PharmaSUG 2023 - Paper LD-178

Schoveing Series 6: Practical Tips for Effective Coaching for Leaders and Managers in Organizations

Dr. Priscilla Gathoni, Wakanyi Enterprises Inc., Gaithersburg, MD, USA

ABSTRACT

As an executive or senior-level member of the organization, do you wish you had better skills in coaching, similar to a skilled professional? As a people manager, do you want to help your team members improve their performance in all aspects important to them? Do you find it challenging to manage people and their problems? Is developing a coaching mindset hindering you from being truly present in your coaching conversations? Do you struggle to handle different personality types? Coaching is a vital tool for every leader and manager to have at their disposal if they are committed to fulfilling and advancing the potential of their individuals and teams and improving organizational commitment. Coaching relationships are built upon truth, openness, and trust and allow the person being coached to be responsible for their own results and think creatively. Well-executed coaching empowers individuals to take action, increase their personal performance and professional effectiveness in problem-solving and decision-making skills, and influence others. We will explore the value of coaching, when to coach, coaching mistakes, and six practical tips for becoming an invaluable coach for your organization and your coaching business.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are now recognizing the benefits of integrating coaching into everyday activities for executives, leaders, and managers. However, despite the simplicity of the various tools and techniques available for coaching, most executives, leaders, and managers still find it challenging to put some aspects of coaching into practice. The purpose of this paper is to provide you with practical tips for effective coaching as a leader or manager. These tips can be put into practice immediately and help with everyday situations you face during coaching conversations.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF COACHING?

In the book, *The Oscar Coaching Model*, Andrew Gilbert and Karen Whittleworth have suggested that coaching encourages the individual to take action to increase personal performance and professional effectiveness in problem-solving and decision-making skills as well as influencing others. In addition, coaching provides a lower cost-benefit ratio than many other developmental approaches, is results-focused, builds personal commitment to learning and professional and personal development, and helps improve team involvement, engagement, and motivation. Coaching can also be viewed as a conduit to help people cope with transition and manage anxiety created by increased complexity and uncertainty in the busy corporate world.

In the *Coaching Book*, Nicole Soames points out that a manager may need to wear different hats when training, managing, mentoring, or coaching. Therefore, it's vital to establish absolute clarity about coaching expectations. For example, personal development should be the focus during coaching one to ones and not giving business updates during that time. To better support your employees during the coaching conversations, they must know when you are in a coaching mode so that you would not be providing them the answers you do when you are the manager, trainer, or mentor. Consequently, as a manager, you must ensure that you respect the

coach's point of view and that you are impartial during these conversations. The key here is to build trust and rapport and ensure that there is no conflict of interest during the coaching conversation. If there are internal politics, it is always prudent to put your hand up and find someone else to coach the person instead.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR BECOMING AN INVALUABLE COACH

DEVELOPING A COACHING MINDSET

First, let us explore some of the coaching mistakes. The most common coaching mistakes include the following:

- Working too hard
- Failing to ask the person being coached how you can be helpful
- Talking too much
- Owning the outcome
- Giving well-meaning advice that is not needed
- Finishing without a commitment
- Assuming that the person who is being coached is a challenge to overcome or a problem to be fixed
- Steering the coaching conversation toward the path that you know best
- Failing to say what is needed
- Trying to be a great coach

Once you have understood the coaching mistakes, developing and maintaining an open, flexible, curious, and person-centered coaching mindset is the next step. Nicole Soames observes that a great coach would leverage emotional intelligence so that they're able to think in the moment. A great coach should draw on this self-knowledge to understand the impact they have on the individual (employee), self-control to be genuinely present in the moment, self-confidence to silence any self-doubt, and self-reliance to believe you have the tools and techniques at your fingertips to help the individual (employee) be the best that they can be. In addition, a coach should have empathy to put themselves in the individual's shoes and build a relationship based on trust and a rapport that is straightforward and open. Furthermore, a coach should always use self-awareness and also their own experience to benefit others and, at the same time, develop an ongoing reflective practice that will enhance their personal coaching skills.

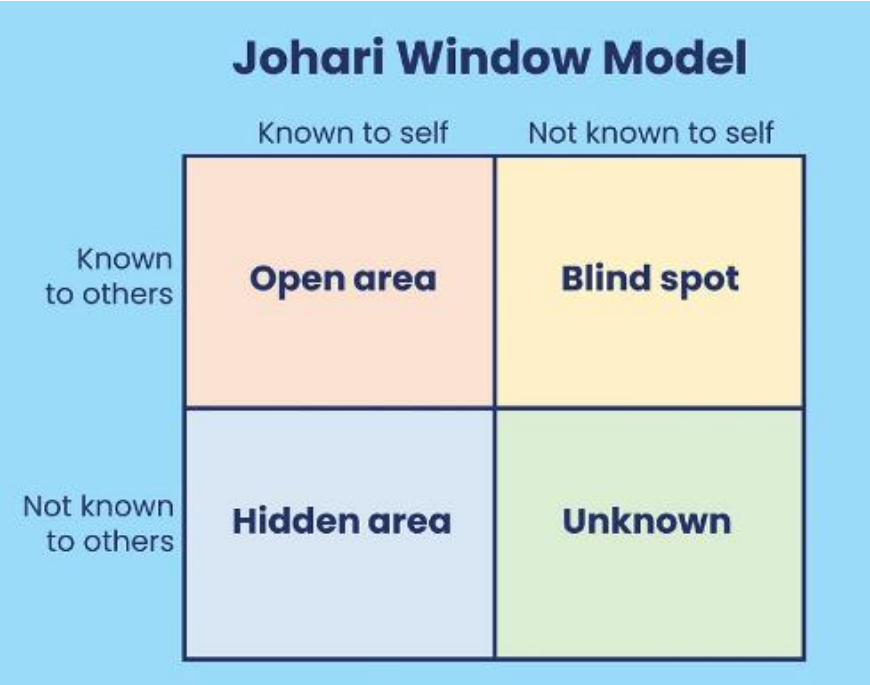
A coach should mentally and emotionally prepare for the coaching sessions and develop and maintain the ability to regulate their emotions. Self-management involves making sure that you are taking advantage of any learning and development programs. As a coach, you should facilitate growth in others which means that you should acknowledge your team members are responsible for their own choices. Lastly, be open to your influence on the context and culture of those you coach.

In my experience as a leader and as a people manager, my strategy was always long-term, and along came to develop my people. Competing and project deadlines became easy to manage and execute. A successful executive leader must have a coaching mindset that you are a player and a coach. This real shift in mindset allowed me to govern and manage my people using emotional intelligence tactics such as self-control, self-knowing, self-confidence, self-reliance,

and an optimistic and positive view of my employees. In addition, I was ideal so that I could adapt to different personality types believing that a solution could be found when I coached my employees. By combining the aforementioned emotional intelligence skills, a coach can move from good to great and become a coach who successfully manages and controls the coaching conversation. Remember that a coach is a fearless leader who instills fearlessness in their people.

IDENTIFYING WHO NEEDS COACHING

As a coach, you should remember to focus on the individual's potential and current performance. Using tools such as the *Skill and Will Matrix* or the *Johari Window* can necessitate this type of focus (Landsberg, 2015). Using tools such as the Johari Window allows you to identify when your employees would benefit from either performance or development coaching, training, or being managed closely. Remember, not everyone needs coaching. However, it is essential to understand that coaching alone is not enough to enable your employee to reach their full potential; a blended approach to learning and development is necessary so that you can constantly judge what is suitable for each individual at a particular time so that you give them the appropriate level of support. Remember, there is no ONE way of doing things.



The Johari Window is a personal development technique developed by a team of psychologists. As a coach, you should look at the window from the perspective of the person you're going to coach. For example, the open area shows what is known to others as well as themselves, the blindspot is what is known to others but not known to themselves, the unknown area is what is not known to others or to themselves, and the hidden area is what is not known to others but is known to themselves. As a manager or leader coach, you need to harness your emotional intelligence to judge whether members of your team have any blind spots or hidden

concerns that could be helped through coaching. Remember to gather feedback first so that you have a balanced view of the area where your employee needs coaching.

BEING TRULY PRESENT IN THE MOMENT

Every leader and manager should draw on their emotional intelligence and deeply listen to their employees (Goleman, 1996). Listening is a learned skill, and a leader should make every effort to listen actively. Your employee can easily spot when the coach is practicing cosmetic or selective listening, which results in a lack of trust and rapport in the coaching relationship. Many authors have pointed out that listening at the moment allows the coach to process exactly what the client is saying and see things from their perspective (See Recommended Reading). Being present requires empathic listening that makes your employee feel valued and essential and thereby building trust in the long term. Being genuinely present requires one to ask effective questions so that you understand as opposed to being understood, being aware of barriers that hinder your listening, staying focused, and capturing and checking the messages through summarization.

As a coach, you have invaluable work of reducing any amount of interference in your head and the head of the person you're coaching so that you're both able to be truly present during the coaching sessions. Many internal dialogues will interfere with your coaching sessions, such as figuring out how the conversation will go, the person being coached feeling apprehensive about the upcoming coaching session, or perhaps feeling that you didn't pitch a particular question in the right way during coaching. Be fully aware of this interference and take practical steps to try to reduce them. You do this by preparing everything needed for the session well before you start your coaching session. Likewise, choose a quiet place to hold your coaching conversations and ask your employee for full attention during the coaching conversation. Personally, I always have 30 minutes before each coaching session to prepare, and I always have a blank page open with the client's name and the date of the session. This allows me to focus and clear my mind and also scale down any noise that may be going on in my head.

HANDLING DIFFERENT PERSONALITY TYPES

Human behavior is mostly linked back to what a person believes and considers important. An effective coach strives to understand what and how the values and beliefs of the individual being coached affect their behavior and environment. Bringing this awareness to your employee enables them to identify and overcome their blind spots or areas for development. As a leader or manager coach, you should recognize any self-limiting beliefs that influence or undermine your self-confidence and cause you to doubt your coaching ability.

Furthermore, handling the different personalities that you have in your team requires effective questioning. Effective questioning is characterized by a coaching mindset that shifts from me to them, which means being objective, open-minded, facilitative, and empowering in the questioning technique (Kline, 1999). Leading and managing global teams requires strategic communication with each team member and working with each individual. For example, coaching my teams in India and USA needed a different strategy from coaching my teams in UK and Europe. Each culture was different, and each individual was coached as an individual. You must learn and appreciate the different cultures within the organization and make every effort to

include that when building your coaching relationship.

COACHING YOUR TEAM

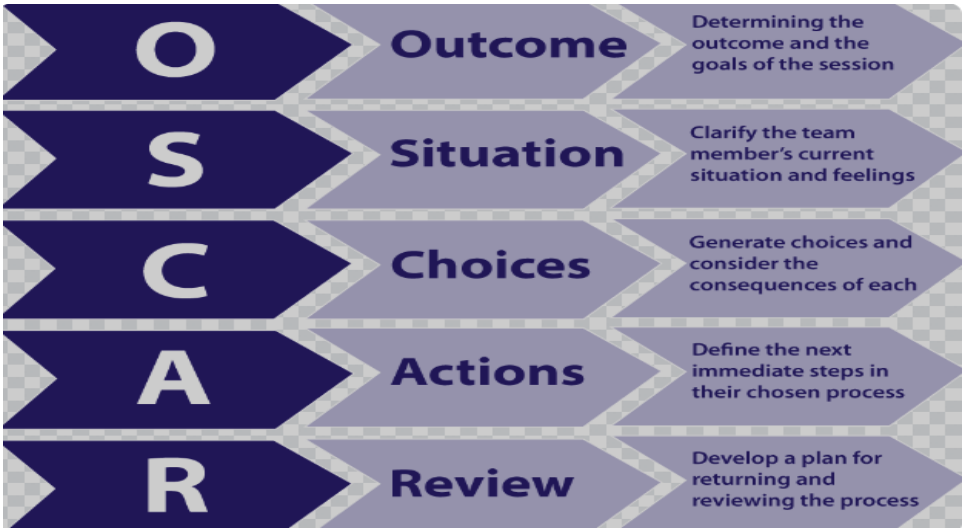
When coaching your team, you should remember that you should not just coach to facilitate change, but you should coach to facilitate learning and create momentum for continuous learning. As a coach, you should help the team to break down major goals into bite-size chunks that can be easily applied to work and life. Coaching should be non-directive in nature and should aim to unlock the full potential of your employees and encourage them to thrive and develop. Coaching should enable a 'safe' working environment where your employees can set new goals for themselves and ask for support, guidance, and meaningful feedback (Kline, 1999). In addition to coaching your team, you should aim to set measurable and achievable goals, ensure solid target completion dates, and ensure that a system of accountability exists to avoid procrastination and lack of commitment.

In coaching your team, the starting point could be a definition of what a great and effective team looks like. You can then create a teamwork wheel where you agree on what 10 out of 10 looks like, in this case, your *outcome*. Examples could be great internal communication, excellent relationship building, and ideal problem resolution. In the next step, you assess your current level of teamwork, that is, the *situation*. For example, the issues being faced are a lack of problem resolution, internal communication conflicts, or a lack of relationship building. You and the team will score these three issues in a simple system on an overall score out of 10. For example, internal communication conflicts could be a 10 out of 10, and lack of relationship building could be a six out of 10.

In their book, Andrew Gilbert and Karen Whittleworth postulate that using a tool such as a teamwork wheel enables you, as the leader, to see the *outcomes* and the current *situation instantly*. As the manager, you can then use the difference between the *outcome* and the *situation* as the foundation for a coaching conversation. The teamwork wheel tool should aid in discussing the choices that might move your team towards the desired outcomes and agree on the actions that are required to implement those choices. The teamwork wheel can be reviewed at any time to measure progress.

COACHING FOR INCREASED PERFORMANCE

For managers and leaders, understanding the techniques and tools for coaching is imperative for their success as coaches if the objective is to increase performance. Many coaching tools exist (GROW, TGROW, CLEAR, EXACT, etc.); however, I will touch on the OSCAR coaching model developed by Andrew Gilbert and Karen Whittleworth. The OSCAR coaching model is a framework that helps to keep the coaching process focused, structured, and time effective. The OSCAR coaching model is proven effective in achieving instant success for many leaders and managers because it's simple to use, easy to understand, and uses common sense, and leaders and managers use it already without calling it OSCAR!



The OSCAR coaching model begins with the end in mind, that is, knowing your outcome. To coach for increased performance, you want to help raise awareness and responsibility to those that you're coaching. When focusing on the outcome that you desire for your team to perform well, you will likely find ways to overcome challenges or problems. The question to ask is, 'what result do I want to achieve?' if you have more than one outcome, you need to prioritize them. You must be clear about your outcome and the order of importance to you on the team. In the workplace, you'll find that the term 'outcome' is much more powerful than the word 'goal', which is often linked to moving targets that have to be achieved. The word 'goal' often anchors a feeling of demand and pressure, whereas the word 'outcome' is often anchored to a feeling of collaboration and involvement.

In the Situation phase, coaching should focus on the current situation so that you help your employee to recognize the impact the issue they're facing have on them and perhaps the rest of the team or the organization. Do this by helping your employee compare the pleasure of the outcome to the difficulties of the situation, thereby raising their motivation to move towards the desired outcome.

In the choices and consequences phase, your objective is to get the employee to generate at least three or four choices. Having several choices raises awareness in the employee that they have control of their decision-making, enabling you to put the control firmly back into your employee's hands. As a coach, you should remain neutral on all the choices that your employee come up with and allow them to look deeper at all the upsides and downsides of each choice. You should eventually ask the employee to choose one choice from the three (or more) that best moves them towards the outcome.

In the action phase, you help your employee formulate the specific actions they would take. In addition, you will help them craft a timeframe around when each of those actions will take place. It is important that you ascertain the degree of willingness on a scale of one to ten and how they would take those actions. Lastly, you help them figure out what the ongoing process for reviewing those actions will be. If your employee struggles to come up with actions, revisit the outcome because that probably wasn't defined well enough to provide clarity.

In the review face, you as the manager or leader, will agree with your team member to review the action plan and ensure that a strong message is given out that the actions agreed are

not optional. In most organizations, it is always too easy for agreed actions to get lost in everyday urgent issues because of competing deadlines and other project priorities. Regularly reviewing the action plans as a manager or leader will help you stay in control of your own department or organization.

In summary, managing performance well is the key to maintaining your team's focus, morale, and motivation. Therefore, using the OSCAR model can help you gain success and the ability to make a full contribution to your organizational objectives.

IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTIVE LEARNING FOR COACHES

According to Finlay (2008), reflective practice is the process of learning through and from experience to gaining new insights into self and practice. This involves life-long learning by examining assumptions of everyday practice, being self-aware, and critically evaluating the responses to practice situations. Hays (2007) postulates that for continuous growth and improvement, a coach can reflect on their practice across three timeframes – past, present, and future. For me, this means setting aside time to think about what I have done in the past and what I want to do in the future and taking time during coaching sessions to think about the reflective practice in the present moment. Soliciting feedback from my clients and acting on it allows me to assess my developmental areas and create an action plan to address them. A reflective coaching practice has the following benefits for me:

- Increase my self-awareness which helps me understand exactly what makes me a good coach by recognizing my strengths and weaknesses and the impact I have on my clients and my practice.
- Rejuvenate and increase my self-control by ensuring I am truly present at the moment and can focus on the client's needs by asking open questions and responding with an open mind.
- Revitalize my innovative skills, confidence, and courage to challenge the client's thinking to unlock their true potential in a non-judgmental manner.
- Assess my self-reliance, knowing that I am the right person having the right conversation at the right time, and ensuring that I recognize any patterns of behavior that may distort the coaching conversations and find a way forward for them.
- Increase my empathy and relationship-building skills that help find common ground, build rapport, and establish trust with my clients.
- Experience a sense of fulfillment from helping motivate clients to achieve their full potential in order to achieve their personal and professional development goals.

Hay (2007) suggests the benefits of using a coaching supervisor to aid with reflective learning. My coach supervisor plays a crucial role in my growth and development and does this via feedback, direct guidance, role modeling, challenging, and supporting me on what is going well, what can be improved, and what needs greater self-awareness. Before and after the coaching supervision, I self-coach by experimenting with new ideas and asking myself questions that can help me understand the effect and efficiency of my coaching practice.

CONCLUSION

The coach's goal is to raise awareness in the individual so that they are constantly making better choices. Practice makes perfect, and the more coaching sessions, the more likely one can move on to more advanced questioning techniques (Passmore, 2015). Remember, when an individual becomes clear about the choices that they will make, they will choose to take responsibility and do something different and therefore break negative belief cycles that they could have thought were real. As a coach, remember to solicit feedback. Why? As a coach, you probably spend the majority of the time giving feedback, so you must demonstrate how much you value feedback by asking for it in return (Kline, 1999). This will enable you to identify any areas for personal development or blindspots and also help boost your confidence that you're on the right track as a coach.

REFERENCES

Finlay, L. (2008). *Reflecting on 'Reflective practice.'* http://oro.open.ac.uk/68945/1/Finlay-(2008)-Reflecting-on-reflective-practice-PBPL-paper-52.pdf

Gilbert, A. and Whittleworth, K. (2009). *The OSCAR coaching model*. Lulu. Com

Goleman, D., (1996). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Hay, J. (2007) *Reflective practice and supervision for coaches*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Kline, N., (1999). Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind. New York: Hachette Book Group.

Landsberg, M. (2015). *The Tao of Coaching: Boost your effectiveness at work by inspiring and developing those around you*. Profile Books.

Passmore, J. ed., (2015) *Excellence in coaching: The industry guide*. Kogan Page Publishers.

Soames, N., (2019). *The Coaching Book.* LID Publishing Ltd.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank the Great Architect of the Universe for leading me, guiding me, comforting me, and increasing me in Wisdom, Beauty, and Strength as I work on myself, a rough ashlar that is continuously transforming in the direction of the Eternal Light.

I would also like to thank and dedicate this paper to all my executive coaching clients and all leaders and managers working on their coaching skills. Thank you for being part of my life, coaching, and leadership journey.

And to you, the reader, THANK YOU, and see you soon for an exciting and remarkable Schoveing Series 7!

RECOMMENDED READING

- Brown, T. (2009) Change by design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organisations and Inspires Innovation, New York: Harper Business
- Buzan, T and Buzan, B. (1996) The Mind Mapping Book: How to use radiant thinking to maximise your brain's unlimited potential, London: Penguin
- Clutterbuck, D. David, S. & Megginson. D. (2013) Beyond Goals, Surrey: Gower
- Collins, J. (2001) Good to Great: Why
- Dotlich, L.D. and Cairo, P.C. (1999) Action Coaching: How to leverage individual performance for company success, 2nd Edition, San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons
- Dweck, C. (2007) Mindset: The New Psychology of Success, USA: Ballantine Books
- Goleman, D. (1995) Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ, London: Bloomsbury
- Hunt and Wientraub. (2007) The Coaching Organisation: A Strategy for Developing Leaders, Sage
- some companies make the leap and others don't, London: Random House Business Books
- Hay, J. (2012) Donkey Bridges for Developmental TA: making transactional analysis accessible and memorable, 2nd Edition, Hertford: Sherwood Publishing
- Kimsey House, H. Kimsey House, K. Sandhal, P and Whitworth, L. (2007) Co-Active Coaching: New skills for coaching people toward success in work and life, 2nd Edition, Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Kline, N. (1999) Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind, New York: Hachette Book Group
- Lehrer, J. (2010) The Decisive Moment: How the brain makes up its mind, Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd
- Myers, B.I. (1998) Introduction to Type, 6th Edition, Mountain View: Cpp Inc
- Passmore, J. (2015) Excellence in Coaching: The Industry Guide, Kogan Page
- Parnes, S.J. (1997) Optimize the Magic of your Mind, Bearly Ltd
- Stewart, I. and Joines, V. (2012) T A Today: A new introduction to Transactional Analysis, 2nd edition, Melton Mowbray: Lifespace Publishing
- Taylor, R. (2013), Confidence at Work, London: Kogan Page
- Taylor, R. (2013), Creativity at Work, London: Kogan Page
- Taylor, R. (2017), Willpower, London: Wiley
- Whitmore, J (2017) Coaching for Performance: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership

CONTACT INFORMATION

Your comments and questions are valued and encouraged. Contact the author at:

Name: Dr. Priscilla Gathoni, DM, MS, MBA
Enterprise: Wakanyi Enterprises Inc.
Address: 509 Quince Orchard Road – Suite 304
City, State ZIP: Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Work Phone: (202) 236 2598
Email: drgathoni@wakanyienterprises.com