

## Top Tips

### Coaching

#### What is coaching?

Coaching is a short term investment for long term gain. It is not about instruction, training, or telling people what to do; it is a process where you help and encourage people to work things out for themselves. Coaching uses questions about real current situations as learning and development opportunities; every time you delegate a task, provide guidance, and discuss progress you have an opportunity to coach. It may be defined as:

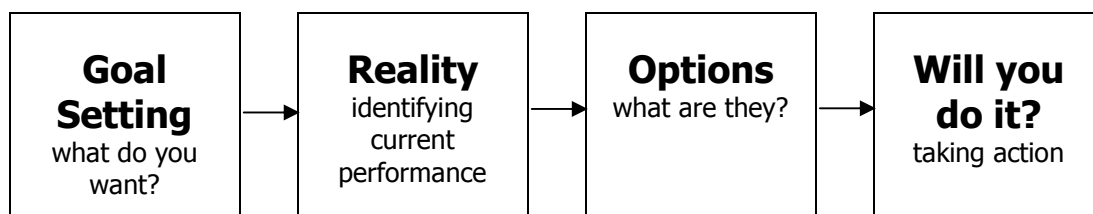
**“Unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.”**

#### Why Coach?

- To raise awareness and understanding in others about their own performance at work, through the use of questions
- To get people to be clear in their own minds about a situation or incident so that they can do something about it
- To raise the levels of responsibility and ownership in others by getting them to think issues through rather than by telling them what to do

#### The coaching process

There are four key stages to coaching, sometimes described as **GROW** (after the first letters of the following model):



For each of these stages there are some questions which you may find useful:

##### Stage 1 - Goal setting – what do you want?

- What is your goal?
- What milestones have you set?
- When do you want to achieve it by?
- Is it positive, challenging, and realistic?
- How will you know when you get there?

##### Stage 2 –Reality - identifying current performance

- What is the situation now?
- What went / didn't go well?
- What have you done so far?
- What results did that produce?
- What are the constraints to finding a way forward?

## Stage 3 - Options – what are they?

- What choices or options do you have?
- What else could you do?
- What if you had...? (Time, money, resources, control, etc.)
- What are the pros and cons of each option?
- Can I make a suggestion? (only when ideas dry up!)
- What will you do differently next time?

## Stage 4 – Will you do it - taking action

- What are you going to do?
- Will this achieve your goal?
- When are you going to do it?
- What could get in the way?
- How can you overcome this?
- Who do you need to inform, and ask?
- What help or support will you need?
- How can you access that support?

## Building a vision

It may help the person you are coaching if they can visualise what success might look or feel like. One way to achieve this is to ask them to recall or imagine the time when they felt most successful at the topic. What did or would they feel like? Can they describe the feelings they associate with this? This works on the principle that if you look for and dwell on problems and barriers, you will find more, whereas if you look for and describe success, you are more likely to achieve it.

## The key skills and behaviours of a coach

### Do

- ✓ Show interest and confidence in the individual.
- ✓ Help the individual to think through and find their own solutions.
- ✓ Respect and value the individual's opinions, ideas and feelings.
- ✓ Ask open questions to get the individual to talk openly
- ✓ Ask direct questions to obtain specific facts and information.
- ✓ Listen actively to what is said.
- ✓ Acknowledge the other's position.
- ✓ Focus on key issues.
- ✓ Clarify by summarising and checking understanding of what is said.
- ✓ Give encouragement by reflecting on previous success.
- ✓ Empathise and share your own experiences.
- ✓ Encourage a desire to improve, and commitment to agreed actions.
- ✓ Agree limits of authority and action where necessary.
- ✓ Ensure that realistic and achievable action plans are in place.
- ✓ Set up a review process to monitor and reinforce progress.
- ✓ Suggest ideas only when you've explored all the person's own ideas

### Don't

- ✗ Judge what you hear or impose your own opinions.
- ✗ Give solutions.
- ✗ Fill silence with unnecessary words; use it to let the person think.

**For related topics see Top Tips:**

- **Development Methods**
- **Feedback**
- **Mentoring**
- **Objective Setting**
- **Rapport**