



**CROWN AGENTS**

ACCELERATING SELF-SUFFICIENCY & PROSPERITY

# COACHING SKILLS AND BEHAVIOUR FOR LEADERS

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## WHAT IS COACHING?

**Coaching is about facilitating the performance, learning and development of another person. It enables people to perform better by building on their current knowledge. You are not trying to 'teach' a person when coaching. It is about allowing that individual to learn by unlocking their potential and maximising performance.**

Coaching is a conversation, or series of conversations, between two people. Such conversations benefit the learner's thinking, actions and learning in a way that would have been unlikely if they had not had the discussion.

A coach can work alongside individuals to improve their performance at work, regardless of whether or not they could do that work themselves. They help people to see opportunities for improvement and practical ways forward for themselves.

A coach uses a blend of observation, talking, listening, questioning and reflecting back to the learner. During the conversation, the coach encourages the learner to identify goals and objectives, to rise to challenges, to overcome obstacles and to move to action. When things don't go well, the coach supports the learner and helps them to reflect on their learning from the experience. When things go well, they help the learner to pinpoint what worked so they can do it again.

Coaching is being adopted by many organisations as a style of leadership. Leaders are learning to use coaching with their staff through being coached themselves. Instead of directing staff and giving detailed instructions on how to approach a task, they enable their staff to resolve challenges for themselves by providing support, challenge, feedback and guidance, but rarely answers.

The leader's focus is on enabling their staff to perform independently of them and to take personal responsibility for their own success. Time is spent on objective setting, one-to-one meetings and team meetings. Leaders who coach improve staff productivity, morale and job satisfaction. They find that their staff are less dependent on them, which in turn reduces pressure on themselves and frees up time to focus on other priorities. Thus, coaching is a process that benefits the manager, their staff and the organisation.

### COACHING

THE ART OF FACILITATING THE UNLASHING OF PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL TO REACH MEANINGFUL IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES. IT IS ABOUT UNLOCKING A PERSON'S POTENTIAL TO MAXIMISE THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE; IT IS HELPING THEM TO LEARN.

### MENTORING

IS CONCERNED WITH THE LONGER-TERM ACQUISITION OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN A DEVELOPING CAREER BY GIVING ADVICE AND SHARING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. MENTORS ARE EXPERTS IN THE SPECIFIC FIELDS IN WHICH THEY ARE SUPPORTING OTHERS; THE RELATIONSHIP IS USUALLY OUTSIDE OF ANY LINE MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP.

# WHAT ARE THE **BENEFITS** OF COACHING?

Fill out the below sections:

Benefits to the **INDIVIDUAL**



Benefits to the **COACH**



Benefits to the **ORGANISATION**





# COACHING OPPORTUNITIES

## 01 PLANNED COACHING

**Planned coaching is where you, or your staff member or colleague, have identified a development opportunity or requirement, and you agree that working together on this would be useful.**

Planned coaching may be a one-off conversation, or a series of conversations. You can use planned coaching with a very capable member of staff who has high potential, with an average reliable performer, or with someone whose work is not meeting expectations.

Examples of where planned coaching would be appropriate are where your colleague or team member:

- is learning a new skill
- is assuming additional responsibilities
- has received some negative feedback
- returns from a course and wants to consolidate their learning
- is new to the department.

## 02 IMPROMPTU COACHING


**Impromptu coaching happens on the spur of the moment. It happens when you spot the opportunity to turn a problem or question into an informal coaching conversation.**

An example might be where your colleague or member of staff tells you that they have to call someone who is unhappy with the work that they had done. They ask, "If you were me, what would you say?"

Rather than giving your advice, or describing how you have handled a similar situation in the past, you could ask questions such as:

- "What are your main concerns?" "How justified is their criticism?"
- "What will you do if they are unwilling to listen to your explanation?" "What would be a reasonable offer to make to them?"
- "How will you prepare for the call?"

The person may well be unaware that they are being coached but will know that they are being helped in working out their problem. By asking them questions, they will be better prepared for the call, will have considered wider options for action, will have reduced some of their emotion and will therefore be more likely to have a successful call.



THE MOST COMMON WAY TO START AN IMPROMPTU COACHING DISCUSSION IS BY REFLECTING SUCH QUESTIONS AS **"WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO DO?"** OR **"WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD BE THE BEST THING TO DO?"** BACK TO THE LEARNER.



# A PROCEDURE FOR COACHING SUCCESS - STRUCTURE OF COACHING

The actual process of coaching is a relatively simple one. However, without proper planning and preparation it can often be disastrous. Team members are often 'coached' with no awareness of what is expected of them in the first place. This can create confusion, frustration and eventual stress.

To avoid this happening, it is useful to follow a procedure, not just for the actual coaching session, but for the entire process. The following is a method of doing this:



## **Agree requirements and expected standards**

Here we should clearly define and agree the job role and the standards of performance and the skills/behaviours necessary to achieve them.

## **Monitor performance against agreed standards**

Once we have the performance standards in place, it becomes easier to monitor performance against them. Here we should establish if the individual is meeting the requirements of the role.

## **Coaching conversation**

Here we should use effective communication methods to maximise the outcome of the session and explore development actions. This task has become easier as the individual now knows what is expected of them in the role and what they need to work towards. The outcome from this session is a focused action plan.

## **Evaluate the impact**

This stage is about evaluating the success of the coaching session. Assessing what the individual is doing differently and the effects this is having on their results. Here you should also test the effectiveness of your own coaching methods. What success are you having? Do you need to alter your coaching behaviour?

## **Integrate best practice**

This last stage is where you integrate the successes you have achieved. Too often we only evaluate things when they go wrong. Ask yourself, what is going right and how can we include that in our day-to-day work?

Once you have reached the final stage you should return to the monitoring stage. It is not necessary to agree roles continually (in most circumstances). However, you may wish to do this from time to time.





# GROW FRAMEWORK

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The GROW framework provides a simple four-step structure for a coaching conversation.

## WAY AHEAD/WILL

- Commit to action
- Identify possible obstacles
- Make steps specific and define timing
- Agree support

## GOAL

- Agree topic for discussion
- Agree specific objective of session
- Set long-term aim if appropriate

## REALITY

- Invite self-assessment
- Offer specific examples of feedback
- Identify and challenge assumptions and faulty thinking
- Discard irrelevant history
- Establish gap between reality and goal

## OPTIONS

- Invite suggestions from the learner
- Offer suggestions carefully
- Identify and challenge assumptions and faulty thinking
- Consider pros and cons
- Make choices; prioritise

