



University of
South Australia

Leader as Coach

A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR MANAGERS



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
What is Coaching?	4
What Coaching is Not.....	4
Coaching in the Leadership Continuum.....	5
The Benefits of Developing a Coaching Style.....	6
For the Organisation – A Coaching Culture.....	6
For the Leader.....	7
For the Team Member.....	7
Desired Outcomes of Coaching.....	9
Awareness.....	9
Clarity.....	9
Ownership.....	9
Empowerment.....	9
Honing your Coaching Skills.....	10
Coaching Meta-Skills.....	10
Coaching Skills.....	10
Coaching in Action.....	12
A Coaching Model.....	13
Appendix 1 – Leader as Coach.....	15
Appendix 2 – GROW Model.....	16

Introduction

Developing the capabilities of staff is an important part of Enterprise 25, the University's Strategic Plan. Organisations can no longer expect to be competitive unless they are able to attract and retain high performing staff, inspire them and support them to learn continuously.

Coaching is a one-on-one process of professional support, guidance, challenge and development that has emerged over the years as an invaluable process in:

- facilitating learning
- enabling transfer of knowledge
- improving staff capability for the long term
- facilitating effective delegation of work
- optimising staff performance, and
- creating a productive workplace climate.

Being able to operate as a coach is an integral aspect of a line manager/supervisor's role and expectation of leadership at UniSA

This guide explores the elements and benefits of coaching. It provides tips on how to move to operating as a Manager-Coach, including highlighting the skills needed to make this transition. In doing so, it links to a range of enablers available to you as part of UniSA's suite of development options including both the Women's Development and Enterprising Essentials programs. We encourage any feedback you might have on the usefulness of this resource to assist you in successfully operating in your role of *Manager as Coach*.



Note: In this Guide we have used the term leader to apply interchangeably with manager and supervisor. It has been designed as a resource for those in any leadership role.

What is Coaching?



Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.

- Sir John Whitmore, 2002.

Coaching provides the opportunity for an individual to work together with another person to:

- discover and clarify what the staff member wants to achieve and align with organisational goals
- elicit staff-generated solutions and strategies,
- enable a change in an individual's perception and/or behaviour,
- build individual know-how, skills, confidence and effectiveness, and
- hold the staff member responsible and accountable.

In essence, it provides for immediate on-the-job learning as well as 'just in time' learning tailored to the individual and their particular situation.

What Coaching is Not



A purist coach does not advise or provide solutions. Instead they facilitate a process whereby the coachee generates their own solutions and holds themselves accountable to them. Unlike counselling / therapy, which seeks to ‘heal’ a problem, coaching is performance and solutions focused. Whilst therapy is often rooted in the past, coaching focuses on creating a future based on conscious choices made in the present.

Finally, unlike mentoring, the coaching is not about imparting expert knowledge in a particular field. It is about guiding individuals in self-directed learning, with each person being the expert on his / her own domain.

- Coaching is a development process in which an individual is supported while achieving a specific personal or professional competence, result or goal.
- Coaching is a very focused conversation that primarily uses questions to get to the heart of things and facilitate change and transformation.

Coaching in the Leadership Continuum



Whilst purist coaching does not involve mentoring, instruction and a raft of other skills, Managers and Supervisors in our work environment here at the University may well find themselves having to wear several different hats as they are coaching day to day workplace situations.

As the diagram above depicts as a manager there will be times you will move along the continuum and utilise different approaches that may be categorised as ‘push’ or ‘pull’ approaches. Where we may ‘push’ information in a more instructional manner, this includes mentoring where we are giving advice, or utilising a ‘pull’ approach to obtain information from the employee leveraging from the use of good questioning and reflection opportunities. Roles overlap and often appear in one interaction, and whilst not all situations will lend themselves to purist coaching, coaching techniques can greatly assist engagement, clarity, empowerment and ownership in performance development situations.

The Benefits of Developing a Coaching Style

For the Organisation – A Coaching Culture

At UniSA, the goal of developing a coaching culture supports strategic development, empowerment and innovation across the University. A coaching culture develops leadership capability at all levels of the organisation. Leaders who can engage with their staff to develop their mastery, autonomy and connection with the outcomes of the University are key to developing this culture.

Today's leaders are facing increasing complexity in their work environments, requiring more adaptive and collaborative ways of working. Leaders are expected to demonstrate high levels of self-awareness; be able to develop the capabilities of their staff; and be able to effectively guide and motivate others towards identified goals.



Leaders need to have effective coaching skills to focus their staff on the desired performance required to achieve a clear end goal. A listening, learning coaching culture where the strengths of employees are optimised, two-way feedback and learning is the norm, and commitment to goals is fostered provides the best chance of working with the increasing levels of complexity facing organisations today.

A 2014 study conducted by the Human Capital Institute (HCI) and International Coach Federation (ICF) participated in by 500 professionals from different organisations found measurable increases in employee engagement, financial performance and career opportunities in those organisations that developed a coaching culture.

Daniel Goleman refers to Six Leadership Styles (refer [Appendix 1](#)) in his article Leadership that Get Results (HBR March-April 2000). Whilst all styles can be beneficial in specific situations, a coaching style is one of the leadership styles researchers identified as creating a positive culture and high performance in the team.

For the Leader



*Growing people is enlightened self-interest rather than idealism
that offers no added value*

- Sir John Whitmore, 2002.

Leaders 'get things done through people' so it makes sense to enhance staff capacity on the job through coaching. Staff who are *coached* to perform rather than *managed* to perform usually have more investment in the outcomes of their work and the achievement of team goals. Successfully applied, coaching enables managers to delegate work with more confidence as the staff member's capacity increases, freeing them up to work on more strategic initiatives.

Effective coaching can result in:

- enhanced performance, including increased ability to take initiative and find solutions to problems
- enhanced productivity due to increased motivation
- strengthened commitment to personal, professional and organisational goals
- increased retention of high performing staff
- greater levels of co-operation with change
- greater commitment to collaboration to achieve results.

For the Team Member

Staff receiving coaching experience the personal benefits of continually improving their skills and know-how. They increase their levels of self-confidence and job satisfaction and enhance personal growth as well as career development prospects. These factors can help to attract and retain high-performing staff.

We all recognise that when we come up with our own goals and our own solutions, we are much more motivated to achieve them than if we have been told to do something.

INTRINSIC motivation



Interest and enjoyment in the task itself

EXTRINSIC motivation



Outcome that will result by doing the task

Image source: [Sperton Recruitment](https://www.spertonrecruitment.com)

Extrinsic motivation occurs when we are motivated to perform a behavior or engage in an activity in order to earn a reward or avoid a punishment. Examples include:

- Working towards a goal to please the boss
- Participating in an activity in order to win an award
- Paying your taxes to avoid getting audited

In each of these examples, the behaviour is motivated by a desire to gain a reward or avoid a negative outcome. Typically, we might hear someone say “I should do...” or ‘I must do...”

Intrinsic motivation involves engaging in a behaviour because it is personally rewarding; essentially, performing an activity for its own sake rather than the desire for some external reward. Examples of behaviours that are the result of intrinsic motivation include:

- Striving to complete a goal because you find the outcome personally rewarding
- Participating in a sport because you find the activity enjoyable
- Solving a word puzzle because you find the challenge fun and interesting

A person’s behaviour is motivated by an internal desire to participate in an activity for its own sake. Coaching engages the individual in co-creating their work. A leader’s skilful questioning can guide the individual to develop their capabilities through identifying the parameters of the task, the quality required, who else might need to be engaged in the task and the timeframes for completion.

Desired Outcomes of Coaching



Awareness

Internal awareness of perception and feelings about a situation, e.g. discomfort, frustration, pride, sense of anticipation. A self-awareness of your own default behaviours and from that greater self-awareness comes the ability to adapt and self-correct.

External awareness of issues, stakes, consequences and a systems view.



Clarity

Clarity about issues, outcomes and goals. Where am I now? What am I trying to achieve? How does this fit with our overall direction? What options do I have available to me? What solution do I think would work best? What does a quality outcome look like?



Ownership

Ownership is about outcomes and process; having a sense of personal responsibility and motivation. It leads to improved decision-making, prioritisation and focus.



Empowerment

Empowerment is about having a clear path to reach goals. Individuals have a sense of anticipation and a sense of ability and resourcefulness. It leads to improved relationships and an improved ability to cope with stressful situations.

Honing your Coaching Skills

Coaching Meta-Skills

A meta-skill is a high order skill that allows you to engage with functional expertise more effectively. A useful example of a meta-skill is self-awareness. With self-awareness we can more accurately identify our strengths and weaknesses, leading to opportunity for further development.

To support the success of the coaching discussions it is important for the manager-coach to continually hone their practice in the numerous skill areas including the following:

Compassion – the capacity to genuinely understand another person’s point of view without judging the merits of that point of view. Empathy in action.

Humility – the capacity of letting go of the need to be the expert in a situation. It involves bringing a “beginners mind” to a coaching conversation.

Neutrality – listening to your coachee with curiosity, whilst also being aware of your own thoughts, feelings and perspectives without reacting to either point of view. It involves seeing the relationships between the different polarities in the “issue” being discussed.

Courage – the capacity to approach a difficult situation and not shy away from potential conflict. Remaining strong and ‘holding the space’. Being quiet and having a centred sense of self amidst the chaos.

Coaching Skills

To be effective as a Manager-Coach, a range of capabilities is required. These include being able to:

- build positive trusting relationships with staff. Coaching depends on a positive relationship between the coaching leader and staff member being coached. The relationship needs to be based on trust - where the staff member knows he/she can come to you and brainstorm issues in a supportive environment and leave with encouragement and your support to take action on a chosen solution.
- provide quality feedback. You want to deliver feedback that builds motivation not fear or apathy
- be receptive to receiving feedback. Be open to reflecting on and potentially learning from what you hear
- practice empathic listening (Empathise, Acknowledge, Reflect, Summarise)
- enable dialogue through open or facilitative questioning

To ascertain the strengths you will bring to a coaching relationship with your staff, why not ask your staff what coaching skills they find helpful and where you may have potential 'blind spots'. These blind spots may include you asking a lot of closed questions rather than open questions, offering solutions instead of waiting for the staff member to consider their own solutions or not taking follow up notes and therefore failing to check in at a later date.

From Manager	To Coach
<i>From trying to work out how to manage staff</i>	<i>To asking your staff how they are best managed</i>
<i>From 'You report to me'</i>	<i>To 'Tell me how I can help you'</i>
<i>From telling staff how to behave</i>	<i>To communicating expectations and being an exemplary role model</i>
<i>From controlling staff actions</i>	<i>To enabling them to take better actions</i>
<i>From solving all the problems</i>	<i>To facilitating staff to solve problems</i>
<i>From tip toeing around staff issues</i>	<i>To building relationships where you can have frank and open dialogue about issues</i>
<i>From telling staff what to do</i>	<i>To building initiative & self-directed action</i>
<i>From delegating tasks that simply get the job done</i>	<i>To giving staff challenging assignments that stretch them</i>
<i>From building a compliant culture low in drive and initiative</i>	<i>To building a learning culture where the strengths of employees are optimised, two way feedback and learning is the norm, and commitment to goals is fostered</i>

Review these questions and reflect on the changes you may need to make to enable your move from being a manager to a coach. Select one of the changes you have identified. What can you do differently at once to take the first move to operating more as a coach and less as a manager?



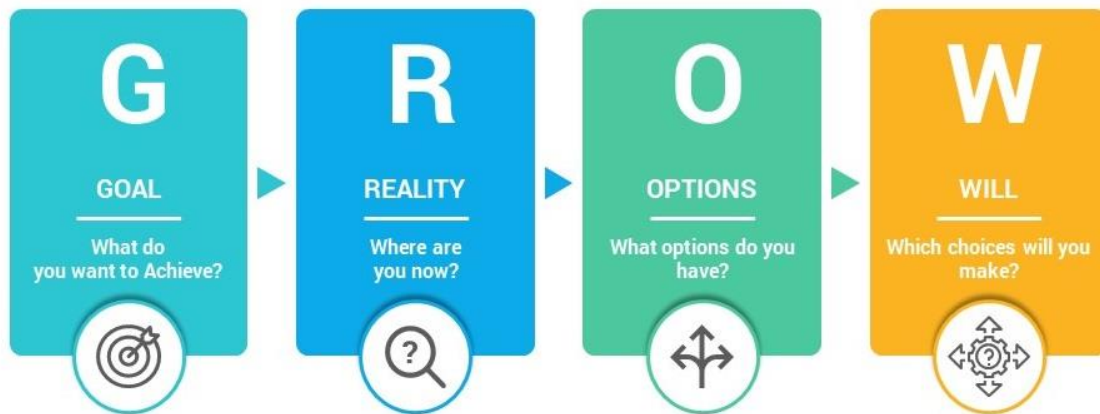
Coaching in Action

When applied, coaching is:

- **Holding a conversation and engaging in dialogue.** Coaching is not about telling the staff member what to do. Rather it is about encouraging them to reflect and learn. As adult learners, we generally like to create our own solutions rather than be told what to do.
- **Collaborative.** Coaching is about brainstorming issues together. Jointly identify possible solutions to problems.
- **Focused on achieving outcomes.** You want the staff member to leave your meeting with a course of action to take.
- **Solution focused and future-oriented.** With consideration given to the past where appropriate. When we dwell on the past and a problem, the problem often 'gets bigger'. If we focus on the way forward and a solution to the problem, the problem becomes more manageable and we have the energy to deal with it.
- **Challenging to the individual, in a positive way.** Ask open-ended questions of the staff member to encourage them to reflect on the issue or situation and think through the possible options. This is your opportunity to enable the staff member to see the situation differently, to embrace a different way of dealing with it, and potentially to change their approach or behaviour.
- **Focused on the staff member.** Your aim is to focus on their needs and learning requirements as well as facilitating ways for them to find the answers (rather than you providing the answers or directing). You want the staff member to take ownership of the problem and to take action to solve it. From this they learn and are more likely to develop capacity to find solutions to problems independently.
- **Dependent on high quality feedback.** Positive feedback builds self-confidence and makes people want to take more action. Review how implementation of the action plan went. Identify learnings. Celebrate successes.
- **Encouraging the individuals to achieve.** We learn better when we discover for ourselves. Enable your staff to 'extend' themselves and remember 'blame' has no place in coaching!

A Coaching Model

A popular and effective coaching approach is the GROW model developed by Sir John Whitmore.



The context for using the GROW model is **awareness** and **responsibility** and the skill of **effective questioning** is core to using the model effectively.

Goals – identify what is to be achieved

Reality – understand the issue or situation

Options – discuss options or choices available and think through the impact of each

Way Forward – (also known as Will or Wrap Up) agree on a course of action. What is to be done, when, and by whom and do you have the will to do it

Whilst the GROW model is very effective if you use it in the sequence of the mnemonic, you can also use it in other sequences. For example, you may not be able to help the individual set an effective goal, until they have explored the current reality, or a staff member may come to you with a number of options. You may need to explore these, before returning to the Goal or current Reality.

It is important to acknowledge that a coaching approach may not work in all cases. This will be the case, for example, if a staff member requires excessive personal direction, or if you as the manager lack the skills to guide the staff member appropriately. When a manager is responsible for a staff member who needs excessive direction, he/she needs to reflect on the potential causes of this to guide strategies for dealing with it. For example; it may be due to a lack of confidence, skills, motivation, clarity about work goals, or a 'spill over' from a previous leadership style that did not encourage self-management. When this occurs, it is useful to consider the motivational issues carefully and then seek advice from managers or your local [People, Talent & Culture Business Partner](#) on approaches that might be taken to address the issues identified.

You will find some sample questions for the Grow Model in [Appendix 2](#) of this Guide. Refer to the [Manager's Toolkit](#) for more information on the above skills.

Be sure to look out for relevant workshops offered as part of the University's [Professional Development Programs](#).



Appendix 1 – Leader as Coach

Goleman's Six Leadership Styles

THE SIX LEADERSHIP STYLES AT A GLANCE						
	Coercive	Authoritative	Affiliative	Democratic	Pacesetting	Coaching
The leader's modus operandi	Demands immediate compliance	Mobilises people towards a vision	Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds	Forges consensus through participation	Sets high standards for performance	Develops people for the future
The style in a phrase	"Do what I tell you."	"Come with me."	"People come first."	"What do you think?"	"Do as I do, now."	"Try this."
Underlying emotional intelligence competencies	Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control	Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst	Empathy, building relationships, communication	Collaboration, team leadership, communication	Conscientiousness, drive to achieve, initiative	Developing others, empathy, self-awareness
When the style works best	In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with problem employees	When changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed	To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances	To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees	To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent team	To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strengths
Overall impact on climate	Negative	Most strongly positive	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive

Appendix 2 – GROW Model

Sample Questions

Goal

- What are the intermediate steps you can identify?
- How will you know that you have achieved that goal?
- What issue would you like to work on?
- What is the timeframe?
- What form of outcome are you seeking by the end of the session?

Current Reality

- Questions to help determine the current reality
- What is the present situation?
- Who is affected by this issue other than you?
- What actions have you taken so far?
- What obstacles need to be overcome?
- How much control do you personally have over the outcome?
- Who else has some control over it and how much?
- What resources do you already have? (Skill, time, enthusiasm, money, support, etc.)
- What resources will you need? Where will you get them from?

Options

- What would you do if there were no constraints?
- Which solutions would give the best result?
- What are all the different ways you could approach this issue?
- What are the alternatives?
- What else could you do?
- What would you do if you had more time, a larger budget, or if you were the boss?
- What would you recommend if you were an external consultant looking at your challenge?
- What would you do if you could start again with a clean sheet, with a new team?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options in turn?
- Which of the solutions appeals to you most?

Way Forward (Will / Wrap Up)

- What will you do to obtain support?
- To what extent does this meet your objectives?
- When are you going to start and finish each action step?

- What will you do to eliminate the roadblocks to your actions?
- What could I do to support you?
- What commitment on a scale of one to ten do you have to taking the agreed actions?
- What could you do or alter to raise your commitment closer to ten?