and recognises situations that are better addressed by another route. For example, someone may have issues better addressed by a therapist, or their underperformance at work may be better addressed by a capability approach.

Coaching is often referred to as being 'for the worried well'. The focus on coaching is on the future – what do you want to achieve? It is suitable for people who have the inner resources and willingness to move forward, it is not suitable for those people who do not have the inner resources or the willingness to change.

Julie Starr (2008) suggests that a coach with no relevant counselling skills should avoid the following:



Where someone has (or the issue relates to) on-going dependency on alcohol or drugs.



Where someone has experienced abuse of any type.



Where someone is abusing others.



Where someone suffers from mental illness such as extreme mood swings, on-going depression etc.

It is important to remember that there are some individuals for whom coaching may not work. This may be because their 'problems' are best dealt with by another type of intervention (such as counselling, occupational therapy, capability or disciplinary procedures) or, it may be because their attitude may interfere with the effectiveness of coaching.

Coaching

for change



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Our Values

Service Teamwork Ambition Respect

What is coaching?

There are a number of definitions of what coaching is. However, there is widespread agreement on the following descriptions:

Coaching is the art of facilitating another person's learning, development and performance. Through coaching, people are able to find their own solutions, develop their own skills and change their own behaviours and attitudes.

Coaching is an ongoing process designed to help employees gain greater competence and overcome barriers to improving performance.

- ✚ **Coaching involves a change of behaviour and attitude.**
- ✚ **Coaching can help maximise performance and deliver 'Performance Management.'**
- ✚ **Coaching enables others to achieve goals by using their own inner resources.**

The essence of coaching is that it encourages people to take responsibility for themselves, to experience themselves as powerful, to continue learning, to be creative in problem-solving, to take charge of their own development, to be able to make excellent decisions and to fulfil their potential.

'Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance.' *Source: Coaching for Performance: Sir John Whitmore Pre-Course Reading for ILM Level 5 Coaching and Mentoring*

Coaching and other similar activities

Coaching is not the same as some other methods of developing people, though it shares a number of common strands with them. These are the main differences:

Similar or related disciplines	Coaching
Therapy and counselling: Assumes the person is ill and needs a 'cure'/help and has temporarily lost their sense of resourcefulness	Coaching assumes the person is well and can solve their own problems; typically has a strong focus on goals. It is 'work' rather than 'help'
Training: Owned by the trainer; working to an external curriculum. The assumption is that knowledge will pass from trainer to trainee	Coaching is owned by the coachee; there is no external curriculum or timetable. The coach does not assume that he or she necessarily has knowledge that the coachee lacks
Mentoring: Assumes the mentor is older, wiser and knows best. A mentor offers trusted advice based on experience	Coaching assumes the coachee knows best. The coach rarely offers advice but encourages coachees to wrestle with problems themselves
Appraisal: A formal part of the control system happening at infrequent intervals and is a judgement by the manager on the appraisee	Coaching is an informal process of development that can happen every day; judgement on performance is only a small part of what takes place
All of the above: Have a power differential: the mentor, therapist, trainer assume the more 'senior' role	Coaching is far more a relationship of equals: for purposes of the conversation, even where one person (the manager) is technically more senior than the other

What does coaching involve?

Coaching is the very opposite of telling someone what to do. The effective coach uses questions to help raise the awareness and understanding of the person they are coaching.

Coaching is essentially the art of asking good questions, and of knowing when and how to ask, and of course to actively listen to the answer.

Effective coaches have the ability to, and more importantly the willingness to:

- ✚ **Ask effective questions**
- ✚ **Actively listen and reflect back**
- ✚ **Remain detached and non-judgemental**
- ✚ **Be patient and supportive**
- ✚ **Build rapport and empathy**
- ✚ **Give and receive feedback**

Coaching, in its purest form, is creating a space for an individual to come and find answers to their own questions. It assumes the individual has the answers to the questions they ask of themselves. They just may not be able to get at those answers as they are covered up by layers of life experience, beliefs, conflicting understandings, and anything else that may come up.

A coach's job, therefore, is to support the coachee to make their journey from A to B, quicker and more effectively than they might on their own.

One of the key benefits of coaching is that it is a sustained intervention – the coachee and the coach connect on a regular basis and the coachee's progress can be closely monitored.

Coaching is widely recognised as a method of developing employees to enhance organisational performance. Coaching is one of the most effective ways of unlocking potential and creating an empowering atmosphere at work.