COACHING CONVERSATIONS

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

1/2-DAY COURSE

COACHING CONVERSATIONS

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Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- **Learning objectives** provide effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training
- **Meaningful connections** between the topic and students' past, present, and future
- **Appropriate organization** of essential ideas helps students to focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- **Modeling techniques** demonstrate useful behaviors and problem-solving skills
- **Active application**, the cornerstone to learning, helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- **Consistent** instructions and design help students learn and retain new information
- **Accelerated learning techniques** create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course to appeal to all learning styles and ensure that the ideas and information will be retained.

Course Timing

Module One: Coaching for Performance Improvement

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Course Objectives	5
	Overview of Coaching and Conducting a Coaching Session	15
	Communication Skills and Techniques	15
	Context: Coaching for Performance Improvement	10
	Conversations: Define the Opportunity or Problem Analyze Options Develop an Action Plan	45

Module Two: Coaching for Career Development

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Context: The Career Coaching Process	5
	Context: Finding Energy, Joy, and Passion	10
	Conversation: Finding Your Passion	15
	Conversation: Setting SMART goals	10

Reading

Written Exercise

Facilitation

Group Activity

Reading

Written Exercise

Facilitation

Group Activity

Course Timing (cont.)

Module Three: Coaching for Training Specific Skills

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Context: Implementing the Steps to Effective Coaching	10
	Conversation: Brainstorming Around a Task	20
	Example: Coaching the Skill of Active Listening	10

Module Four: Coaching a Business Team

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Context: What Makes for an Effective Business Team Coach?	10
	Conversation: Empowering Team Members	20
	Conversation: Rewards and Recognition as a Springboard to Improvement	15
	Summarize and Close	10

Contents

Module **One**

COACHING FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

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Introduction: Coaching skills can be applied to a variety of situations. The most common situations involve the "big picture" view of identifying a satisfying life path and the narrower view of improving performance in specific areas.

This course reviews some of those basic situations and then expands upon them to give participants a chance to practice applying the skills in different situations.

The focus of this course is on establishing the context of a situation, then allowing the participants a chance to practice or evaluate a portion of a coaching session.

After introducing these concepts, review the learning objectives of this course.

Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

Identify the four steps of a coaching session and how they are applied in various contexts

Recognize the correct application of inquiry and advocacy in a coaching session

Apply basic coaching techniques to coaching for:

o Performance improvement

o Career development

o Training for specific skills

o Coaching a business team

An Overview of Coaching

General definition of coaching:

A method and technique that can be used to guide an individual to new learning within defined time frames

Goals of coaching:

Motivate and inspire individuals to do more and reach higher

Support clients in breaking down large goals into manageable steps

Hold individuals accountable to their commitments to quickly produce results

Over time, a coach guides a discovery process:

Assessing skills, personality traits, and learning styles

Defining vision and successful outcomes

Creating an inspiring mission statement

Establishing annual goals with objectives to meet along the way.

Coaching – A method and technique that can be used for guiding an individual to new learning within defined time frames

Aspects of coaching are not standardized, but many descriptions contain common elements

Coaching is not therapy, as that leads to dependence

Coaching puts the responsibility on the individual to become more proactive in defining goals and reaching them.

Setting the stage involves creating a private, non-threatening environment in which to conduct a conversation, then clearly stating the objectives of the session.

The conversation moves to defining the opportunity or problem, and gaining agreement from the individual.

By asking questions, the coach can help the individual to raise and evaluate options.

Once the individual has settled on an option to pursue, the conversation can focus on developing an action plan with specific goals, deadlines, and incremental steps to achieve the goals.

Since most coaching sessions are part of a coaching program, in the next session, participants should evaluate the individual's actions and the coach should provide feedback.

Context: Conducting a Coaching Session

A coaching session is a four-step process:

Set the stage

Define the opportunity or problem

Analyze options

Develop an action plan

Ongoing coaching also includes:

Continued Evaluation

Providing feedback

Communication Skills: Expert Questioner

Coaching sessions include many questions:

Ask the right questions at the right time.

Ask questions that respond to the individual's needs (not a checklist).

Begin with non-challenging questions.

Ask thought-provoking and challenging questions after trust has developed.

Ask the questions individuals wouldn't ask themselves.

Ask questions that help individuals arrive at their own solutions.

A good coach can be described as an "expert questioner," with the ability to ask the right questions at the right time, responding to the needs of the individual being coached rather than just reading from a checklist of questions.

Expert Questioner
- Ask the right questions at the right time
- Respond to the needs of the individual
- Begin with non-challenging questions
- Ask challenging questions after trust has developed
- Ask questions individuals wouldn't ask themselves
- Use questions to help individuals arrive at their own solutions

Coaches frequently ask non-challenging questions to encourage the individual to "open up" and begin a conversation.

Later, once trust has developed, coaches can ask deeper, more thought-provoking and challenging questions. These are questions that the individuals wouldn't ask themselves, which help the individuals come up with their own solutions.

When individuals arrive at their own solutions, they are better able to implement and stick to them than to solutions that others offer to them.

It is the coach's responsibility to keep the conversation moving and to achieve the desired outcomes.

Two key communication techniques used to accomplish this are inquiry and advocacy.
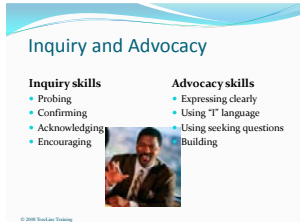
Inquiry skills follow a cycle of probing for information, confirming understanding, acknowledging the individual's feelings about the situation, and encouraging additional conversations.

While coaching involves many inquiry questions, advocacy questions and statements are also important.

Advocacy is how the coach interjects his or her insights into the conversation and builds upon what has been said. Asking questions can help the coach to determine the person's reaction and whether he or she "buys in" to what you are saying.

Communication Techniques: Inquiry and Advocacy

Inquiry skills

Probing

o "Tell me about …"

Confirming

o "Let me see if I understand this correctly …"

Acknowledging

o "I sense you're feeling overwhelmed by …"

Encouraging

o "I see, please tell me more."

Advocacy skills

Expressing clearly

o "Here's the situation we need to address."

Using "I" language

o "I have observed …"

Using seeking questions

o "What do you think about what I've just said?"

Building

o "That's a good point. Let me also suggest that …"

Context: Coaching for Performance Improvement

Set the stage

Schedule a meeting to conduct a performance conversation

o   Name the objective: To help the employee improve and become or stay successful

Define the opportunity or problem

Focus on actual behavior

o   Gain agreement on what the behavior has been

Compare the behavior to what is expected

o   Identify areas of strength and areas for improvement

Encourage the individual to think through the actions that lead to this behavior

Ask, "What is preventing you from doing the things we've talked about?"

Ask the individual, "What can you do to improve or ensure that you are doing the right thing?"

Analyze the options

List the options

Discuss the pros and cons of each

Identify the best options

We are leading up to our first coaching conversation. It will involve coaching for performance improvement.

Here is an illustration of how the four steps of a coaching session are adapted to performance improvement.

This description addresses an individual with a performance problem, but the same approach can be applied to a situation where an individual wants to improve on already good performance to make it even better.

The fourth step appears on the following page.

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Develop an action plan

Ask, "What can you take from this conversation to apply to your life today?"

Ask, "What do you need from me?"

Set expectations

o "How will we know that it is working?"

o Identify improvement steps

Set a date by which the improvement should be completed

Set checkpoints which are no longer than a week apart

Conversation: Define the Opportunity or Problem

Situation: The employee is always the last to adopt and integrate a new procedure into her workflow. This consistently results in errors immediately after a new procedure is implemented.

Most recent incident: The employee failed to use the new cover sheet when distributing TPS reports. (The new cover sheet has a new distribution list and highlights four key results in the report. Several vice presidents did not get the report, and those who received it had to dig through the report to find the key information.)

Upcoming change to procedures: The due date for report distribution is moving from Friday at 4:00 pm to Friday at noon. You are concerned that the report may not go out on time.

Coaching Conversation: The stage has already been set. We pick up the conversation at the "define the opportunity or problem" phase.

A volunteer participant, using inquiry and advocacy techniques, must identify the unacceptable behavior and help the employee understand how the behavior happens.

The rest of the participants should use a scorecard to note instances of inquiry and advocacy, to identify positive aspects of the conversation, and where the coach could have done better.

Coaching Scorecard					
Inquiry skill	**Frequency of use**				**Notes**
Probing	1	2	3	4	
Confirming	1	2	3	4	
Acknowledging	1	2	3	4	
Encouraging	1	2	3	4	
Advocacy skill	**Frequency of use**				
Expressing clearly	1	2	3	4	
Using "I" language	1	2	3	4	
Seeking questions	1	2	3	4	
Building	1	2	3	4	

Instructor notes for role play:

During the conversation, the participants should come to understand that you need to succeed in the small details in order to get ahead.

Some possible solutions for the upcoming change:

You can set up a reminder on your Outlook or Lotus Notes calendar for first thing Friday morning and again for an hour before the reports are due.. (Con: an hour might not give you enough time.)

You could just force yourself to remember without relying on outside reminders, to make sure you internalize the message. (Con: while your effort is commendable, you can't risk being late.)

Do the report the day before to make sure it is done on time. (Con: all of the data may not be available by then.)

Distribute the report by 11:00 instead of noon. This will exceed expectations, which is one way to get ahead.

Debrief this phase of the conversation before continuing.

Conversation: Analyze Options

Situation: Continue the previous conversation, with a new participant taking over for the coach.

Coaching Conversation: Using inquiry and advocacy techniques, help the employee identify options to address the behavior and then analyze the options, noting the pros and cons of each option.

The rest of the participants should use a scorecard to note instances of inquiry and advocacy, to identify positive aspects of the conversation, and to indicate where the coach could have done better.

Conversation: Develop an Action Plan

Situation: Continue the previous conversation, with a new participant taking over for the coach.

Coaching Conversation: Using inquiry and advocacy techniques, help the employee develop an action plan based on the best option developed in the previous portion of the conversation.

The rest of the participants should use a scorecard to note instances of inquiry and advocacy, to identify positive aspects of the conversation, and where the coach could have done better.

A coaching session is a four-step process:

Set the stage

Define the opportunity or problem

Analyze options

Develop an action plan

Instructor notes for role play:

The action plan could be a combination of the first and last ideas from the portion of the conversation on the previous page: to set a recurring reminder for every Friday morning at 7:00 and again at 10:00 to allow enough time to complete the report and distribute by 11:00, to exceed expectations.

Keep the reminder in place until getting the report out by 11:00 is just part of the Friday routine.

Debrief this phase of the conversation.

Summarize how these conversations illustrated the second, third, and fourth steps of the coaching session.