

Coaching Tools and Techniques for Managers

21 ways to help your team shine

Flo van Diemen van Thor



FLO VAN DIEMEN VAN THOR

COACHING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGERS

21 WAYS TO HELP
YOUR TEAM SHINE

Coaching Tools and Techniques for Managers: 21 ways to help your team shine

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The advertisement features a black header with the CMO Inspired Conference logo on the left, which consists of a green speech bubble containing the letters 'CMO'. To the right of the logo, the text 'INSPIRED CONFERENCE' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, in smaller white capital letters, is the date and location: '25 OCTOBER | DE VERE BEAUMONT ESTATE | OLD WINDSOR UK'. The main body of the advertisement is a collage of images. The top image shows a large, white, classical-style building with many windows, surrounded by lush green trees and a fountain in the foreground. Below this are several smaller images showing conference activities: a panel discussion with four people on a stage, a woman speaking into a microphone, a large audience of people seated in a hall, and a man presenting at a podium. At the bottom of the advertisement, a black banner contains the text 'Join Over 100 Chief Marketing Officers & Digital Innovators' in a green, sans-serif font.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Based in the UK, Flo van Diemen van Thor is an executive coach who specialises in leadership development and change. Her coaching instincts were awakened during a high profile change programme in the public sector, where she was responsible for public engagement. She found herself working with very senior people who preferred staying in the ‘ivory tower’ over hearing frank feedback, but who really needed to hear such feedback to make the programme work. Through taking a coaching approach to supporting them, Flo was able to improve key relationships which in turn enabled fruitful collaborations on the programme.

Flo went on to found Socius Associates Ltd which designs and delivers development programmes for clients across Europe. She coaches senior leaders in the public and private sector and feels especially at home working in and with large and complex organisations. She holds an MA in Coaching and Mentoring Practice from Oxford Brookes University in addition to several marketing and communications qualifications.

You are warmly invited to get in touch with her to share your thoughts on her book or coaching in general – Flo is always in for a natter – via her website, Twitter or trusty email:

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INTRODUCTION

More and more organisations are turning towards coaching as a way to develop people. With its roots in both counselling and management theory (specifically leadership theory) coaching has been an established developmental approach in business for decades. More recently coaching has also started to enter into other sectors such as health, education and the public sector as a highly effective way to support individuals, teams and even entire organisations to tackle specific challenges that affect them.

This book is for line managers who want to have some powerful coaching tools and techniques at their disposal to support their reports.

WHY COACHING?

We'll open the first chapter by establishing what coaching is and isn't in more detail. For now, let's describe coaching as a collaborative process geared towards helping the client (an individual, a group or a team) successfully resolve a challenge.

The key word is 'process'. The manager doing the coaching brings some useful skills and tools to guide the coaching through different stages. At the heart of the coaching process is the member of staff or the team receiving the coaching and the question they need to work on. That is important to remember, because it isn't about the manager: it is about what the individual or team being coached thinks and needs to discuss.

So why would a manager coach?

Managers I work with have said these things about why they sometimes choose to coach instead of manage:

- *"I have 70 reports, I simply don't have the time or the will to manage them all every day"*
- *"You can tell people how to do things but frequently they'll have forgotten next time. If you coach them to resolve something they remember because they worked it out themselves"*
- *"Coaching gives me a break from the expectation of having all the answers all the time – I don't, and it's OK that I don't"*
- *"It frees me up to focus on strategic things that affect my teams"*
- *"Coaching has helped some of my best talent develop to their full potential by giving them the space and support they needed"*
- *"Coaching is the opposite of micromanagement. And micromanagement makes good people leave!"*
- *"It gives new people a great start because coaching encourages independent thinking."*

WHEN NOT TO COACH

If that sounds good, then we must also consider the limitations of coaching as a manager. Even if coaching has become more and more embedded in management practice, it isn't the answer to everything and there are situations where taking the coaching approach is not appropriate:

- In crisis situations where your reports need quick decisions and clear instructions
- To delegate tasks you must do yourself such as signing off on decisions or orders
- In performance management situations where formal steps are being taken

You also need to gauge whether taking the coaching approach is what the person needs. As a project manager explained to me:

“As much as I love the whole coaching thing, my manager can't seem to get enough of it right now to the point where it has turned into her new hobby. Sometimes I just want to get her view on something and not spend the next half hour exploring options when I have already done that by myself, and just want a sense check and her thoughts on my final two so I can get on with it.”

BIG QUESTIONS THE BOOK ADDRESSES

Coaching as a line manager has distinct advantages as well as limitations. To help you learn some useful ways to lead through coaching, here are the important questions the book deals with:

Big question: what coaching is and isn't

There are some misunderstandings about coaching which I will explain and clarify. We'll also look at some definitions of coaching. What makes coaching so powerful when used well? What are the similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring?

Big question: how to know when to coach as a manager

How does a coaching approach fit in with other management styles? Why and when would a manager want to take a coaching approach? Warning (or maybe reassurance): taking a coaching approach is not the same as being a coach. When is it best to steer clear of coaching and use a different management style? What are pitfalls to avoid and how can you recognise them in time?

Big question: how to coach as a manager

This is the core of the book: how to coach while also being their line manager! What approaches to coaching are available that can really help you grow your repertoire as a manager? We'll look at the skills, capabilities and mindset needed to coach effectively as a manager, and instead will spend more time looking at coaching tools and techniques to have at the ready. Managing yourself and looking after your own wellbeing is important too, especially if the going gets tough.

WHAT THIS BOOK DOESN'T COVER

The aim is to keep this book concise and to the point and get you confidently using coaching tools and techniques in little time. Interesting as it will be, we won't have time to go into detail on:

- All the different types of coaching and coaching theories that exist
- Management theory and a detailed discussion of different management styles
- Related approaches to helping, such as mentoring, counselling or consulting

Turn to the recommended reading list at the end to find some suggested titles and sources for the above and other topics of interest.

HEALTH WARNING: READING THIS BOOK WON'T TURN YOU INTO A COACH

And that isn't just because reading coaching books isn't enough to become one. For all the talk about the benefits of coaching in the workplace, nobody should expect you to become a fully-fledged coach as a manager. Nor is it desirable or advisable to only coach as a manager from now on. In other words: knowing how and when to coach people is just one skill an effective manager needs to have.

Taking a coaching approach also does not mean you have to start venturing into areas you do not want to go. We'll spend some time on how you can approach situations that make you uncomfortable.

The tools and techniques explained in this book are here for you to try out and use with the aim of having more ways of leading your team at your disposal.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANISED

Chapter 1 starts by explaining what coaching really is and gives an overview of management styles. We'll discuss the differences between being a coach, having a coaching style as a manager and having coaching conversations: these are three different things. The chapter then explores benefits and limitations of applying coaching principles in management.

Chapter 2 looks at the skills required to make coaching work, both from your perspective as the manager-as-coach and that of the person, group or team at the receiving end. Because this book is about the tools and techniques, this chapter is fairly succinct; those who want more can refer to the excellent titles included in the reading list.

Chapter 3 introduces two coaching models which are known for being particularly effective in the workplace. Each will be explained and examined on their merits. Coaching models are extremely useful for people who are new to coaching, so don't be put off if it sounds a little too theoretical. They'll help you get the hang of it and to plan your coaching efforts.

Chapter 4 presents some very powerful coaching tools, explains how they work and in which situations they are especially effective. We discuss how they can be used in 1:1 or team settings.

Chapter 5 looks into 'sticky' situations which line managers encounter, and suggests if and what kind of coaching tools and techniques might be useful. Examples include performance issues, dealing with conflict in teams and low motivation. In this chapter we will also look at what you can do to look after yourself and how to handle coaching conversations that are not working out, including those that make *you* uncomfortable.

Chapter 6 Concludes this book with a list of top tips from experienced coaches.

A list of recommended reading, end notes and templates for tools and models are included at the end of this book.

HOW TO GET THE BEST USE OUT OF THIS BOOK

I don't know about you, but I confess to dipping in and out of business books looking for something in particular rather than necessarily reading them cover to cover. Although the book is structured the way it is for a reason, I have put this book together in such a way that you can dip in and out at will too. The Table of Contents is the obvious place to look up where you need to be in this book.

In writing this book I refuse to underestimate my readers. Having said that, I do hope that I have explained any and all jargon clearly and that professional terminology that you encounter is helpful instead of confusing or plain annoying. Please do [get in touch](#) if you find anything I can improve in the book. I also like a good discussion so if you take a different view on something I've written I'd very much welcome your thoughts.

1 WHY COACH AS A MANAGER?

In the introduction we read some compelling reasons why more and more organisations invest in developing their managers' coaching skills. It all sounds great, but what is coaching more precisely, and also, what does a manager need to bring to the table to develop and use their coaching skills well?

First, let's address some myths about coaching. Coaching is not the preserve of learned people with impressive credentials, even if those can be a huge help. It starts with the person doing the coaching having the right mindset to be helpful to another. Great coaching happens when the coach takes leave of their own ideas and thoughts and is entirely focused on the other person and their question. It requires humility and confidence in the relationship with the other, a trust that the way forward will emerge in the course of the conversation. This kind of maturity isn't something you can learn from a book or in a workshop. It is the sum of your experience, values, motivation and attitude.

Coaching also isn't for everyone. Some people do not want to be coached, even if others can see how they might benefit from it. It may simply be the wrong thing at the right time for them. It is also possible that they don't want to be coached by the person offering to coach them, and that is their prerogative of course.

There are also many myths surrounding management, including:

- Managers should always be in control
- Managers should have all the answers
- Managers should set the goals and enforce their achievement if necessary

Perhaps this may have been the case in industrial times, but these assumptions no longer work today. Many managers have virtual teams and in flatter organisations they have larger spans of control. Delegation is inevitable. Today's workforce has far better access to information which means we all have an opportunity to see the bigger picture. Working in and being part of an organisation requires everyone, including managers, to see how each of us fits into it. In other words, the conversations taking place in organisations are of a very different nature compared to the early days of management theory.

Coaching is not the new management: they are very different. Let's have a closer look.

1.1 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COACHING AND MANAGEMENT

Simply put, managers manage performance and hold people to account. Their job is to ensure there is appropriate control over processes and people in order to get things done in line with their organisation's expectations.

Coaching is a collaborative process whereby the coach acts in the service of the question and the person dealing with the question. Their job is to create the circumstances in which the individual can resolve the question themselves.

Let's compare a few definitions for coaching, so that you can see some of the differences in interpretations. There is a wide range covering different types of coaching.

Coaching is the art of facilitating another person's learning, development and performance. It raises self-awareness and identifies choices. Through coaching, people are able to find their own solutions, develop their own skills and change their own attitudes and behaviours. The whole aim of coaching is to close the gap between potential and performance.

– Jenny Rogers, *Manager As Coach*, 2012

Unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.

– John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance*, 2003

A powerful alliance designed to forward and enhance a life-long process of human learning, effectiveness and fulfilment.

– Kimsey-House et al, *Co-Active Coaching*, 2007

As you can see, the above definitions centre on development and learning with the help of an outsider. There are also differences: the first two definitions focus on performance and potential while the third mentions effectiveness and fulfilment.

This is an important distinction which I wanted to show, because as a manager you may be lucky enough to have stellar performers in your teams who habitually smash goals and exceed expectations. Should we conclude these people don't need coaching?

Yes and no. It would be very limiting to suggest improving performance is the only reason to coach people: of course it isn't! What about succession planning in your team, or keeping your talent motivated and engaged by finding them new challenges to tackle? And what about growing and nurturing talent for future senior roles elsewhere in your organisation?

So while you might not need to coach your high flying team members to improve on their performance, there might be scenarios such as the above where a coaching approach can be of great value. It's OK to acknowledge a degree of self-interest here: which manager rejoices in seeing a valued member of their team move on because they became bored?

1.2 WHAT COACHING IS NOT

Now that we have looked at what coaching is, let's also look what it is not. Many clients ask me to explain the differences between coaching, mentoring and counselling, and that is a very good question. Let's look.

1.2.1 COACHING VS MENTORING

Coaching and mentoring have a lot in common. Both are entirely focused on what the coachee or mentee wants to achieve, and the coach or mentor puts themselves in the service of those goals. The approach is an appreciative one: like a coach a mentor considers the other their equal and not someone in need of fixing. A mentor is chosen for their specific experience of something the mentee wants to learn about.

Here is a summary of the main characteristics of coaching and mentoring, showing the differences:

Coaching	Mentoring
Short term – taking place over weeks or months	Long term – taking place over months or years
Usually by formal agreement	Often informal
Delivered by a qualified professional	Qualifications are only relevant to the question
Avoids advice giving	Advice giving is part of the process

Table 1.1 Coaching vs Mentoring

As a manager you might ask: why not simply mentor my reports instead? Good question: perhaps you should! Consider each instance on its merits; what is the individual or team going to benefit from the most? Is it by sharing your own experience and expertise or do you need to let them work things out by themselves mostly? A key question here of course is whether your experience is relevant (enough) to mentor and how to know this.

1.2.2 COACHING VS COUNSELLING AND THERAPY

An important assumption a coach makes when they agree to work with a client, is that they are what we call *naturally creative, resourceful and whole*. The client doesn't need healing or coming to terms with much, if anything, and they are certainly not experiencing an episode of major psychological pain. If they do, then a counsellor or therapist can help.

Coaching	Counselling and Therapy
Short term – taking place over weeks or months	Medium to Long term – taking place over months or even years
The client is generally functioning well at work and at home	The client is experiencing a crisis which impairs their day-to-day functioning
Works in the present looking to the future	Works to resolve past trauma
Assumes an equal partnership	The counsellor is an expert
Aims to help the client achieve their goals	Aims to help the client cope again
Looks to develop the client's potential	Looks to heal trauma and distress
Not qualified to diagnose mental health problems	Qualified to diagnose <i>and</i> treat mental health problems

Table 1.2 Coaching vs Counselling

As you can see, the differences between the two are significant.

A final note on establishing whether a client is resilient and whole enough for coaching: professional coaches are trained in recognising signs that someone may be experiencing sustained distress that could be the result of deeper psychological problems. Coaches need to be able to do this to practise safely and not cause any harm to the people they work with.

If as a manager you have any concerns whatsoever about the (psychological) wellbeing of one of your coachees, please explore other or additional ways to support them rather than continuing to coach them. Consult your HR Handbook or speak to a colleague in your HR department to discuss available support.

1.2.3 COACHING CONVERSATIONS VS. SESSIONS

I need to emphasise a point here about expectations on you as a manager who coaches: you are and will be first and foremost the manager of your team. Deciding to add coaching to your toolkit as a manager doesn't oblige you to coach all the time, nor to start coaching everyone around you. It may not be appropriate in certain circumstances to coach, and the individual or team concerned may need something else from you (see also Chapter 5).

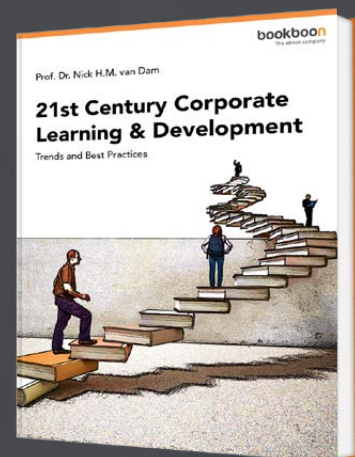
Coaching people can take more than one form as well, from having a five-minute 'corridor conversation' that you decide to apply a coaching approach to rather than a managerial one, to planning a series of sessions with a member of your team who wants your support in developing certain skills. Both are coaching.

One is not better than another: if you are the kind of manager who gets much done by having frequent, brief conversations, then you can benefit as much from developing your coaching capability as the manager who prefers to schedule hour-long 1:1s with everyone.

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You can apply a light touch to using a coaching approach to developing your people. For example, if you don't want to call a 1:1 progress update a coaching session, that's fine. What does matter is that you have permission to coach people when they ask you for your help in their development, because they may expect you to be a manager instead.

Let's say that one of your team aspires to become a supervisor and wants to work on building their CV towards this goal. What will this individual benefit the most from in terms of support? Think for example of the skills and attributes needed for the supervisor role: initiative, independent thinking and people skills may be some of the requirements. Can you teach them as a manager or should you coach them to help develop those skills? Or perhaps a mix of both? In this example it is important to consider how to have the conversation to explain what you can do for them as their manager and how you can coach them to develop themselves.

We will look at management styles next to see where coaching fits in with your repertoire.

1.3 MANAGEMENT STYLES AND COACHING

Psychologist [Daniel Goleman](#), best known for his work on Emotional Intelligence, identified six leadership styles. Note that leadership isn't the same as management, but for the purpose of this book you will see how these styles are relevant to you as a manager.

The six styles are:

The coercive style demands unquestioning and immediate compliance.

The authoritative style takes a firm but fair approach aimed at taking followers with the leader.

The affiliative style puts people first and has creating a sense of community at its heart.

The democratic style is focused on feedback and seeks to involve people's views.

The pacesetter style demands high performance and is strongly focused on achievement.

The coaching style seeks to develop people by focussing on strengths and weaknesses of people.

Each of the above styles has advantages and drawbacks and each has scenarios in which they are appropriate. For example, the commanding nature of the coercive style is suited to solving a crisis or deal with problem staff. Its overall impact on the climate in an organisation is negative, and it should be used sparingly for that reason.

The pacesetter style is appropriate when quick results are needed; again, drawing too much on this style will undermine motivation.

The authoritative style is also referred to as the visionary style and can deliver great results in times of change where a clear vision and path is needed. It can boost morale and motivation in organisations and is often aspired to by leaders.

The democratic and affiliative styles seek to involve staff and have their input to bring the organisation together behind what needs to happen. The affiliative leader is especially impactful during stressful times as they can bring teams (back) together.

This brings us to the coaching style, which Goleman says is the least used of the six, although there are signs that this is changing. The impact of a coaching style is positive on the climate in an organisation as it seeks to build on strengths and to mitigate weaknesses with the aim to increase performance.

To find out your most used leadership style, try this [online leadership style calculator](#).

1.3.1 WHY DEVELOP A COACHING STYLE?

There are real advantages to developing your coaching muscle as a manager. Versatile leaders are able to flex between styles as context demands and, most importantly, they recognise when this is the case. Developing your coaching skills and gaining coaching experience will help you recognise the signals that tell you which leadership style is appropriate and when.

How?

Let's say that you have developed strong 'coaching' relationships with several of your reports. You have both become accustomed to having a different kind of conversation when you need to and as a result trust and mutual respect has increased. You need less time and fewer words to get your meaning across. This has created the circumstances in which your member of staff can ask you to shift into a certain leadership style, while your intuition may have been sharpened by all the additional insights your coaching experience has given you.

There is no one leadership style that is necessarily better than the others, even if the impact of some styles are on balance more positive overall. The context determines which leadership style will be most effective, and so each style does have its uses. The most effective leaders switch between styles and are able to do so without confusing others.

1.4 WHAT COACHING CAN DO FOR US

Some of the benefits of adding coaching skills to your repertoire as a manager have already been mentioned, so let's line them all up here and get an overview. Also, it pays to know what will be unrealistic to expect.

1.4.1 BENEFITS TO YOU

Developing and/or refining the interpersonal skills required for effective coaching is an obvious win. We'll go into more detail on what these are in the next chapter, but in a nutshell they include:

- Improving listening skills
- Having more and new ways to offer and ask for feedback
- Developing your critical thinking skills
- Becoming comfortable with reflective practice

Many managers who coach also report that they are getting other, perhaps more personal, benefits from coaching people they manage. Here are some of them:

- Taking a break from (the expectation of) being in control
- Feeling motivated by seeing other people grow and flourish
- Delegating responsibility for solutions to talented people
- Being perceived as a good manager who listens and cares
- Gaining a reputation as the leader who 'grows' talent for the organisation

The vast majority of managers that I have come across in the last 20-odd years only want to be good at managing and leading. Successful managers have invariably developed a broad range of skills and know how to use them in different situations. Suspending judgment, listening to and understanding other people's views have always been key in this development.

1.4.2 BENEFITS TO YOUR REPORTS

Whether your reports are employees on your payroll, staff or volunteers, let's refer to them from now on as your *coachees*: the individuals, teams and groups receiving coaching from you.

The benefits coachees get from working with you as a coach depend on what they have in front of them. It is an altogether different thing to help one of your team skill up for a promotion compared to tackling another's unhelpful behaviour, for example. So with that in mind, here are some of the benefits coachees have reported before:

- Taking time out to think about a problem in a different way
- Being able to say everything that's on my mind to someone who'll just listen
- Seeing the bigger picture by unpicking the challenge
- Discovering what or who can help me solve my problem
- Becoming more confident

It is surprising how often confidence comes up in coaching conversations. People at all levels in organisations can experience a crisis of confidence, and even the most successful people who appear to be at the top of their game can have chronic confidence issues that no one else knows about. My advice to managers turning their hand at coaching people would be to be very sensitive to confidence issues and to handle any emerging problems very carefully. Chapter 5 may offer more help for such scenarios.

1.4.3 BENEFITS TO YOUR ORGANISATION

Even if coaching is a relatively young profession or managerial approach, there is a large body of evidence backing up claims that organisational benefits are plentiful. Let's have a look at some of the main ones.

Coaching can contribute to:

- Talent development and retention
- Increased performance and productivity
- Greater job satisfaction and motivation
- Better use of available resources by tapping into creativity
- Better and faster embedding of new working practices or organisational structures
- Improving working relationships between teams, departments, locations etc.
- Positive perception of the organisation as an employer

The last argument is an interesting one. Coaching is increasingly seen as an investment in potential high-flyers rather than a way to combat performance that is wanting. And perhaps thankfully too, because showing a willingness to invest in people can not only lead to keeping your high performing people from leaving, it also marks you out as a good place to work for talent looking for a new job.

1.5 WHEN COACHING IS NOT THE ANSWER

Coaching isn't a magic solution to everything, everyone and at any time. There are also serious limitations to what can be achieved through coaching and before we proceed, we need to spend some time on when it is inappropriate to take a coaching approach.

1.5.1 THE COACH IS NOT EQUIPPED TO COACH (YET)

The success of coaching is very strongly linked to the skill, attributes and attitude of the coach: this may sound obvious to you but it's crucially important. Sadly, coaching is a profession that has real potential for self-deception. The vast majority of us has a tendency to rate our abilities higher than our peers do – anyone who has had a bit of a reality check after doing a 360 degree review or a psychometric test will know what is meant by that.

Perhaps the most effective personal attribute a coach needs to possess in abundance is self-awareness (see box). Low levels lead to blind spots, missing non-verbal signals the coachees might be giving off and projecting our own ideas onto other people's thoughts.

All these things will get in the way of strong rapport growing between the coach and coachee, while the limitations of the coach are unlikely to help the coachee go beyond what they have already discovered by themselves.

Not to be confused with self-consciousness or a sense of self-worth, self-awareness refers to the level of understanding an individual has of the psychological processes that are taking place in themselves as well as in others. It also includes an awareness and understanding of the impact their own actions have on others.

Training is important to learn the essentials of coaching, but so is learning from practice. It is like learning to drive: you've passed your driving test, now the real work begins! Many coaches start by offering coaching to volunteers who know they are helping the coach to learn. My tip: avoid coaching family and friends if you can. The people who know you best will find it hardest to give you unbiased feedback, while you might find yourself in a very similar position as their coach. Your friends and family will know your opinions on many things; keeping these out of a coaching conversation is fiendishly difficult. Ask them instead for recommendations and start with a clean slate with people you don't know (as well).

1.5.2 THE CONTEXT DEMANDS A DIFFERENT APPROACH

We touched on this when we looked at leadership styles and other forms of helping, so we'll keep it short here. It is key for you as a manager to recognise situations that need you to switch into a different mode of management than coaching. One way of learning this is by observing other managers who have mastered this more than you feel you have yourself. These role models can be from your own organisation but also from elsewhere.

Let's wrap up by mentioning performance management. Coaching can be instrumental in improving performance and is an established method for this. However, it is unsuited to dealing with consistent underperformance which needs addressing through more formal processes. Coaching works on the assumption that the coachee is functioning well, and this condition is not met in the case of chronic underperformance. Other measures should be considered instead.

1.5.3 THE ORGANISATION IS NOT READY FOR COACHING

It's possible that the culture of an organisation – the way things are done and the stories people tell each other about this – does not encourage taking a coaching approach to managing people. For example, the CEO and (or) senior leadership team heavily rely on more authoritarian styles to get things done. This attitude is likely to translate into a directive way of handling feedback and demanding results, and into working processes that support this way of working. For example, goals may be imposed from above and appraisal processes may reflect that staff are expected to comply.

This does not mean you shouldn't coach, but it may mean not having much in the way of practical support to coach as a manager. Attitudes may also be indifferent or even hostile.

It can be tough going trying to coach in an organisation that isn't used to self-reflection and taking time out to examine a problem. Should you find yourself part of an organisational culture that is lacking the maturity needed to use coaching as a tool, look for opportunities such as staff retention, talent development and performance improvement in teams. It's important to be able to evidence the difference *coaching* has made, especially when there are other developments aiming to improve the same thing you are working on. Evaluating impact can be tricky but worth it: if there is one thing senior leaders should be interested in, it's getting results!

See also Chapter 5, Sticky Situations, on how to deal with resistant coachees, running into your own limitations and recommended tools for common coaching scenarios.

2 COACHING SKILLS

Let's turn our attention to what you need to bring to the table to be an effective coach as a manager. There are many excellent books on coaching and coaching skills to help you deepen your practice further, so we'll keep this chapter nice and concise. Turn to Recommended Reading at the back of this book to find several useful titles.

2.1 LISTENING LEVELS

To start with the obvious: these skills are at the heart of coaching. Most of us think of ourselves as good listeners, but if we consider the skill more closely, isn't the person we're listening to the best placed to judge that? So let's not kid ourselves and keep working on our listening skills, if only because every person we will be listening to as a coach will have different needs and expectations.

Listening takes place at different levels. Unless we train our listening ability, we unconsciously apply filters, assumptions and ideas to the information we receive, and our mind races ahead of the conversation. A very common example among managers is having a solution to the problem their coachee presents, and becoming fixated on somehow leading them to that solution without actually saying it out loud.

This 'noise' is problematic for a few reasons: we are so busy focusing on what *we* think of the problem, we may be missing additional important information that changes everything we know about the problem. In doing so we also deny the coachee the option to explore all aspects of the problem, because in our heads we have already solved it for them. Such a way of listening impedes learning for the coachee. It's also very tiresome for a coach to have to 'sit' on the answer – it can feel very frustrating indeed when you feel it's right in front of you!

Look at the below levels of listening and consider what you think is helpful in coaching conversations and when:

Level	Result
5. Empathic Listening	Fully engaged with speaker's perspective, leaves self behind
4. Attentive Listening	Pays attention to speaker and compares to own experiences
3. Selective Listening	Hears only the interesting bits
2. Pretend Listening	Creates the appearance of listening
Ignoring	Doesn't bother

Table 2.1 Stephen R. Covey's Listening Continuum

The key to great coaching is developing the ability to switch off your own opinions, thoughts, ideas, hang-ups etc. and put yourself entirely at the service of the other.

2.2 QUESTIONING

Your ability to ask great questions is closely linked to your listening skills: how else do you know and decide what to ask? Therefore working on your listening skills is a wonderful way of becoming better at asking powerful questions too.

Like listening, questions are also subject to filters. Filters change the way information is received, and as the person asking the question you cannot for certain know that it is being interpreted as intended. This is why it's very important to minimise the influence of filters by carefully formulating your questions.

Let's look at some types of questions and their purpose.

Type	Purpose is to...	Examples
Clarifying	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get factual information 2. Open the conversation 3. Clarify understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions starting with who, what, where, when and how
Explanatory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get reasons 2. Widen discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way would this help? - What else needs to be considered? - Questions starting with 'why'
Exploratory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Challenge old ideas 2. Develop new ideas 3. Get reasoning and proof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the evidence? - What have we overlooked so far? - Talk me through your reasoning
Leading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Introduce</i> a new idea 2. Advance a suggestion of your own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should we consider this as a possible solution? - Would X be a feasible alternative?
Hypothetical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Develop</i> (new) ideas 2. Suggest another, perhaps unpopular opinion 3. Changing the direction of the discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If we did X, what would happen? - How might approach Y work here? - What would we win/lose if we did/didn't do Z
Co-ordinating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get agreement 2. Establish next steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can we conclude this is the next step? - Do you agree with this plan?

Table 2.2 Types of questions

Note how some of the above questions can contain answers and (or) lean in a certain direction. This can be wholly appropriate of course; whether a question is suitable depends on context and you need to be the judge of that when you are in a conversation.

Something a manager pointed out about the above types is that some of them are very closely related: hypothetical questions can be leading questions. Don't worry too much about labels but be conscious of how questions can take on an unintentional meaning despite your best efforts.

2.2.1 CLEAN LANGUAGE

This brings us to the concept of clean language, which focuses on how the use of metaphors and similes can 'load' what we say with meaning. This is something to avoid as a coach, because we should be focused on what the coachee is saying and how they are saying it instead. Otherwise we may not be truly listening and therefore not be asking good questions.

So what is meant by 'clean language'? Jenny Rogers describes it as follows:

"The phrase 'clean language' means that you notice and then explore the language of the other person and never assume that you know what that language means. You notice any non-verbal signals the other person is giving – for instance, a frown, a little cough, a tapping foot."

– Jenny Rogers, *Manager as Coach*, p. 101

For a coach, anything that is said – and also what isn't said – as well as the manner in which it is being said is valuable information. Clean language involves listening for and working with the specific language the coachee uses.



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Under siege

Some years ago I worked with Bob*, a middle manager who was struggling to manage his frustration in the workplace: he would flare up over things he knew were not important and he had discovered how destructive such outbursts could be. He was very self-conscious about his impact on others and was especially fed up with holding grudges, which were draining him of mental energy.

I noticed he was wearing a commemorative RAF pin on his lanyard and started to pay close attention the language he was using: indeed, he spoke of feeling besieged, of being bombarded and being in the trenches.

Drawing his attention to these very vivid metaphors turned out to be very helpful: Bob had not been conscious of them and was quite astonished at their power. He began to see how he had started to regard his colleagues as 'enemies' and that this was stopping him from seeing how they were trying to be supportive.

These new insights helped Bob to understand what was really going on and he successfully developed better and more helpful responses to challenging situations.

2.3 GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

As a coach, giving feedback is part and parcel of the job. Many clients arrive asking for an honest reflection on something they are working to develop because it's very difficult to get it from colleagues or friends or family, who have an interest in giving a certain response. Well-meant but undeserved feedback is as unhelpful as unfair feedback from someone with a score to settle.

Giving feedback as a coach is a delicate matter. On the one hand the coachee will benefit from having a mirror held up and testing their views with an outsider who has no vested interest other than in your development. On the other hand feedback can potentially undermine trust in the relationship with the coach, the coaching process or in the coach him/herself. If the coach's feedback is perceived to be unfair or biased because of how it is delivered it can do more harm than good.

To develop your skill at giving feedback as a coach, try these approaches:

- Clarify what specifically your coachee would like to have feedback on
- Ask your coachee when and how they prefer to receive the feedback
- Seek permission to give feedback on something that they have not asked you about
- Be specific in your feedback

- Use clean language when sharing feedback
- Invite a response on the feedback you have just given, but do not force it if the coachee needs time to consider what you have just shared with them
- Consider whether you need to give feedback as their *coach* or as their *manager*

Receiving feedback as a coach is also very important: a coachee who feels able to tell you to stop doing something or do more of something else has trust in the relationship. It is also a sign they 'own' their coaching and need you to know more about what they seek from you. In that sense receiving feedback from your coachee is a good sign.

Listen carefully to the feedback and ask them to clarify anything you are unsure about. You can also ask your coachee at the end of a session or conversation how they thought it went, and what they would like to be different about the next time you get together. Make some (mental) notes for next time and ensure you put the feedback to good use for you both.

You can take asking for feedback one step further and ask your coachee the question, 'how am I doing today?' and wait for them to respond. In my own experience, they start by saying nice things such as 'really good, I like how I can just take my time to talk' which is more a comment on how the coaching is working for them. As our relationship (and work) progresses, their feedback becomes more specific: 'really good, but next time I want you to push harder, I sensed you were holding back'.

2.4 MINDSET: LETTING GO OF CONTROL

Putting your coach's hat on as a manager means taking off the manager one. It means letting the coachee take control of the conversation and steer it where it needs to go – with your help.

I explain to new coaching clients that my role is to help them define their coaching agenda, the topics and goals they want to work on in their sessions, and to then guard this agenda while they go off and explore. This frees my client up to go off on tangents in the knowledge that their coach will link things back to their coaching agenda, or ask them if they may have strayed somewhere that doesn't help advance their agenda.

As a manager you will have the 'handicap' that you yourself have an interest in achieving a positive outcome for your coachee too. It may therefore become very tempting to try and set the coaching agenda for them to ensure *you* also get out of the coaching what needs to be achieved.

Coaching only works if the coachee is in charge of the work being done: if they are not, they are being managed instead. Coaching as a manager means letting go of control and handing over to the individual and putting yourself in the service of what they are working on.

It may help you to set out in advance for yourself which topics need to be managed for your member of staff and which topics are suitable 'coaching' material. Consider putting those that are not into their Personal Development Plan or equivalent instead.

Separating topics in this way allows you to help the coachee set a clear agenda and manage their expectations of what you could achieve through coaching.

2.5 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

To conclude this chapter a few notes on reflective practice are in order. As a manager no one should expect you to start case notes on each coaching 'case' or conversation. That said, you may want to take some notes and add them to the personal files of the reports you coach, as this is also about record keeping. These can be useful for appraisals for example.

Reflective practice is considered to be extremely important for professional coaches. It allows us to learn from our work and also serves to keep our practice safe, up-to-date and recognise our own developmental opportunities, amongst other benefits.

For you as a manager-who-coaches there are similar benefits to be had from reflecting on your coaching efforts. I recommend making reflecting after each session a habit – and you can develop your own way and it can take a matter of minutes. If you only have time or inclination to ask yourself two questions after each session, make it these:

- What went well?
- What will be even better next time if...?

Here is an example of record keeping that you might find helpful to track progress:

Question	Example
What progress was made on the agenda?	Chaired team meeting on my behalf Handled negative customer feedback so well the customer sent a thank you email
What else was discussed?	Strained relationship with floor supervisor Prioritising tasks
What actions were agreed?	Circulate action points from team meeting and ensure they are carried out Have 1:1 with supervisor to give and ask for feedback
What preparation do I need to do before the next session?	Look up suitable tools to help with prioritising workload
What can I do differently next time?	Talk less!

Table 2.3 Record keeping for coaching sessions

Now, as a manager it could be very tempting to have a word with the floor supervisor after the above session. Tread carefully. If you were to take the floor supervisor aside you would undermine the coachee’s initiative and you would certainly break confidentiality and harm their trust. As a coach you need to continue to step aside, even if as a manager you might have intervened. Discuss with your coachee in a next session if, when and how you will get involved as their manager.

However important confidentiality is, it is not and cannot be absolute. Here are some important exceptions that allow a coach to break confidentiality:

- If the coachee is in a crisis – for example if they need professional help such as therapy or legal advice
- If the coachee is breaking the law or rules in the organisation – for example reveal in a session that they are driving a company van without permission

Always talk to your coachee if you know or suspect a scenario such as the above, but put *always* your own safety first.

3 PLANNING YOUR SESSIONS

Applying a structured approach to your coaching sessions can be of great help to you and your coachee, especially if you are quite new to coaching other people. Using two well-known coaching models we are going to look at two practical ways you can plan and manage your coaching conversations.

3.1 THE GROW MODEL

A very well-known model, GROW, focuses on performance and is a tried-and-tested model in business. The acronym stands for Goals, Reality, Options and Will or Way Forward.

Using this model means working your way along the acronym in four distinct stages. It is a very useful model to structure and plan a series of coaching sessions, but it can also be hugely effective in the space of half an hour. By working through the four stages in a single conversation you can help a coachee clarify what it is that they really want, what is required of them and other people to achieve it, and how to get started.

The GROW model is also a great model to apply in team meetings, for example when the team comes together to work on plans, and in a similar way can also be used with groups, i.e. people who do not work in the same team.

The below table takes you through some great questions to ask in each stage of the conversation.

Stage	Sample questions
Goals	What would you like to get out of today's session? What is going to be the most helpful thing to focus on today? What is your end goal to work towards?
Reality	What obstacles are you putting in the way of your success? What else gets in the way of you achieving your goal? What do you need to bring to the table that you are currently not? How do you feel when you know you have done a good job?
Options	What alternative scenarios do you see? How appropriate or feasible is each of these? How many courses of action are there? If budget/time/resourcing was no object, what else could be done? If obstacle X didn't exist, how would things look?
Will / Way forward	What will you do? When will you do X, Y or Z? How does this contribute to your goal? Who needs to be involved? How will you get the support or resources do you need? What will you do when the going gets tough?

Table 3.1 Using the GROW model

3.1.1 GOALS

John Whitmoreⁱⁱ, who made the GROW model famous, recommends making Goals:

SMART: Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Timed

PURE: Positively stated, Understood, Relevant, Ethical

CLEAR: Challenging, Legal, Environmentally Sound, Appropriate, Recorded.

The GROW model distinguishes between *end goals* ('becoming the MD in 2 years' time') and *performance goals* that contribute to achieving the end goal ('finishing my MBA this year', 'increasing sales performance by 40% this financial year').

Performance goals will typically have the session-to-session focus. As the coach your job is to keep testing these against the end goal to help the coachee to ensure they focus on the right ones to get them to their end goal.

3.1.2 REALITY

By clarifying the current situation or reality of the coachee's circumstances, goals they have set themselves will become more clearly defined. For example, is it realistic to want to become the MD in two years' time when the coachee has not yet enrolled in the MBA they know they need for the job?

In this stage of the coaching it is important to collect all the facts and face up to some uncomfortable truths if necessary. It is also important to explore deeply and honestly what the coachee is bringing to the table to achieve their end goal. For example, what are the personal attributes of an effective MD? Does the coachee possess these traits or is there work to be done? This makes questions of a more soul searching type relevant: is it realistic to work towards this end goal if the coachee has confidence issues or is not yet very good at receiving constructive feedback?

3.1.3 OPTIONS

This stage is about generating as many scenarios and possible courses of action as possible, linked to each of the goals. The more the better is the idea here: get creativity flowing by encouraging your coachee to throw out anything they can think of and recording it. Post-its, flipcharts and whiteboards are useful tools, especially if your coachee has a visual preference. It is important to let them exhaust all ideas fully and give them plenty of time to do so.

If you can think of another option or two, ask the coachee if they want to hear them. Respect their response if it is no – it's not that likely to happen but it can. In offering your options be sure to add new ones or build on existing ones, and to make it plain that your suggestions are no more valid than their own.

Here you may need to manage yourself: as the more senior person in the room you may have knowledge the coachee is not privy to. For example, you may know about a restructure that will affect the coachee, but this information is not yet in the public domain. How will you handle the session in that case?

3.1.4 WILL OR WAY FORWARD

This is the stage where the action plan starts to get formulated in detail. It is crucial that the coachee feels full ownership of this plan and that it isn't imposed by the coach, because that is likely to undermine their commitment to it. Instead, help them to prioritise and find out what they need to carry out the plan.

Linking back to the Reality here can be very useful as a reminder of your coachee's strengths and can be a very powerful way to boost their confidence. Motivation is key when people are committing themselves to tackling stretching tasks!

3.2 THE OSCAR MODEL

Our second coaching model was specifically developed to be used by managers by Jenny Rogers who is a very well respected coach herself. The model is called OSCAR, another acronym which stands for: Outcome, Situation, Choices and Consequences, Actions, Review.

At first glance it may look very similar, yet it is a more sophisticated model than GROW. The main difference to the GROW model lies in the C: Choices and Consequences, designed to spend more time on risks and impact on team and organisation. The second stand-out difference is the last stage: Review. It is a good model for when you need some more structure and depth than the GROW model has to offer.

The below table provides some sample questions per stage to illustrate how this model works:

Stage	Sample questions
Outcome	What would you like to get out of today's session? What is your end goal to work towards? What does long-term success look like?
Situation	What is happening at the moment? Who or what (else) is involved? How do you know this is a problem? What is the <i>real</i> challenge here?
Choices and Consequences	What has worked so far, and what hasn't? What else can be tried? What are the consequences of doing nothing? What are the consequences of option A over option B, etc.? What consequences are most/least desirable and why?
Action	What will you do first? Who needs to be involved? What other support or resources do you need? What will you do when the going gets tough? How committed are you to taking action (scale 1–10)?
Review	How will you know you have completed an action? How will you keep track of progress? How often will you pause to take stock? When will we review progress together? What will help you get back on course when you struggle?

Table 3.2 The OSCAR model

3.2.1 OUTCOMES

Similar to Goals, the Outcomes stage looks ahead and invites the coachee to translate their desired outcome into a long term outcome. It also looks at setting medium- and short-term outcomes. Rogers argues that most of us get more done when we have a clear outcome to work towards, and recommends ensuring you have an outcome for each session as well as longer term outcomes to focus on.

3.2.2 SITUATION

The next stage is essentially a gap analysis: what is the difference between the desired outcome and the present situation?

Clarifying and mapping the present situation also helps uncover any obstacles the coachee is putting in their way themselves. For example, they may be making assumptions about people's interest or involvement and these need to be checked out first.

Scaling can be very helpful here to find out what obstacles are more pressing or important to address than others. Chapter 4 has some excellent tools and techniques to use such as the Force Field Analysis. The Ladder of Inference can be very illuminating when you sense a coachee needs support checking their assumptions.

3.2.3 CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

In this stage we spend time on choices ('options') and, importantly, weigh them against their potential impact. This is valuable, because it invites the coachee to regard the wider system in which they plan to take action and consider all stakeholders.

As the coaching manager this is also an important difference with the GROW model. It allows you to ensure actions are not taken in isolation and gives you an opportunity to introduce additional perspectives to the coachee through questions such as:

What would be the impact of choice A on Team X?

How can you mitigate the budget shortfall in Q3 if you carried out choice B?

Rogers suggests ensuring all angles are covered by using this list:

People – who is affected?

Money – what is required?

Time – how much time will it take?

Practicality – is it feasible?

Personal impact – can you manage?

Unintended negative consequences – what or who needs to give, and is this reasonable?

– Jenny Rogers, *Manager as Coach*

3.2.4 ACTIONS

Once all choices and their consequences have been listed and weighted, actions can be formulated in line with what the coachee has found out so far. The more you have been able to define and refine choices and consequences, the easier this stage will be. Good actions are clearly worded, have relevance and are realistic with a time frame in which to achieve them. If one of those ingredients is missing, you may need to look at breaking an action into smaller parts.

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If you find the coachee has trouble coming up with clearly defined actions that are linked to their desired outcomes, you may have missed something important. If this happens, go back to one of the previous stages and work your way through it once more before setting actions. Don't worry if this happens; it is not at all unusual to find something important has been overlooked altogether! As any seasoned coach will tell you, new insights often lead to outcomes changing later on in the coaching, and this is nothing to worry about.

At the same time, your role as coach is also to hold your coachee accountable. Press them where you feel they need it to get clear actions. Challenging your coachee to take stretching actions can strengthen their commitment to their end goal.

3.2.5 REVIEW

The final stage of the OSCAR model helps the coachee to monitor their progress and intervene early if things are not going to plan. It also helps them to learn from what they have achieved so far, to apply this to new actions, and to pause and enjoy their successes along the way.

For you as a manager this stage is also important because you can stay up to speed with what is happening and how – you yourself may well be asked by your own superiors how things are going! Be sure to safeguard the coachee's trust when you share progress.

3.3 THE RELATIVE BENEFITS OF MODELS

I just need to add a final note here before we move on to tools and techniques. Coaching models – and if you head out to look for more you will find an abundance of wonderfully acronymed models to regale you – are just that: a representation of the real thing. Things can be very different when you find yourself in the room with your coachee, struggling to stick to the right order of your chosen model. Here are a few tips.

Models are intended to help you and your coachee

It means you use them as you see fit, knowing what *you* are confident about and what your coachee needs. You don't need to labour through each stage each time you see each other when it is obvious your coachee needs to spend all available time on just one.

Models are presented as linear, when reality rarely is

I referred to it briefly above: just because you have worked through the first three stages already, doesn't mean you are now stuck with stage four and can't go back. Learning often happens in loops, so skipping back a stage or a few is absolutely fine and even advisable. Your coachee may have become more skilled at working through their thinking in the first round, and get to where they need to be faster. That's great – follow their lead if you are satisfied that they are not rushing or skipping anything important.

Models are optional

If it doesn't work for you or for your coachee (or both), stop using it. You can look for other ways to plan and structure your coaching sessions; the main thing is to support your coachee to get to where they need to be. Perhaps you have made some tweaks to a model to refine it for your purposes – great! Perhaps you have developed your own model – even better! What matters is the end result.

Whatever model you choose to apply, it is only ever a means to an end, never the purpose of the coaching.

4 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Now that we have looked at ways to structure your coaching conversations and sessions, we are ready to introduce some powerful tools and techniques to use with your people. The great thing about these is that you can also use them in team meetings and 1:1 meetings, in other words, their use goes beyond coaching situations. In fact, a few of these tools you might recognise as regular business tools – have a look at these even if you know them, because I have included notes on how they can be used in a coaching context.

You can find full page templates of these tools in Appendix A.

4.1 TOOLS

Here are templates for some useful resources to have in your toolkit along with a few notes on how best to apply them, and what to be mindful of when you do.

4.1.1 ACTIVITY LOG

Useful for: seeing where time goes when you (or the coachee) suspects they are not spending their time as well as they could. It is also a very powerful tool to help people find out more about what they enjoy doing at work – what energises them – and what they don't.

Watch out for: self-deception and defensiveness from the coachee. The tool is useless if the coachee 'edits' it, so make sure that there is enough trust between you for them to create an honest picture.

Time to/from	Description of activity	Energy levels: Low-Medium-High	Importance to my job: Low-Medium-High

Table 4.1 Activity Log

4.1.2 WEIGHTED TO-DO LIST

Useful for: dealing with overload and setting priorities in line with other expectations. This is a very useful tool for balancing an individual's own priorities with those of their team.

Impact refers to the achievement of objectives, which can be the coachee’s own or those of the team/organisation. By adding impact, tasks can be given priority over other tasks. The effort required helps with making a start and combat procrastination, while adding deadlines to the sheet helps to create a sense of urgency. Crossing off deadlines that have been met is also very satisfactory for most of us!

Watch out for: indecisiveness on the part of the coachee: they may not be able to see the bigger picture so easily. Also procrastination: challenge any evidence you encounter.

Task	Deadline (if applies)	Impact: Low-Medium-High	Effort required: Low-Medium-High

Table 4.2 Weighted to-do list

4.1.3 COVEY’S QUADRANTS

Useful for: improving time management by seeing which tasks matter and which are just taking up time for the wrong reasons. Taken from the book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, this tool divides tasks into urgent and not urgent, important and not important tasks. It is an excellent tool to use alongside the Weighted To-Do List. The quadrant is also a very good team tool to show where individual members ‘lose’ time as a result of team processes.

Watch out for: assigning importance to tasks that aren’t. These could be comforting to the coachee but of little consequence in the bigger frame; help the coachee to root them out. Decide what ‘important’ means and apply it ruthlessly. How does the task contribute to agreed objectives/goals?

Covey argues that in order to work strategically we should spend most of our time on non-urgent, important tasks. This prevents most urgent tasks from arising in the first place. Some examples are given below.

<p>Urgent, important tasks</p> <p><i>Finding cover for 1st line support due to unscheduled absence</i></p>	<p>Non-urgent, important tasks</p> <p><i>Writing a contingency plan</i></p>
<p>Urgent, unimportant tasks</p> <p><i>Colleague interrupting to get some numbers from you</i></p>	<p>Non-urgent, unimportant tasks</p> <p><i>Organising colleagues' birthday cards</i></p>

Table 4.3 Covey's Quadrants

4.1.4 STARBURSTING

Useful for: helping to map an action plan. Great for coachees with a visual preference.

Watch out for: overcrowding. Using different colours for each point of the star can help.

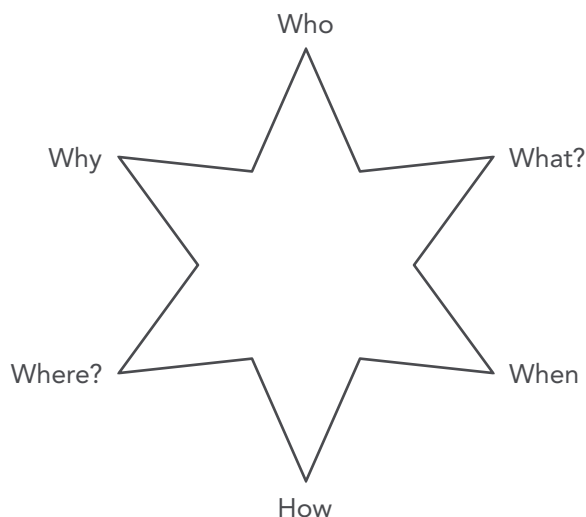


Fig. 4.1 Starbursting

4.1.5 INTERRUPTIONS LOG

Useful for: finding out what or who provides distractions. Keeping this log can identify culprits and patterns, which can then be tackled.

Watch out for: self-deception; similar to the activity log above. The coachee could be defensive about allowing events and people to interrupt them and why. It's also possible that they don't recognise something as an interruption in the first place!

Person or event Date	Time 'lost'	Summary of interruption	Valid Y/N	Urgent Y/N

Table 4.4 Interruptions log

4.1.6 STRESS LOG

Useful for: finding out what stressors are and how they impact on the coachee. Also very useful to see how many occurrences there are and how many. What kinds of patterns or links can be found between events and people?

Watch out for: Doing this exercise can be confrontational: check that you are confident it is not going to make the coachee feel worse seeing everything logged. It's also possible that you discover some unhelpful habits your coachee has developed and/or unhealthy dynamics or practices in your team. Be ready to discuss how these need to be tackled and explain that you may need to take things away to address them as the manager.

Date and time	Situation Description of what happened	Emotions I felt Anger, sadness, frustration	What I thought I'm going to mess up	Strength 1 (low)–10 (high)

Table 4.5 Stress log

4.1.7 ENERGY LEVELS CHART

Useful for: tracking someone's energy levels throughout the day. It's a useful tool for people in their first job who are still finding out about their preferences. It can be used very effectively alongside the activity log to help them plan certain tasks or types of activity in the 'right' time of day.

For example, if someone is clearly a morning person, encourage them to plan tasks that require more concentration first thing and to work on less demanding tasks later in the day.

Watch out for: self-deception including exaggeration.

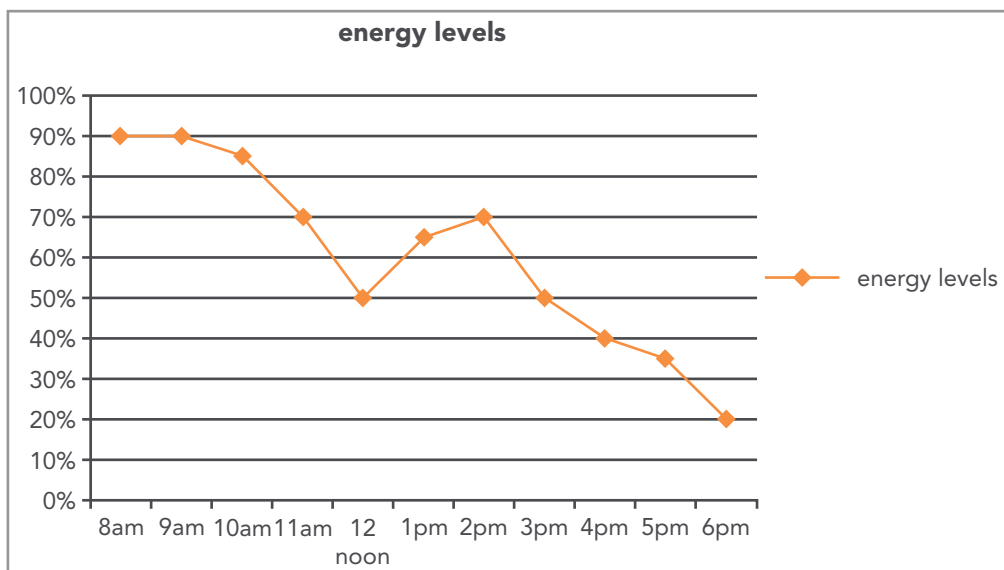


Chart 4.1 Energy Levels chart (example)

4.1.8 STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS MAPPING

Useful for: getting insight into the dynamics of meetings. Based on the work of systems psychologist David Kantorⁱⁱⁱ I developed this tool for clients who chair or facilitate meetings and need to get more insight into group dynamics. Using it can be a real eye opener when meetings are not fulfilling their potential.

It works best in a meeting or part of a meeting that the coachee isn't leading themselves, so they are free to observe. Pick a meeting where the dynamics they are interested in understanding better are likely to manifest themselves clearly.

Watch out for: projecting the results of observing one meeting onto other meetings – treat the results as a snapshot that will help you investigate further.

Use this score sheet during a section where you can observe and record participants' actions during the discussion. Add a tick each time one of the participants moves the discussion by bringing up a new point, follows a mover or an opposer, or remains a bystander. Write down the name of the meeting and the date, and make a note of the subject under discussion while observing. Let the conversation take its natural course while you do this.

Participant	Move	Follow	Oppose	Bystand

Table 4.6 Structural dynamics mapping

4.1.9 SIMPLIFIED STAKEHOLDER SEGMENTATION

Useful for: getting a comprehensive overview of all interested parties in a project. Making a map can help a coachee see who will be affected by their plans, who can help them succeed, and who might be or become an obstacle. Stakeholders can be individuals as well as groups of individuals such as teams or organisations.

When working with the below tool, keep in mind two key questions: who *needs* to be involved and who *wants* to be involved? Distinguishing between these will be very helpful to maintain focus and set priorities.

Watch out for: overlooking stakeholders. Start by brainstorming a list before sorting the stakeholders into categories. This can be overwhelming, so keep the number of categories small and clearly defined and that long list will soon start to make more sense.

Engagement required	Stakeholder names
Keep informed	Interested, but none of the below:
Involve in key decisions	Make-or-break, such as budget holders
Collaborate	Helpers, such as subject specialists

Table 4.7 Simplified Stakeholder segmentation

4.1.10 FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

Useful for: making up minds by listing all arguments in favour and against a decision, and weighing each argument. The Force Field Analysis is a well-known business tool which I include here because it has been shown to be an excellent tool to break through an impasse in coaching. Tallying up the scores at the bottom can be very enlightening.

Watch out for: indecisiveness on scoring and ‘fixing’ the weighting to change the outcome.

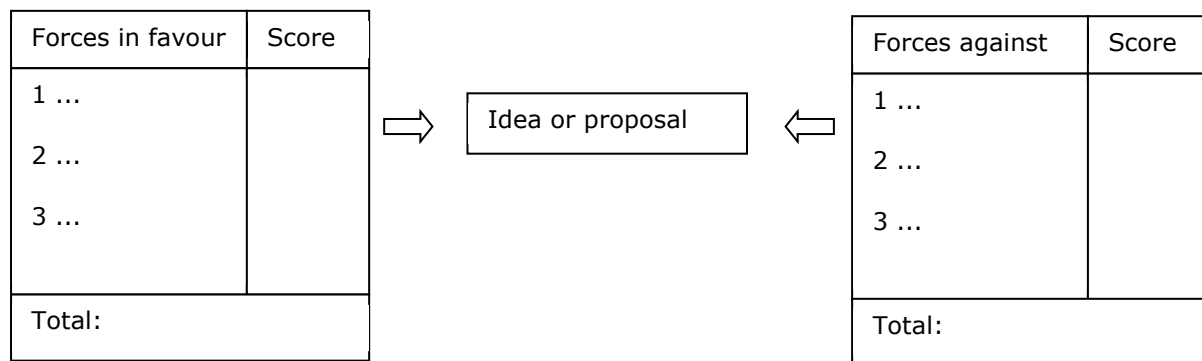


Figure 4.2 Force Field Analysis

4.1.11 EMPATHY MAPPING

Useful for: helping your coachee consider a situation from someone else’s perspective. An especially powerful tool when the coaching has interpersonal skills on the agenda, and for resolving conflict in teams. It is also a great tool to use for customer journey mapping exercises.

Watch out for: defensiveness. It may be difficult to acknowledge the impact own behaviour has on other people. Also, be careful not to make too many assumptions and try to test any you come across as much as possible.

Name of other person	
Question	Answer
What do they see?	
What do they hear?	
What might they think or feel?	
What do they say or do?	
What is at stake for them?	
What might be their gain?	

Table 4.8 Empathy Mapping

4.1.12 ABCDE TOOL

Useful for: dealing with stress and confidence issues, conflicts between people and unhelpful responses to situations. It is also a good tool to use with people who feel stuck in a loop and want to break this thought pattern. Using this tool can help discover issues that inhibit performance.

Watch out for: signs of increased stress, often shown as defensiveness. High levels of trust are needed between you and your coachee to use this tool well.

A: Adversity or Activating event	
B: Beliefs about A	
C: Consequences of B	
D: Disputation of A and B	
E: Energising effect of D	

Table 4.9 ABCDE Tool

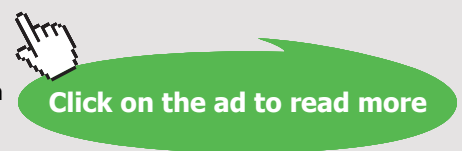
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4.1.13 WANT, DON'T WANT EXERCISE

Useful for: helping an individual or team take stock and think about what matters, and what doesn't. By working through the four below categories people can find reassurance but also gain inspiration for getting what they do not have (yet). The exercise can form the basis of prioritising and planning.

Watch out for: focusing more on 'don't want' than 'want'.

Question:	Answer:
What do I already have that I want?	
What do I already have that I don't want?	
What do I not have that I want?	
What do I not have that I don't want?	

Table 4.10 Want, don't want table

4.1.14 CIRCLES OF CONCERN, INFLUENCE, CONTROL AND COMMITMENT

Useful for: helping individuals and teams break through an impasse; solving conflicts of interest or a lack of agreement on priorities in teams.

This exercise is adapted from Stephen Covey's Circle of Influence. Start by brainstorming everything that your coachee worries about: their concerns. Draw a large circle and write all concerns around the inside of the circle, leaving space in the middle. Make an exhaustive list until no more new things are forthcoming while avoiding duplication.

Next, draw a smaller circle inside the first one. Ask what concerns the coachee feels they can influence. Draw arrows to concerns and write each on the inside of this circle if influence. Leave an empty space in the middle as before. Keep adding until there are no more new contributions: challenge where necessary.

In the third step, draw another circle inside the influences and ask the coachee to look through the list of items they agree they can influence. Which of these can they control in part or even entirely? Challenge where necessary.

Finally, ask what the coachee is willing to commit to doing to resolve those concerns that they have control over. List these and use them as a basis for agreed actions.

Watch out for: self-deception, defensiveness. Although the visual of the smaller circles inside the concerns is a powerful image you can also draw separate circles or work with post-its on a flipchart.

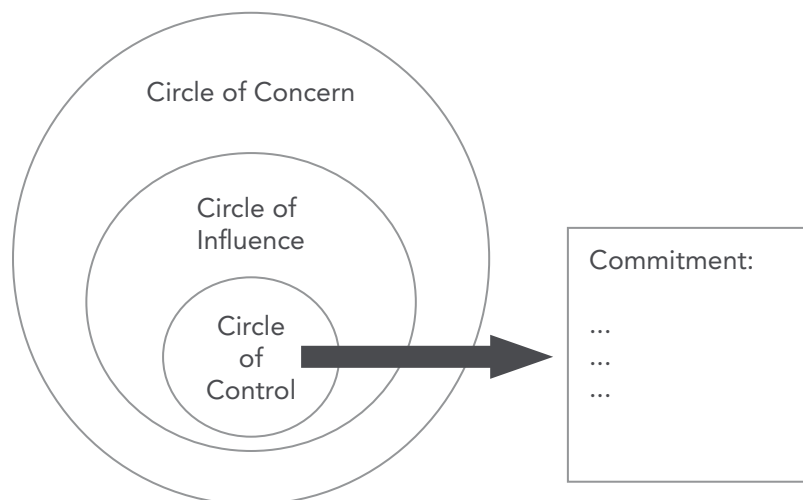


Figure 4.3 Circles of Concern, Influence, Control and Commitment

4.2 TECHNIQUES

In addition to the ready-to-use tools in the previous section, let's look at some processes that can help with tackling specific questions.

4.2.1 TEAM CHARTERS AND MANTRAS

Useful for: when teams are forming or storming^{iv}, they can benefit from making explicit the norms which they aspire to. This process can speed up team development, and it can also bring differences to light that have remained hidden so far. Some of these may come to light by themselves at some point, but there is a good chance that others won't and could become a bigger problem later.

How it works: Get your team together and reserve a good chunk of time for this; two hours is a good start but longer is better. Ensure the room has plenty of paper, pens, some flipcharts or a whiteboard.

Bring all relevant information you have about the team such as organisational charts, strategies and plans which detail the role and objectives of the team.

Invite the team members to brainstorm and draw up short paragraphs on each of the below:

1. Our team purpose is to:
This matters because:
2. Our key responsibilities are to:
3. The goals we are working to achieve are:
4. The roles in our team are:
5. The values that are important to us to perform well as a team are:
6. What we are committed doing to share good practice and to resolve any conflicts:

The result of the conversation is your Team Charter, a summary of what the team is about and how it wants to work together. Its purpose is to remind everyone in the team of what was agreed collectively. It can be referred to for decision making and to hold each other to account.



Figure 4.4 A Team Charter

A Team Mantra consists of a list of values and desired behaviours based on the team charter. An ideal length is between 5 to 10 short statements. Here are some sample statements:

- Be curious and open to new ideas
- Always act on feedback
- Encourage closer working
- Customer first

Watch out for: conversations getting stuck or being dominated by a minority of voices.

Tip: Put your Team Mantra up on a wall or board to make it visible and make it part of the enrolment of new staff. Revisit the Charter at regular intervals, especially when there are changes in the team or its purpose.

4.2.2 DE BONO'S SIX THINKING HATS

Useful for: ensuring an idea or problem is thoroughly examined from all angles by switching into different ways of thinking. By focusing on one specific way to think about a problem at a time we can explore it more fully and be confident we've truly examined the problem before coming to a decision. This tool is also great in groups and teams.

How it works: The process starts by briefly presenting a problem, preferably in under two minutes. The group decides which of the hats to 'wear' first:

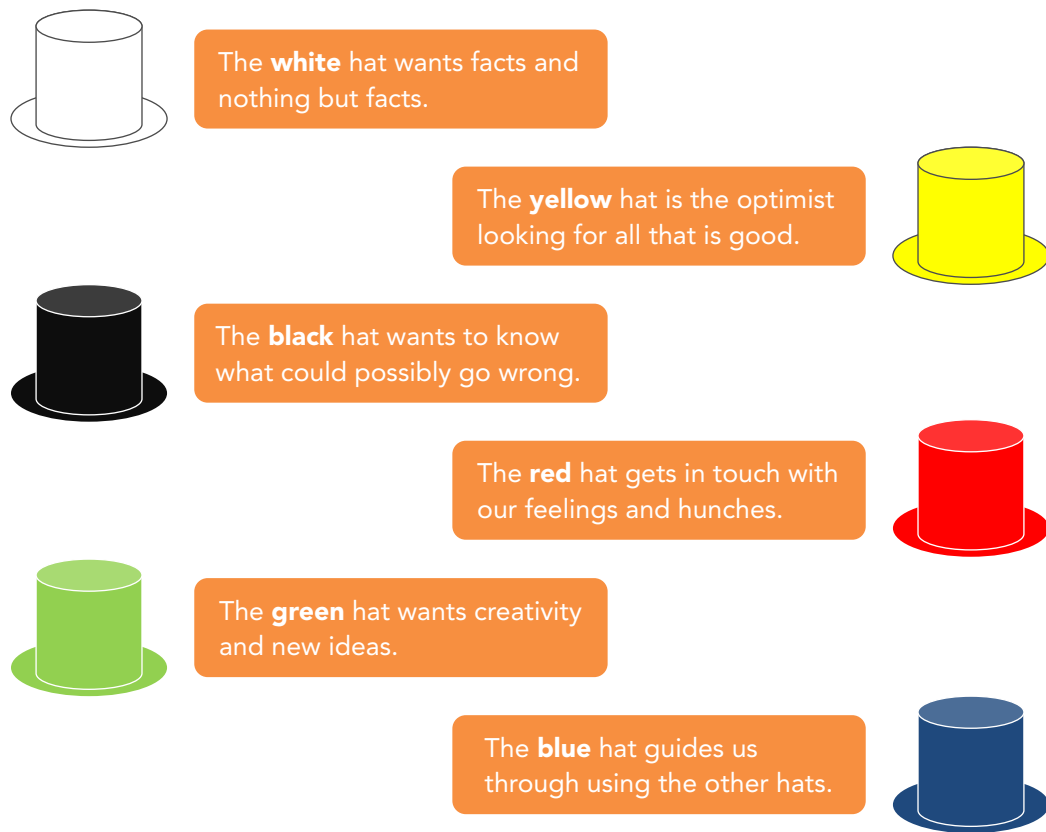


Figure 4.5 De Bono's Six Thinking Hats

Note the special role of the blue hat: its purpose is to check with the group which of the other hats is best to wear next and why, and to check whether the group is ready to move on to a different one.

Watch out for: bias and skipping your least favourite hats. Are you more attached to facts than going on your gut feeling for example?

4.2.3 FIVE WHY'S

Useful for: Getting to the root of a problem by probing deeper and deeper. It is an effective tool to learn from experience, including when something was a success.

How it works: The answer to each 'why' forms the next question as in the below example.

Problem: The Finance department is not paying invoices on time, leading to complaints from suppliers

Why are there payment delays? Payment requests are returned to us for resubmission

Why do we need to resubmit the payment request? Most often it is because the Purchase Order Number is missing

Why are the PONs often missing? Because we have not been supplied with one

Why have we not been supplied with PONs? Because the process of requesting one is unclear

Why is the process of requesting a PON unclear? Because it needs prior sign-off from the budget holder **and** the departmental head, but the system allows invoices to be submitted for payment in the meantime.

Figure 4.6 Five Why's

In the above example a flaw in the system has been identified which can be addressed.

Watch out for: rushing to conclusions. Also, when this technique is used on an individual's question, it can be confrontational for them and lead to defensiveness. Facilitating such a conversation with sensitivity is essential.

4.2.4 ACTION LEARNING

Useful for: collective problem solving. Taking a structured approach to examining a problem and generating possible solutions can free up the 'owner' of the problem and help them see previously unseen angles.

The power of action learning is in the distinct roles and steps, so sticking to these is important. An ideal group size is between five and eight.

How it works: Action learning goes through distinct steps designed to free up the problem holder and invite the rest of the group to think about the problem with them in a structured and timed way. The following steps set out how this process works.

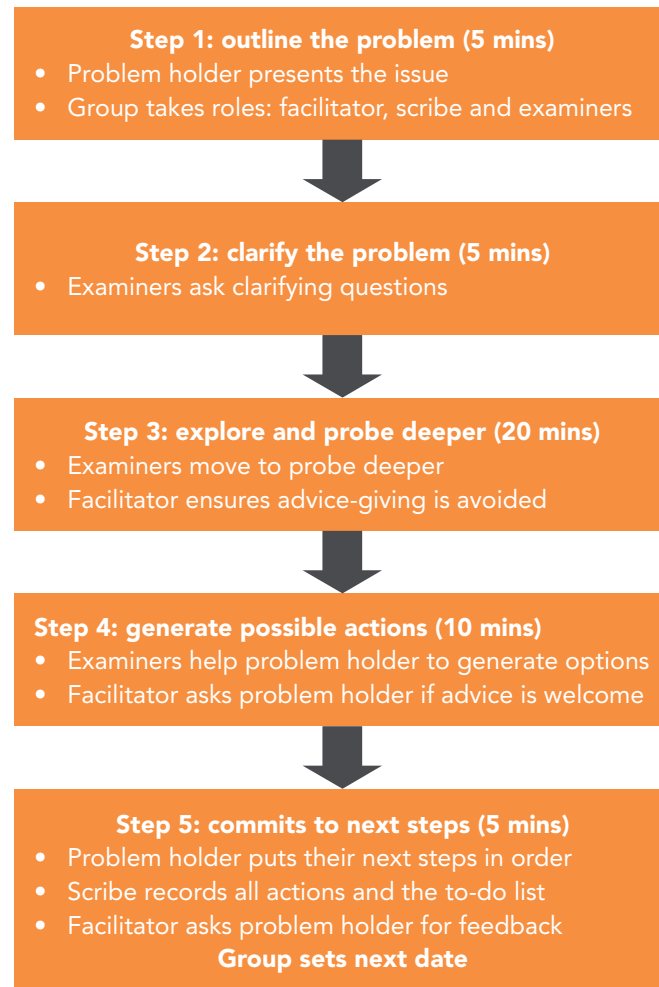


Figure 4.7 Action Learning steps

Watch out for: judgement and advice-giving creeping in. It is quite an art form to formulate a question neutrally, which is why the process has a facilitator. They may step in to ask an examiner to rephrase a question.

For example: ‘How would doubling the size of the team contribute to a good resolution?’

Can be rephrased as ‘What evidence is there that the current resource in the team is insufficient?’

This removes a suggestion and also opens the question up to different answers, for example ‘Come to think of it, two of our vehicles have been out of service for over three months and this has created a bottleneck’.

Also important is agreeing upfront that every participant owns their actions, meaning that if they agree to try something they take full responsibility for its success but also for any disappointment.

4.2.5 LADDER OF INFERENCE

Useful for: checking assumptions and making implicit thinking processes explicit. Challenging and adjusting flawed logic.

How it works: Depicted as a ladder which we climb starting at the lowest rung, this process identifies the steps we all make when interpreting the world and deciding how to interact with it.

Starting our climb we make observations and have experiences, some of which stand out more than others. Whether we intend to or not: we pick up on some things but not others, and so are selecting our reality. This leads to personal interpretations of reality and assumptions that we apply to other things as a result. From this we draw conclusions and as we near the top rung, we have formed beliefs that move us to take certain actions over others.

You can ask your coachee to talk you through each of the steps leading to a particular action to see what has been missed or interpreted differently along the way. This makes the coachee more aware of the logic or thinking behind some of their actions, and can help them check themselves in time before making a similar journey up the ladder.

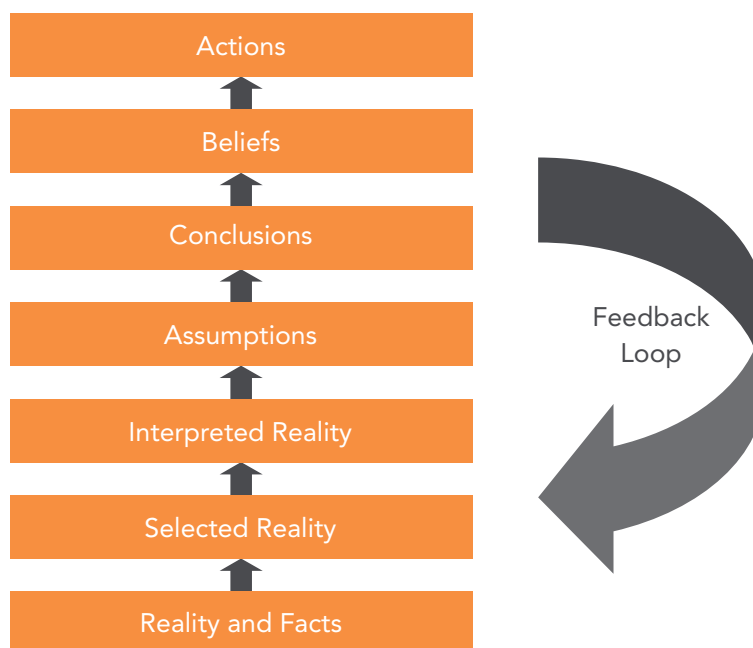


Figure 4.8 The Ladder of Inference, by Chris Argyris

Watch out for: defensiveness, self-deception.

5 STICKY SITUATIONS

As we have seen in a few examples in the previous chapters, sometimes the going is tough in coaching. This happens to all coaches and it is part and parcel of the job. In this chapter we'll look at some of the most frequently seen scenarios to help you navigate any that you encounter as a coach yourself.

5.1 THE RESISTANT COACHEE

Not everyone wants to be coached, even if you and others agree that it would be beneficial for them. It can also happen that something changes for them while working with a coach, and they seem to switch off or even disappear before they have concluded their sessions. The overtly resistant coachee can show their unwillingness in various ways such as:

- Using delaying tactics such as saying they have no time
- Not showing up for appointments or being late; last-minute rescheduling or cancellations
- Being uncooperative in session:
 - Talking about other people's issues instead of their own
 - Avoidance of real issues by talking about things that are irrelevant
 - Asking the coach what to do – 'just tell me how to solve X and we can save ourselves a lot of time'
 - Claiming they do not understand the purpose of the coaching even after this has been extensively discussed
- Not doing their actions and arriving unprepared – 'what were we talking about again?'

What does it mean and what can be done about it? Finding out the source of this resistance is key to any attempts to address it. There can be various reasons why someone puts up resistance, which can include relatively good reasons such as a lack of understanding of or misconceptions about coaching or previous, negative experiences with coaching. It is also possible that they prefer a different coach to you or that coaching is coming at the wrong time for them. Preparation is key as it may help to identify that coaching isn't the answer – another reason people resist coaching.

Let's look at these reasons more closely.

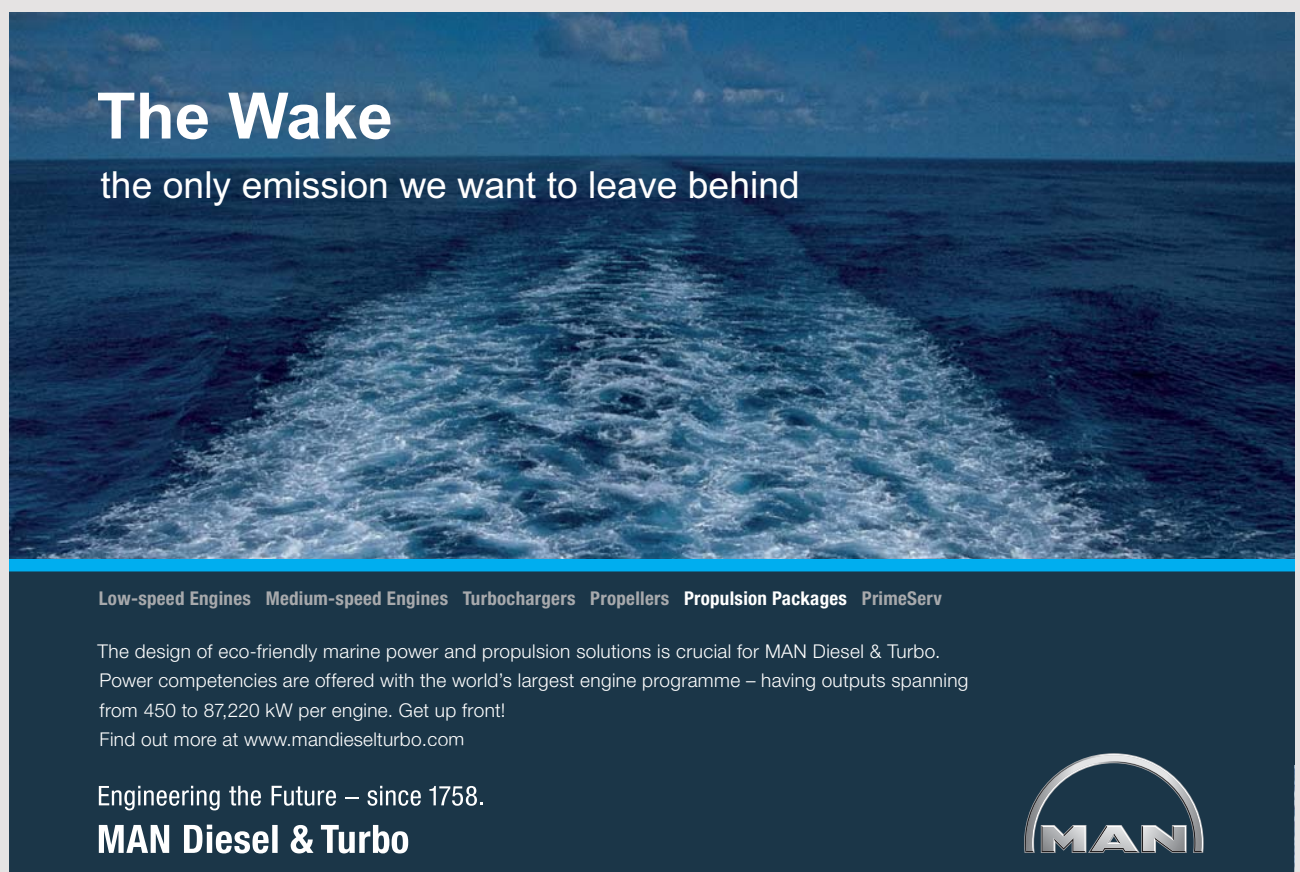
5.1.1 CLARIFYING COACHING

Before you start working with anyone as a coach rather than their manager, ensure they understand what it means for them. Ensure you discuss the way you will be collaborating and how this is different from your regular interactions. Doing this is important whether someone is open to coaching or less so, because it sets expectations and marks out the boundaries for you both.

Here it might also help to explain the differences between management, coaching, mentoring and counselling (see Chapter 1) so that the coachee understands what will be in and out of scope.

5.1.2 DEALING WITH A COACHING LEGACY

It is worth finding out if the coachee has had some experience with coaching before, which may have been prior to them landing in your team or organisation. If they have, what was the experience like for them? Asking this question helps to address any misconceptions or give additional information about how *you* see coaching and what you will be able to do as their coach. How will it be different compared to a previous experience that wasn't so successful?




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Tip: When I meet a new coaching client who tells me they have had a less than positive experience with a coach before, I apologise on behalf of the profession for their disappointment. I also thank them for agreeing to see me and give coaching another chance. It is important for the client to know their next experience could be a different one!

Once I know more about what didn't work so well for my client I ask them what I can do to avoid a repeat of the experience and, if necessary, negotiate with them.

For example, a client may say they felt the coaching was lacking in advice-giving. Rather than saying I won't be giving them advice either, I find out what the need was that led them to wanting advice from their coach and work from there. Very often this leads to us discovering that the tools and techniques which I can bring into the sessions are what they are interested in, and we work from there.

5.1.3 YOU OR A DIFFERENT COACH?

Another important point is to find out whether the idea of having their manager as their coach is too uncomfortable for your report. Check their understanding of coaching thoroughly and explain the boundaries that you will both stick to.

A little soul-searching goes a long way here too. How might you be perceived as a coach if you have a reputation as an authoritarian boss? What you know about how you are seen by your team in your day-to-day role as manager can provide some valuable clues.

Similarly, if your team is used to a directive style of leadership in the organisation as a whole, coaching might be viewed with suspicion. If this is the case, explaining the purpose and place of coaching is important.

5.1.4 TIMING

It isn't unthinkable that your report has a perfectly good reason for resisting your generous offer to coach them: it's a good idea that comes at the wrong time. You may not know it, but your report is dealing with some other issues outside work that take up all of their mental energy and the coaching would be one developmental opportunity too many. They just want to coast and do their jobs well enough for a while, but are unable to tell you. Coaching shouldn't ever be compulsory, so if you have probed enough leave the offer open with them and consider revisiting after some time.

5.1.5 ALTERNATIVES TO COACHING

Finally, as I've argued before, coaching isn't the answer to everything. Sometimes a training course is what is needed, or a straightforward answer from you as the manager. Use your judgment: you know your team better than anyone!

Key points to remember:

- Make it a rule not to coach without the other's permission
- Build trust
- Tap into motivation: what could they achieve that you know they really want?
- Consider finding them an alternative coach
- Explore other ways to support your report such as training or performance management

5.2 THE COACH

Coaching can also be difficult because the problem lies with the coach. Some of the reasons for this include:

- Inexperience or lack of training
- Mismatch between coach and coachee
- Lack of self-awareness in the coach
- Boundaries being crossed

5.2.1 TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Training is very important to hone your coaching skills, and fortunately there are many excellent workshops and training courses that can set you up with the knowledge you need. These do not have to be a huge investment in time and money – it is surprising how much you can learn about coaching in a single day. As alluded to before, experience is hugely important to train your coaching skills. The more you can practise the better, and using volunteers for this is a great way of gaining more experience.

5.2.2 THE COACH-COACHEE MATCH

As we saw in the previous paragraph, one of the crucial ingredients of coaching is the relationship between coach and coachee, which we also call the working alliance in coaching terms. A key principle of coaching is that the relationship is equal, and this is unlike your regular relationship as manager and report. This requires you to switch into a different mode, and you may not always be able to do so.

Before you start working with one of your team in a coach-coachee collaboration, check that you will be able to create a working alliance based on equality with them. This can vary from person to person, because you have a unique relationship with each member of your team. If it proves impossible or too difficult for whatever reason, your coaching is unlikely to produce any results. It is best to look for alternatives to coaching in that case.

5.2.3 DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS

It is not an exaggeration to state that self-awareness is absolutely essential in a coach. Understanding what is going on in your own mind while you are engaged in a coaching situation is crucial.

We covered listening skills in Chapter 2 and looked at levels of listening:

Level	Result
5. Empathic Listening	Fully engaged with speaker's perspective, leaves self behind
4. Attentive Listening	Pays attention to speaker and compares to own experiences
3. Selective Listening	Hears only the interesting bits
2. Pretend Listening	Creates the appearance of listening
Ignoring	Doesn't bother

Table 5.1 Stephen R. Covey's Listening Continuum

Now, let's suppose that you have been listening to your coachee's worries about redundancy and decided to pitch in:

'Oh, I know how you feel. When I was made redundant from my first job...'

Even though you might think such a response is supportive and empathic towards someone who is worried about being made redundant, it does shift the focus away from the coachee and their uncertainty and towards you, your experiences and expertise. Several things are wrong with this:

1. It isn't about you, but the coachee
2. Your contribution has interrupted the coachee's flow
3. You have become the expert and thus unbalanced the working alliance
4. Your own experiences may have no relevance at all to the coachee's circumstances

This is where self-awareness comes in. How did you decide to share this experience? What need is being satisfied by doing so, and whose need is it? What is the impact on the coachee? What might happen next in the conversation?

Working on developing your levels of self-awareness is a sound investment in your coaching capability. There are various ways of doing this: asking trusted people for feedback, doing a 360 degree review, and working with a coach yourself are just some ideas.

5.2.4 MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

Taking a coaching approach does not mean you have to start venturing into areas you do not want to go. For example, most managers will at some point need to deal with people's work-life balance issues. How do you usually deal with the topic? What about people bringing personal issues into work, how do you usually tackle these? Do you set clear boundaries and expect people to stick to them?

Taking a coaching approach while supporting a member of staff who is dealing with personal issues does not mean that you are expected to become their counsellor and go into detail. What was inappropriate to bring into work remains exactly the same, regardless of the approach you take to having the conversation.

5.3 COMMONLY ENCOUNTERED THEMES

Experienced managers will know that there are themes that present themselves time and time again. Let's look at a few of these themes and map these against the tools and techniques introduced in this book to help you apply them in real life.

5.3.1 PERFORMANCE ISSUES

Underperformance and/or inconsistent performance are two of the most common staff issues managers have to deal with. The causes of such problems can be vastly different between people, so they need careful unpicking to get to the root of them. Some causes for performance issues include:

- Lack of clarity on what the job is about
- Lack of means to do the job well: equipment and resources but also skills
- Misaligned priorities
- Being unaware of what good performance looks like
- Lack of motivation to perform well

From the above we can see that in order to address performance issues, we need to match our approach to what causes them. What should also be clear is that some of these issues need to be managed, not coached. For example, if it is clear that the software used for sales tracking isn't up to the task, no amount of coaching is going to improve performance if it has been identified as the main bottleneck.

We should also consider the 'maturity' of the performance issues and look at what has already been tried to address the problem. Most organisations will have formal processes in place to deal with chronic performance issues that become appropriate when other ways to overcome them have been exhausted without a meaningful result. If you are dealing with this scenario, coaching is not appropriate and could in fact complicate formal steps that need to be taken.

Let's assume you have established there is merit in applying a few coaching tools to help address performance issues to the above causes. Here are some suggestions to help.

5.3.2 TIME MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Time management is crucial to good performance. It relies on understanding what the job is about and which priorities must come before others. It makes demands on people's personal and organisational skills, all of which can be developed.

Suitable tools include:

- Activity Log
- Weighted to-do list
- Covey's Quadrants
- Interruptions Log

5.3.3 LOW MOTIVATION

A lack of motivation can have many causes, and addressing it can be difficult and take time. Not all coachees are going to be forthcoming when probed about their seeming lack of motivation for various reasons. The following tools and techniques can help uncover what causes low motivation and figure out ways to address it:

- Energy Levels Log
- Stress Log
- Ladder of Inference
- Interruptions Log
- Covey's Quadrants

Highlighting time wasting and what exactly it is wasted on can show up patterns in behaviour. The Ladder of Inference can help identify issues in the logic or reasoning applied to work situations. It is also possible that the job makes demands on the individual which are a mismatch with their skills and preferences; the energy levels and the stress logs can help identify how and where this mismatch occurs.

5.3.4 POOR PLANNING

If someone's planning skills are poor, this can be caused by other things such as the two above, but poor planning skills can also be the cause of time management issues and a lack of motivation. Helping someone to develop their planning skills can break an impasse to improve or even resolve other performance issues. Recommended tools for developing more and better planning skills are:

- Starbursting
- Weighted to-do list
- De Bono's Six Thinking Hats

The Six Thinking Hats exercise is especially useful for helping someone think through plans from all angles if you have identified that they tend to jump in with enthusiasm and overlook important aspects which then complicate the plan. Starbursting can be excellent to look around for additional help and support, and you may need to work on someone's confidence to ask for help or involve others in getting their task done.

5.3.5 ASSERTIVENESS AND CONFIDENCE ISSUES

Confidence issues are very commonly encountered in coaching. If you have identified this as an area for development for your report, it is advisable to find out more about the coachee's thinking processes. The below tools and techniques can help:

- ABCDE tool
- The Ladder of Inference
- Stress Log

If your coachee finds it hard to say no to other people who are making demands on them, it may help them to map these demands against their job responsibilities. It may also boost their confidence to give them permission as their manager to say 'no' to unreasonable or irrelevant demands and to support them in their efforts to learn to do so as their coach. Some useful tools include:

- Interruptions Log
- De Bono's Six Thinking Hats
- Weighted To-Do List

The Interruptions Log can help identify culprits taking up time that should really be spent elsewhere. These interruptions can be people as well as tasks generated by circumstances, such as working processes that need adjusting. Be ready to discuss next steps that may involve you addressing unhelpful behaviours in other team members as the manager and looking into improving working practices such as inefficient processes.

5.3.6 CONFLICT IN TEAMS

Team development consultant Patrick Lencioni^v suggests that not making good use of conflict in teams is an opportunity missed. Conflict can highlight what is important to a team and its individual members and help the team to resolve it and grow closer in the process.

Team conflicts can have many causes, with some important ones being personality clashes between members, a lack of alignment of vision and unhealthy team dynamics, such as cliques forming and even bullying. Team conflict is very interesting to work with, as the stakes are high. The reward is worth it: a team that is willing to explore conflict and take risks to resolve it has the potential to become a high performing one.

Here are some tried-and-tested tools to consider when working with teams that are experiencing issues:

- Structural Dynamics Mapping
- Empathy Mapping
- Force Field Analysis
- De Bono's Six Thinking Hats
- Team Charter and Mantra
- Action Learning

The first suggestion, Structural Dynamics Mapping, is a tool I recommend using yourself when observing the team work on something together. As a coach this map can give you invaluable information about the possibility of cliques, domineering views, untapped potential and behavioural patterns to inform your next steps.

Teams in conflict can become very inward focused when much of their energy is spent on dealing with tensions. Empathy Mapping can be used as a tool to get the team to shift its focus back to the context they operate in. It is also a good tool for self-reflection in the team, for example by asking them to create an empathy map for each other to understand the impact of their behaviour on the team.

When a team cannot agree on its vision and purpose, the Force Field Analysis and Six Thinking Hats can help draw out all the different ideas people have and discuss which ones matter most and why. The Team Charter and Mantra can make an agreed vision explicit to all, including people who join the team later – this can minimise the risk of conflict erupting anew.

Finally, Action Learning is a method that can help a team develop a disciplined, structured way of collaborating as equals. It can be a powerful technique to prevent domineering voices from taking over conversations without silencing them altogether.

5.3.7 COMMUNICATION

Communication is a personal skill, certainly. However, it also applies to processes and team dynamics, so it gets its own separate listing. Teams that are clear on their purpose, vision and role must be able to convey this outside the team as well. Individuals with strong communication skills are likely to perform better and maintain high levels of motivation.

The following tools and techniques are designed to gain more insight into audiences:

- Simplified Stakeholder Segmentation
- Structural Dynamics
- Empathy Mapping

Finally, these tools can help with developing communication skills further:

- Action Learning
- The Ladder of Inference

If the latter sounds like an odd suggestion, consider this: the conversation we have with ourselves about something and the logic we apply to our reasoning in particular shapes the way we communicate our views to others. Additionally, by examining our own way of working through facts and reality and how we get to taking action, we might also become closer to understanding the way other people do the same.

6 LEARNING ON THE JOB

They say it takes 10,000 repetitions before we've truly mastered a skill. With coaching the real learning also takes place in practice. If that sounds daunting, remind yourself that you are working with people who know and trust you when you decide to take a coaching approach with your reports.

To help you get started, here are ten top tips from experienced coaches.

1. Seek permission to coach. It can't be stated enough: coaching only works when both participants *want* to.
2. Have your own definition of coaching ready when you sit down with someone new. It helps if you can clearly explain what coaching is and what they can expect.
3. Be explicit about what you are aiming to achieve through *coaching* as opposed to *managing* someone. Discuss boundaries between the two and what you will do and say if you need to switch from coaching to managing someone mid-conversation.
4. Start simple: how about sitting down with a tool and helping your report to work through it?
5. Discuss expectations and limitations to confidentiality upfront with your coachee to avoid misunderstandings later.
6. Avoid making coaching into your new hobby. It's not always going to be effective or appropriate to coach.
7. Consider if and what kind of notes you need to keep on coaching sessions. How will you keep them safe?
8. Consider upfront what you are prepared to report on to your own superiors about what your coachees are working on in their sessions, and what should remain confidential.
9. Consider finding a coach for yourself. Apart from benefitting from the coaching, it will give you additional insight into coaching. The experience can also help you understand how your coachees might experience being coached by you.
10. Keep learning about coaching, including from things that didn't work while celebrating the things that did!

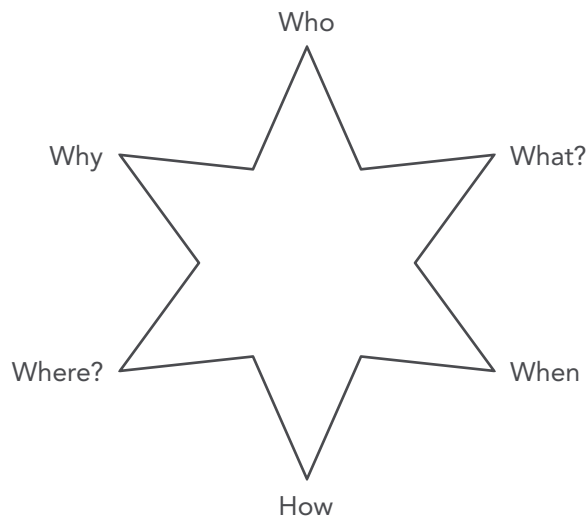
Go forth and coach!

Additional notes:

T3 COVEY'S QUADRANTS

Urgent, important tasks	Non-urgent, important tasks
Urgent, unimportant tasks	Non-urgent, unimportant tasks

T4 STARBURSTING



**UNLEASHING
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OCTOBER 18 & 19, 2018
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The poster features a circular logo on the left with three stylized human figures in the center, surrounded by six gears and four curved arrows pointing clockwise. At the bottom, there is a silhouette of an Amsterdam city skyline including a windmill, a bridge, and several buildings.

T5 INTERRUPTIONS LOG

Person or event Date	Time 'lost'	Summary of interruption	Valid Y/N	Urgent Y/N

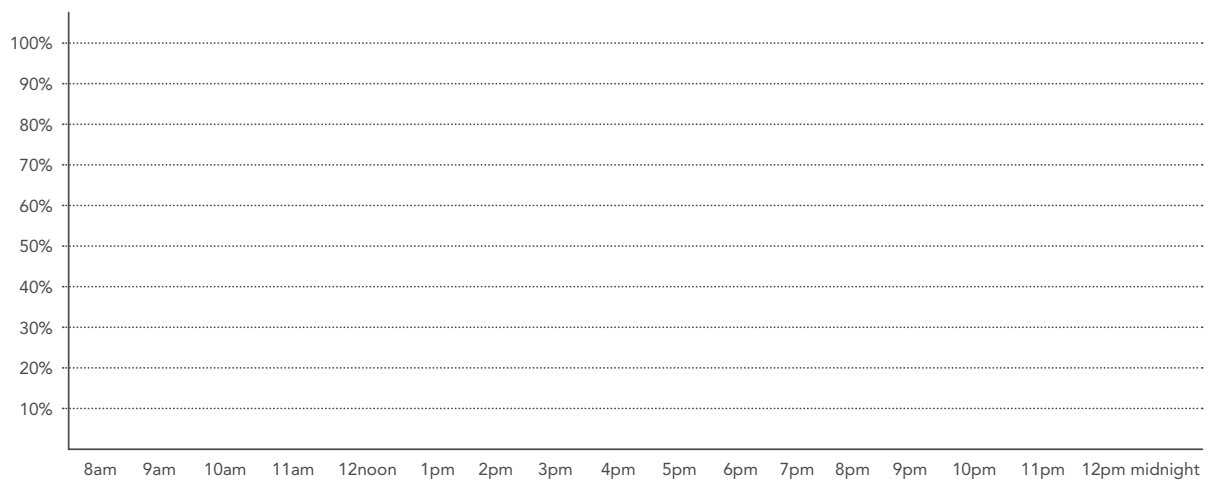
Additional observations:

T6 STRESS LOG

Date and time	Situation	Emotions I felt	What I thought	Strength 1 (low) - 10 (high)

Additional observations:

T7 ENERGY LEVELS CHART



Additional notes:

T8 STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS MAPPING

This tool can help map the dynamics in a team or group as they go about discussing a topic of interest to all. Use this score sheet during a 10-minute section where you can be a participant rather than a chair or facilitator, allowing you to observe and record participants' actions during the discussion. A simple tick each time one of the participants moves the discussion, follows a mover or opposer, or remains a bystander.

Structural Dynamics Score Card

Meeting and date:

Participants (i.e. team name):

Subject under discussion during observation:

Participant	Move	Follow	Oppose	Bystand

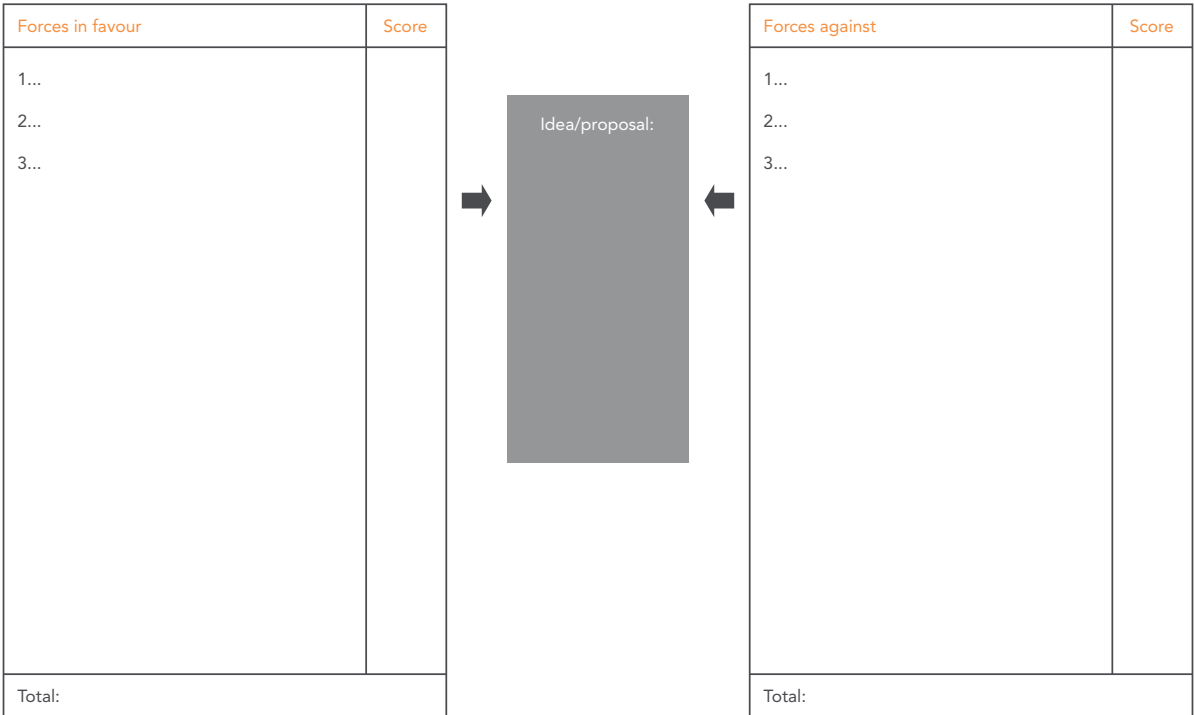
Notes on specific interactions:

T9 SIMPLIFIED STAKEHOLDER SEGMENTATION

Engagement required	Stakeholder names
Keep informed	
Involve in key decisions	
Collaborate	

Additional notes:

T10 FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS



T11 EMPATHY MAPPING

Name of other person, team, group, organisation etc.	
Question	Answer
What do they see?	
What do they hear?	
What might they think or feel?	
What do they say or do?	
What is at stake for them?	
What might be their gain?	

Additional observations:

T12 ABCDE TOOL

A: Adversity or Activating event	
B: Beliefs about A	
C: Consequences of B	
D: Disputation of A and B	
E: Energising effect of D	

T13 WANT, DON'T WANT EXERCISE

Question:	Answer:
What do I already have that I want?	
What do I already have that I don't want?	
What do I not have that I want?	
What do I not have that I don't want?	

Additional notes:

RECOMMENDED READING

COACHING BOOKS FOR MANAGERS

James Flaherty, *Coaching. Evoking excellence in others*. Elsevier, 2010

Henry Kimsey-House et al, *Co-Active Coaching. Changing business, transforming lives*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2011

David Megginson and David Clutterbuck, *Techniques for coaching and mentoring*. Elsevier, 2005

Eric Parsloe and Melville Leedham, *Coaching and Mentoring. Practical conversations to improve learning*. Kogan Page, 2009

Jenny Rogers, *Manager as Coach. The new way to get results*. McGraw Hill, 2012

John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance. Growing people, performance and purpose*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing. Many editions available

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Lynne Butler, Nigel Leach, *Action learning for change. A practical guide for managers*. Management Books, 2011.

Stephen R Covey, *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. Simon and Schuster. Many editions available.

Daniel Goleman, *Six leadership styles calculator*

David Kantor, *Reading the Room*. John Wiley and Sons, 2012.

Patrick Lencioni, *The five dysfunctions of a team*. Jossey-Bass. Many editions available

Mike Pedler, *Action Learning for Managers*. Gower, 2008

Reg Revans, *The ABC of action learning*. Routledge, 2011

Bruce Tuckman, [Stages of Group Development](#)

ENDNOTES

- i. Henry Kimsey-House, Karen Kimsey-House, Laura Whitworth, and Phillip Sandahl, *Co-Active Coaching: Changing Business, Transforming Lives*, 2011.
- ii. John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance*, first published in 1992 and reprinted and updated many times.
- iii. David Kantor, *Reading the Room*, 2012.
- iv. See Bruce Tuckman's [Stages of Group Development](#)
- v. Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.