

COACHING AND MENTORING SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE (BMSW6105_LON)

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Reflection on Coaching Sessions: What Went Well and What Could Be Improved for the Future

During the coaching session with Janice Rowlands, in the role of coach, we successfully established a solid, trust-based relationship. This environment of psychological safety allowed Janice to openly share her concerns, leading to a productive conversation aimed at achieving tangible outcomes.

Open-ended questions were effectively utilised to help Janice clarify her goals, such as improving her visibility and skill set within the company. This resulted in a clear action plan with concrete deadlines to reinforce her commitment to these goals. These techniques demonstrate the power of well-structured coaching to facilitate a coachee's journey towards achieving their objectives.

While the session was successful, there are opportunities to enhance the coaching process, particularly in using follow-up and probing questions to explore the underlying obstacles that Janice might face. For example, we did not delve deeply enough into how her remote working arrangement might impact her visibility within the organisation or what resources she might need to address this challenge.

In the session where I was the coachee as Robert Lee, I experienced firsthand the value of having a dedicated space to reflect on challenges and find solutions. Philippa's coaching facilitated my identification of necessary actions, such as creating a WhatsApp group to improve team communication and scheduling a meeting with the automation team. This experience was a powerful reminder of the autonomy and self-efficacy that effective coaching can foster. The coach's role in guiding the coachee to arrive at their solutions is fundamental to the process, as it reinforces the coachee's belief in their capacity to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. Moreover, it exemplifies the role of coaching in resolving immediate challenges and empowering individuals to take proactive steps in their professional and personal development.

Reflecting on both roles—coach and coachee—coaching is most effective when it is collaborative, context-aware, and responsive to the coachee's evolving needs. The session highlighted the importance of continuous self-reflection for coaches, as this is critical in identifying areas for improvement in their coaching practice. Moving forward, I aim to develop my ability to ask more nuanced and probing questions, which can reveal more profound insights into the coachee's challenges and unlock more effective strategies for achieving their goals.

2. Critical Evaluation of How Coaching and Mentoring Can Lead to Improved Performance and Morale

Coaching and mentoring play pivotal roles in enhancing performance and morale within organisational settings. These interventions provide structured support tailored to the individual's needs, which can result in improved job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being. The benefits of coaching and mentoring are well-documented in the literature, with research indicating that these practices are linked to higher levels of employee engagement, motivation, and retention (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011).

In Janice's case, the coaching process provided her with a safe space to address her concerns about organisational visibility. This process of reflection and goal setting enabled her to develop strategies to elevate her profile within the company, which can ultimately contribute to her sense of belonging and job satisfaction. These outcomes are supported by self-determination theory, which posits that feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are fundamental to motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). By facilitating Janice's ability to identify her goals and create a plan of action, coaching directly contributed to her sense of competence and autonomy, which are critical drivers of intrinsic motivation and performance.

Coaching also provides a mechanism for addressing organisational change and helping employees navigate transitions. From my perspective as a coachee in the session with Philippa, I was able to experience the benefits of coaching in adapting to the changes brought about by automation within the organisation. Managing transitions is critical to maintaining performance and morale during organisational change. William Bridges' model of transition highlights the psychological process that individuals go through when they experience change, emphasising the need to address both the external and internal aspects of transition (Bridges, 2009). Coaching provides the space for individuals to reflect on these transitions, manage the emotional impact of change, and develop strategies for maintaining performance during periods of uncertainty.

Goal-setting theory can also explain the connection between coaching and improved performance. Research indicates that setting specific, challenging goals can enhance motivation and performance (Locke & Latham, 2002). In both sessions, Janice and my own experience as a coachee made setting clear and actionable goals central to coaching. By breaking down larger goals into smaller, manageable steps, coaching helps individuals stay focused and motivated, leading to higher performance.

While distinct from coaching, mentoring also plays a crucial role in supporting employee development and enhancing performance. Mentoring relationships often involve a more experienced individual providing guidance, advice, and support to a less experienced mentee. This can be particularly beneficial in fostering career development, as mentors can offer insights into navigating organisational culture, building networks, and advancing within the company. Research suggests that mentoring relationships are associated with increased job satisfaction, career success, and organisational commitment (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). In this sense, mentoring complements coaching by providing a broader perspective on career development, while coaching focuses more on the immediate challenges and goals of the coachee.

Both coaching and mentoring contribute to improved morale by providing employees with a sense of support and validation. Employees who feel that their development is being prioritised are likelier to be engaged and committed to their work. This support is essential during organisational change, where uncertainty and stress can negatively impact morale. Coaching and mentoring can mitigate the adverse effects of change and help maintain a positive organisational culture by providing employees with the tools and guidance they need to navigate these changes.

However, it is essential to recognise that the effectiveness of coaching and mentoring depends on the quality of the relationship between the coach or mentor and the coachee or mentee. Trust, empathy, and mutual respect are critical components of these relationships, as they create the foundation for open communication and meaningful dialogue. Without these elements, coaching and mentoring may not achieve their intended outcomes. Coaches and mentors must be skilled in building rapport and creating an environment of psychological safety where individuals feel comfortable sharing their challenges and vulnerabilities.

3. Analysis of the Skills, Behaviors, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values of an Effective Coach or Mentor

The effectiveness of a coach or mentor is primarily determined by their ability to combine a range of interpersonal, communication, and analytical skills with the right attitudes, beliefs, and values. These elements work together to create an environment that supports the development of the coachee or mentee and fosters positive outcomes.

Skills: One of the fundamental skills of an effective coach is the ability to ask powerful questions. These questions stimulate reflection and self-discovery, helping the coachee gain new insights and perspectives on their challenges. In the session with Janice, I used open-ended questions to encourage her to explore her goals and identify the steps needed to achieve them. However, as previously noted, follow-up and probing questions could have been improved to deepen the exploration of potential barriers and challenges.

Effective questioning requires a balance between being broad enough to allow for exploration and being specific enough to guide the coachee towards actionable solutions.

Active listening is another critical skill for coaches and mentors. This involves not only hearing the words that the coachee is saying but also paying attention to non-verbal cues, such as tone of voice and body language. Active listening creates a sense of empathy and understanding, which is essential for building trust and rapport with the coachee. In the session with Janice, active listening helped to create a safe and supportive environment where she felt comfortable sharing her concerns. By demonstrating that I was fully present and engaged in the conversation, I built a strong foundation of trust, which is essential for effective coaching.

Providing constructive feedback is another essential skill for coaches and mentors. Feedback should be delivered, supportive, and focused on helping the coachee improve. This requires a careful balance between being honest and direct and being sensitive to the coachee's feelings and needs. In my role as a coach, I aimed to provide feedback that was both constructive and encouraging, helping Janice to see her strengths and areas for improvement.

Effective feedback should be specific, actionable, and focused on behaviour rather than personality traits. By providing clear and constructive feedback, coaches can help coachees develop new skills and behaviours to contribute to their success.

Behaviours: Besides skills, effective coaches and mentors must exhibit behaviours that foster a positive coaching relationship. One of the most critical behaviours is creating a sense of psychological safety, where the coachee feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment or repercussions. This involves demonstrating empathy, respect, and non-judgmental acceptance of the coachee's experiences and perspectives. In the coaching session with Janice,

I focused on creating an environment of psychological safety by showing empathy and understanding towards her concerns. This helped to build trust and allowed for a more open and honest conversation.

Attitudes and Beliefs: Effective coaches and mentors must embody certain attitudes and beliefs that align with their role. One crucial attitude is believing in the coachee's capacity for growth and self-improvement. This belief is fundamental to fostering a positive and supportive coaching relationship. It involves maintaining an optimistic and encouraging stance, even when the coachee faces significant challenges.

For instance, in my session with Janice, adopting a belief in her potential to enhance her visibility and impact within the organisation was crucial.

"This perspective motivated Janice and reinforced her confidence in her abilities. Another vital attitude is the commitment to a client-centered approach.

This approach prioritises the coachee's needs and goals above the coach's agenda. By focusing on the coachee's perspective and objectives, coaches can tailor their support to meet the specific needs of the individual. This involves active listening to the coachee's concerns and working collaboratively to develop strategies that align with their goals. In my sessions,

I made a concerted effort to adopt a client-centred approach, actively listening to Janice and Robert and supporting them in defining and pursuing their goals.

Values: Values play a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of coaching and mentoring relationships. Fundamental values for effective coaches and mentors include integrity, respect, and commitment. Integrity involves being honest and ethical in all interactions with the coachee. This means maintaining confidentiality, being transparent about the coaching process, and providing honest feedback.

In the session with Janice, upholding these values was essential for building a trusting relationship and ensuring the coaching process was conducted professionally.

Respect is another fundamental value which involves acknowledging and valuing the coachee's perspectives and experiences. This includes being sensitive to cultural and individual differences and treating the coachee with dignity and consideration. By demonstrating respect, coaches and mentors create an environment where the coachee feels valued and supported.

During both coaching sessions, I aimed to show respect for Janice's and Robert's viewpoints and experiences, which helped to build a positive and productive coaching relationship.

Commitment to the coachee's development is also a vital value. This involves supporting the coachee's growth and success, even when faced with challenges. A committed coach or mentor is willing to invest time and effort in helping the coachee achieve their goals and is prepared to adapt their approach to meet their evolving needs. In my coaching practice, I demonstrated this commitment by working closely

with Janice and Robert to address their specific challenges and support their development.

Integration of Skills, Behaviors, Attitudes, and Values: Integrating skills, behaviours, attitudes, and values is essential for effective coaching and mentoring. Successful coaches and mentors combine these elements to create a supportive and empowering environment for the coachee. For example, coaches can facilitate meaningful and impactful coaching relationships by using powerful questions and active listening skills while maintaining a client-centred attitude and upholding values of integrity and respect. The ability to integrate these elements requires ongoing self-reflection and professional development. Coaches and mentors should continuously evaluate their practice, seek coachees' feedback, and engage in professional learning opportunities to enhance their skills and effectiveness. This commitment to growth and development ensures that coaches and mentors remain effective and responsive to the needs of those they support.

Conclusion

The reflections on the coaching sessions with Janice Rowlands and Robert Lee show successes and areas for improvement in the coaching process. Effective coaching requires the establishment of a trust-based relationship, the use of powerful and probing questions, and the ability to create a supportive and empowering environment. By focusing on these elements, coaches can help coachees achieve their goals, improve performance, and boost morale. Additionally, understanding the impact of coaching and mentoring on organisational performance highlights the importance of these practices in fostering employee development and well-being.

The skills, behaviours, attitudes, and values of an effective coach or mentor are crucial to the success of the coaching process. These elements create a positive and productive coaching relationship, significantly improving performance and morale. By integrating these components and committing to ongoing self-reflection and professional development, coaches and mentors can enhance their effectiveness and contribute to the growth and success of those they support.

The insights gained from these reflections further underscore the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in coaching. As the coaching field evolves, coaches must stay informed about best practices and emerging trends to ensure they provide their coachees with the highest level of support. Ultimately, the goal of coaching is to empower individuals to achieve their full potential, and by applying the principles and practices discussed, coaches can make a meaningful impact on the lives of those they work with.

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Role Play 1: Philippa Graham & Janice Rowlands

Participants:

- **Philippa Graham** (Coach)
 - **Janice Rowlands** (Coachee - Senior Microbiologist)
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Philippa: Good morning, Janice. Thank you for being here today. Please, have a seat. How are you feeling today?

Janice: Good morning, Ms. Graham. I am doing well, thank you. I am glad to be here and looking forward to our conversation.

Philippa: I am glad to hear that. Please make yourself comfortable. I want to remind you that this session is entirely confidential. Everything we discuss will stay between us. This is a safe space for you to express your thoughts and feelings openly so we can work together to achieve your goals. How does that sound?

Janice: That is precisely what I need right now. It is reassuring to know that I can speak freely.

Philippa: Great! I aim to help you gain clarity and develop actionable steps to move forward. Let us dive in. Could you tell me what specific outcomes you want from our conversation today?

Janice: I love what I do and am very passionate about my work as a senior microbiologist. I am enthusiastic about my results and always optimistic about the impact I can make. However, something has been bothering me lately, especially since I started working from home. While I enjoy the flexibility and the comfort of working remotely, I cannot shake the feeling that my contributions are not being fully recognised. I worry that because I am not physically present in the office, I miss opportunities to interact with others, particularly senior management, which might affect how my work is valued.

Philippa: It sounds like you are experiencing a bit of a disconnect due to the remote work situation, which impacts your sense of visibility and recognition within the company. That is a valid concern, especially given how much you care about your work. Have you considered any specific actions you could take to improve your visibility and ensure your contributions are recognised?

Janice: Yes, I have been thinking about it a lot. I need to take a proactive approach. I want to enhance my skills and qualifications to be better positioned to take on more

significant responsibilities. I am also interested in participating in high-visibility projects that align with our company's goals and would showcase my expertise to senior management.

Philippa: That sounds like a solid plan, Janice. It is excellent that you think strategically about increasing your visibility and impact. What do you think would be the first steps toward achieving these goals? Have you identified any specific actions to help you move in that direction?

Janice: I am considering seeking mentorship from a senior colleague who has already established a strong presence within the company and could offer guidance on navigating this situation. Additionally, I am looking into high-visibility projects where I could contribute meaningfully. Lastly, I am interested in some of the certified courses that our company offers. Further education and training could enhance my skills and make me even more valuable to the team.

Philippa: Those are excellent ideas. Seeking mentorship, getting involved in critical projects, and investing in professional development are all powerful ways to raise your profile. When do you plan to start implementing these actions? Have you set any specific timelines or milestones for yourself?

Janice: Yes, I have given it some thought. I plan to meet with my manager this week to discuss potential projects to increase my visibility. I want to understand where I can make the most impact and how I can align my efforts with the company's strategic goals. As for the courses, I intend to enrol in an advanced microbiology course by the end of this month. I also plan to ask my manager if additional training opportunities could further enhance my skills.

Philippa: That is a very well-thought-out plan, Janice. You are committed to taking concrete steps to achieve your goals. How do you feel about the steps you have planned to take? Do they give you a sense of confidence and direction?

Janice: I feel much more confident now that I have articulated my plan. Knowing that I have specific actions to take makes me feel more in control of my career trajectory. I am motivated to chase my goals and make the most of the opportunities that come my way.

Philippa: I am glad to hear that, Janice. It sounds like you are in a good place mentally and emotionally to pursue these goals. I am here to support you every step of the way. To ensure that you stay on track, I would like to schedule a follow-up session once a month. This will allow us to review your progress, celebrate your achievements, and make any necessary adjustments to your plan. How does that sound?

Janice: That sounds perfect, Ms. Graham. I appreciate your support and guidance. I am looking forward to our next session.

Philippa: You are very welcome, Janice. If you need anything, do not hesitate to email me. I will see you next month.

Janice: Thank you so much, Ms. Graham. Have a great day!

Philippa: You too, Janice. Take care!

Role Play 2: Philippa Graham & Robert Lee

Participants:

- **Philippa Graham** (Coach)
 - **Robert Lee** (Coachee - Head of Section)
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Philippa: Good morning, Robert. Thank you for joining me today. How are you feeling?

Robert: Good morning, Philippa. I am doing well, thank you.

Philippa: I am glad to hear that. I have invited you to this coaching session to discuss recent changes within our company, mainly how they have impacted your role. I want to assure you that this conversation is entirely confidential. This is your time to express any concerns or challenges you might be facing, and we will work together to find solutions. How does that sound to you?

Robert: That sounds reassuring. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues in a confidential setting. Thank you for setting this up.

Philippa: Excellent. Let us start by discussing your goals from today's session. Are there any specific challenges you are facing that you would like us to focus on?

Robert: I appreciate being included in this coaching process. I have been with the company for 15 years, and I have seen many changes over that time. However, the recent changes, especially the automation processes that have been implemented, have been particularly challenging for me. Before automation, I felt much more efficient in my work. Now, I feel overwhelmed by the increased workload, and it becomes difficult to organise shifts with the limited staff and available time. I am concerned about how I can continue to be effective in my role for the remaining three years of my tenure.

Philippa: I understand, Robert. The automation process has brought about significant changes that have disrupted your workflow. It is natural to feel this way, especially after being with the company for so long. Let us focus on how we can address these challenges and find a way to help you adapt to these changes effectively. What steps do you think you could take to start addressing these challenges?

Robert: I have been thinking about it, and I believe the first step is to create a detailed weekly schedule to prioritise tasks. This will help me manage my workload more effectively and ensure everything gets done on time. Additionally, I need to set up a meeting with the automation team to understand the new systems better and see if I can do anything to streamline the process or receive additional support.

Philippa: That sounds like a proactive approach, Robert. Creating a detailed schedule will help you regain control over your workload, and meeting with the automation team could provide valuable insights that could make your job easier.

What specific actions will you take to move closer to your goal?

Robert: First, I will start a WhatsApp pilot program to ensure that everyone on my team receives the weekly schedule and their specific tasks. This will also help me stay connected with the staff and ensure clear and consistent communication. Regarding the automation team meeting, I will email them today to arrange a discussion. I want to understand our systems better and see if there are any ways to improve the process.

Philippa: That is an excellent plan, Robert. Significantly, you are taking concrete steps to address your challenges. **When do you plan to start implementing these actions?**

Robert: I will have the new schedule ready by the end of this week. With the help of my assistant, I will create the WhatsApp group and share the schedule with the team. As for the meeting with the automation team, I will book it as soon as I receive a response to my email.

Philippa: Wonderful, Robert. It looks like you have a solid plan in place. I am confident these steps will help you regain efficiency and adapt to the changes more smoothly. **Let us reconvene next week to review your progress and make any necessary adjustments. How does that sound?**

Robert: That sounds great, Philippa. Thank you so much for your guidance. I am looking forward to our next session.

Philippa: You are very welcome