

The third 'generation' of workplace coaching: creating a culture of quality conversations

Anthony M. Grant

To cite this article: Anthony M. Grant (2017) The third 'generation' of workplace coaching: creating a culture of quality conversations, *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 10:1, 37-53, DOI: [10.1080/17521882.2016.1266005](https://doi.org/10.1080/17521882.2016.1266005)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17521882.2016.1266005>



Published online: 27 Dec 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 6749



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 14 View citing articles [↗](#)

The third 'generation' of workplace coaching: creating a culture of quality conversations

Anthony M. Grant

Coaching Psychology Unit, School of Psychology, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

ABSTRACT

Workplace coaching is increasingly used in organisations. Workplace coaching is conducted internally within an organisation for the purpose of helping employees, managers and leaders attain work-related goals. Workplace coaching methodologies have evolved over time. The first 'generation' (1990s) focused on performance management. A hallmark of the second-'generation' (2000s) approach is structured step-by-step proprietary 'Leader as Coach' performance-focused coach training programmes. Such mechanistic approaches do not meet the challenges of the contemporary organisational context where uncertainty and rapid change are the norm. This paper describes the third-'generation' approach to workplace coaching that is increasingly apparent in the workplace. This is an approach that explicitly focuses on enhancing both the performance *and* the well-being of individuals and organisations in ways that are sustainable and personally meaningful. A case study example of how to integrate 'Leader as Coach' programmes into an organisation is presented. This developmental approach aims to create the culture of quality conversations needed for the challenges faced by contemporary organisations.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 29 August 2016

Accepted 24 November 2016

KEYWORDS

Workplace coaching;
coaching psychology; high-
performance Leader as Coach
workplace well-being

Practice points

- To which field of practice area(s) in coaching is your contribution directly relevant?
This is relevant to coaches, organisational consultants and all professionals who are involved in implementing workplace coaching, Leader as Coach training programmes and other organisational development coaching initiatives.
- What do you see as the primary contribution your submission makes to coaching practice?
This article articulates a useful perspective on contemporary approaches to workplace coaching and training leaders to be coaches, and describes how workplace coaching can create the culture of quality conversations needed to deal with the challenges faced by modern organisations.
- What are its tangible implications for practitioners?
 - It allows practitioners to benchmark first-, second- and third-'generation' approaches to workplace coaching.

- Emphasises the importance of focusing on both performance and well-being.
- Delineates ways to better align workplace coaching with an organisation's culture and values.
- Provides a real-life case study example.

Introduction

The use of coaching in organisations has steadily increased since the 1990s (Goleman, Welch, & Welch, 2012). Whether workplace coaching is used in a remedial context for performance management purposes, as part of a front-line staff skills development programme, on-the-job corridor coaching or as leadership development coaching, workplace coaching skills have an essential place in every leader's toolkit (Goleman, 2000). Because coaching skills do not come naturally to many people, over the years organisations have invested considerable time and resources into 'Leader as Coach' workplace coach training programmes – with the aim of developing their internal workplace coaching capacity. However, it is not clear that these programmes are delivering the outcomes that organisations are looking for; all too frequently the taught skills are not applied back in the workplace (Yamhill & McLean, 2001). Moreover, the demands of the workplace have changed significantly since the 1990s – but many approaches to both workplace coaching and the training of leaders to be workplace coaches have failed to keep pace with these changing demands.

Whereas in the last century organisational change tended to be part of pre-planned initiatives (Gaughan, 2010), since 2000 the rate and unpredictability of organisational change has escalated significantly. Consequently organisations' needs in relation to workplace coaching have changed considerably over time. How we are to understand the evolution of workplace coaching, and what does the future of workplace coaching look like? These are important questions for those involved in leadership development and organisational cultural change. Addressing these questions, from an overview of the literature, this article outlines the key generational trends in workplace coaching since the 1990s, showing how each generation met the existing needs of the day, only to be superseded by a new approach to workplace coaching that was more in tune with the changing times.

A broad overview of the last 35 years suggests that to date, there have been three key 'generations' of workplace coaching. I argue that we now have a new, third generation of workplace coaching¹ – a generation that focuses on the personal and professional development of managers as much as their acquisition of workplace coaching skills, and also focuses on cultural change as much as organisational performance. This new generation of workplace coaching is increasingly evidence-based and typically draws on the peer-reviewed coaching research, including that from specialist university centres such as the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney, the Business Coaching Program at the University of Wollongong, the University of Amsterdam, Ashridge Business School's Centre for Coaching, the International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies at Oxford Brookes University, and the Institute of Coaching at Harvard Medical School, amongst many others.

Having defined workplace coaching, this article describes first-, second- and third-generation workplace coaching and outlines the key principles involved as well as the associated evidence bases. Finally, ideas for the organisational implementation of third-generation approaches to workplace coaching are presented along with a short case study example.

What is workplace coaching?

The term ‘workplace coaching’ refers to the use of coaching methodologies in the workplace for the purpose of helping employees, managers and leaders attain work-related goals in terms of skills, performance or developmental outcomes. Workplace coaching tends to be conducted internally, with managers and leaders coaching their employees or peers, both formally with ‘sit-down’ designated coaching sessions and with informal ‘on-the-run’ coaching conversations. Internal workplace coaching can be contrasted with external workplace coaching where coaches who are external to the organisation provide formal coaching services (typically referred to as executive coaching). This article focuses on internal workplace coaching.

The socio-historical emergence of workplace coaching

Although the origins of coaching in organisations can be traced back as far as the 1950s, when a few problematic executives began to receive specialised counselling from industrial or organisational psychologists (cf. Mace, 1950; Sperry, 1993), it was the influence of the human potential movement (HPM) of the 1960s that really laid the foundation for contemporary workplace coaching practice.

The HPM arose from the countercultural ethos of the 1960s, and had a key focus on helping people develop to their full potential and supporting people on the path to self-actualisation. Given that the HPM was such a widespread social movement it is not surprising that its influence was felt in the workplace. This was seen in the form of group-based training programmes which were designed to raise people’s self-awareness through an eclectic mix of psycho-dramatic role plays, sensory awareness training and marathon encounter groups.

Howard (1970) notes that during the 1970s many major North American organisations utilised some form of HPM training including American Airlines, Esso, GE, Stanford University and Harvard University. Such training programmes were evident also in many other countries including Japan, France, Australia, Holland South America and Eastern Europe (for an informed discussion on issues related to the HPM and coaching, see Spence, 2007).

Although these kinds of group training activities were to become influential in the development of workplace coaching, in themselves they did not constitute coaching per se. However, they do provide a good example of how approaches for performance enhancement in the workplace come and go over time. Some of the reasons for their falling out of favour included a lack of scientific foundations, poor empirical support for their effectiveness (Weigel, 2002) and increasing concerns about the potential negative impact on participants where individuals felt coerced to self-disclose personal aspects of themselves in environments where they felt threatened or anxious (Yalom & Lieberman,

1971). It is of note that these problematic issues are still of relevance in contemporary organisational development coaching and leadership development contexts.

Coaching begins to gain a foothold in organisations: the 1980s

During the 1980s reports of coaching in the management literature started to become more frequent. Articles about internal workplace coaching by managers can be found occasionally in the management literature as far back as Bigelow (1938). However, until the 1980s there was a real dearth of material on coaching in the workplace. There were a few notable exceptions that typically focused on managers doing sales coaching or coaching underperformers (e.g. Bridgman, Spaethe, Driscoll, & Fanning, 1958; Driver, 1955; Lewis, 1947; Perley, 1957), and more material emerged along these lines in the 1970s (e.g. Carroll, 1975; Filippi, 1968; Frohman & Kotter, 1977; Kondrasuk, 1979). The 1980s improved on this situation, although reports were still very sparse compared to contemporary standards (there were only 18 articles published in the psychological and business peer-reviewed literature in the 1980s compared with over 300 in the 2000s) – and this is a good indication that internal workplace coaching was still not firmly established at that point in time. Indeed, executive coaching by professionals external to the organisation was the primary way in which coaching methodologies were being used in the workplace (Wolf & Sherwood, 1981). In an in-depth exploration of the origins of contemporary coaching, Brock (2009) reports that the 1980s saw the first management consulting firms offering executive coaching as a stand-alone service.

The 1980s literature has the occasional report of managers coaching their reports in relation to sales or other aspects of operational service, but very few reports of ‘Leader as Coach’ approaches to training managers to be internal workplace coaches. Indeed, there are a number of articles discussing the urgent need to systematically develop managers’ skills in this area and decrying the lack of progress to date (e.g. Barratt, 1985; Craik, 1988; Evered & Selman, 1989; Ponzio, 1980).

The first generation of workplace coaching²: performance management in the 1990s

In relation to workplace coaching, the 1990s were an era that can be broadly typified by a general idealisation of the Jack Welch style of management. Jack Welch was the chairman and CEO of General Electric between 1981 and 2001, during which time he grew the company’s value by 4000% (Welch & Byrne, 2003). Named ‘Manager of the Century’ by *Fortune* magazine, he was renowned for his ruthlessly competitive style of management and his unrelenting focus on employee performance. Every year, Welch would fire the bottom 10% of his managers, regardless of absolute performance (Slater, 2003). Whilst this approach to people management was good for short-term profitability, this kind of management style tended to create a culture of fear, anxiety and burn out (O’Boyle, 1998).

Although the ‘rank and yank’ policy adopted by Welch did not become universally popular in organisations (Sears & McDermott, 2003), the notion of structured, regular performance reviews central to Jack Welch’s approach became the mainstay of most organisations. Not surprisingly the first generation of workplace coaching (circa 1990s) thus focused on teaching managers how to have performance management conversations,

often with 'difficult' employees (Graham, Wedman, & Garvin-Kester, 1993). Indeed, the workplace coaching literature at this point in time was almost invariably associated with managing poor performances (e.g. Burdett, 1998; Stephen & Sarah, 1994).

Towards the mid-1990s the limitations of such 'command and control' approaches to coaching were becoming increasingly recognised (Wheatley, 1997). Increasing numbers of management consultants such as Wheatley argued that the advent of the knowledge economy meant that organisations who wanted to capitalise on knowledge-based employees needed to shift from a 'burning platform' crisis mentality to a more consultative and participative management style. Concepts such as Emotional Intelligence (EI), popularised by Goleman (1998), became increasingly influential in the workplace, and the increasing need for engaged, self-aware managers with good social and communication skills led organisations to try to develop their workplace coaching practices.

The second generation of workplace coaching: coaching grows in the 2000s

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw shifts in the expectations of employees and increasing competition for recruiting and retaining talented employees – the so-called war for talent (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998). Influential consultants such as McKinsey's argued that executive and managerial talent had been seriously neglected in the past two decades, and so talent management became an organisational priority. Workplace coaching was beginning to be seen as being an important tool in building and managing the skills and talents of employees.

The second 'generation' emerged around 2000 and was associated with the boom in the number of consultants and companies offering proprietary 'Leader as Coach' training programmes. These were early days for workplace coaching. Although formal executive coaching provided by external coaches was being widely used in organisations (Kilburg, 2000; Sherman & Freas, 2004) and the peer-reviewed literature on its effectiveness was growing, the application of evidence-based coaching methodologies to the day-to-day work of managers was still embryonic. The theoretical and empirical foundations of coaching at this time ranged from the psychologically sophisticated, but not very practical (e.g. Zeus & Skiffington, 2000), through to approaches that combined highly practical models such as GROW³ with some aspects of EI and transpersonal psychology (e.g. Whitmore, 1996), through to atheoretical proprietary life coaching training programmes that were promoted with almost evangelical fervour and that drew heavily on the personal development genre (e.g. Leonard, 1999; Rock, 2001; Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998).

Regardless of their theoretical grounding, empirical support or evangelistic fervour, these approaches to teaching workplace coaching skills tended to focus on teaching managers how to have formal 'sit-down' coaching conversations, typically of 30 minutes to 1 hour in length. In many ways, these second-generation coaching methodologies attempted to be a more humanistic, goal-focused version of performance management conversations. These approaches to coaching were usually adaptations of the formal coaching models used in one-to-one executive coaching – models that were often highly successful in formal executive coaching contexts, but were of far less relevance to the day-to-day cut and thrust of workplace conversations.

Problems with the second-generation approach

A hallmark of the second-generation approach is a reliance on proprietary models and highly jargonised (and often pseudoscientific) language. The models and the language used in the training session would be primarily identified as belonging to the organisation that was providing the coach training, rather than as being a natural part of the client organisation's vernacular. This often felt clumsy or foreign to participants. The client organisation and the participants in the training programme would be often expected to learn complex models, using unfamiliar terminology, and often be expected to adopt a specific worldview based on the intellectual property of the coach training organisation (Grant & Hartley, 2013).

Although the second-generation approach could indeed be useful in imparting coaching skills, there are a number of problems that often arose. The highly jargonised language, coupled with an often evangelistic zeal promoted by the coach training company and the resulting power differentials, tended to create in-groups and out-groups within the client organisation (Willemyns, Gallois, & Callan, 2003). There were often a small number of in-group dedicated 'followers and true believers' for whom the propriety coaching methodology became 'the' way to coach and develop people.

As could be expected, those in the out-group often resented being told how to think, what to say and often had fundamental disagreements with the worldview being presented by the coach training organisation. I personally recall in the early 2000s observing a workplace coach training company delivering 'Leader as Coach' training to a large group of IT professionals, sales managers and project leaders. The trainer exhorted this group of hardnosed managers (who were under considerable time and budget pressures) to think of their coachees as being 'naturally creative, resourceful and whole' and to coach them using 'powerful questions'. Whilst such language might well be useful for training professional life coaches in the personal development genre, on this occasion it elicited down-right hostile responses from a large section of the audience, and the trainer had to spend most of the session defending and explaining the underlying philosophical presuppositions. Although the above specific example may be relatively rare, the experience of in-groups and out-groups being formed during such organisational development initiatives is extremely common and can be highly dysfunctional (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). More recently there have been similar reports of in-group and out-group fall-out in relation to the unjustified or over-use of neuroscientific jargon in contemporary organisational programmes (Lindebaum & Jordan, 2014).

On a practical level, structuring workplace coaching around a sit-down 30 minutes or 1 hour face-to-face session fails to meet the real-life needs of the workplace. The vast majority of coaching conversations held in the workplace are not of the formal type, rather they are on-the-run corridor-coaching conversations. But the second generation of workplace coaching tended to be inflexible in this regard. Not surprisingly individual managers often found it hard to schedule the number of recurring formal face-to-face coaching sessions typically stipulated by coach training organisations, resulting in poor take-up and embedding.

The above problems have been discussed so far from an individualistic perspective. From a systemic perspective, if we think about the organisation as a living organism (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972), it is almost as if the highly jargonised proprietary language

and incongruent coaching methodologies are akin to a foreign virus ‘infecting’ the organisation. It is not surprising then, that the system as a whole is predisposed to rejecting the ‘virus’. Although this is a simplistic metaphor it does provide a useful lens through which to understand the all-too-common failure of second-generation workplace coaching programme to instigate and maintain organisational and cultural change. Clearly a different approach is needed if organisations are to realise the potential of workplace coaching to create positive organisational change (see Table 1).

The third generation of workplace coaching: 2010 and beyond

Organisations have increasingly recognised that workplace coaching methodologies can do more than mere ‘performance enhancement’ (Jones, Woods, & Guillaume, 2016). As organisations and their leaders mature and look for more sophisticated ways of dealing with complexity and uncertainty (Stacey & Griffin, 2005), they begin to look to coaching as a means of fostering organisational and cultural change (Malone, 2001). Indeed coaching is now seen as a vital tool in the organisational change process (Cameron & Green, 2015) and creating a culture of quality conversations. The difficulty comes in designing workplace coaching programmes that will indeed be effective in creating the desired organisational change.

To date organisations have tended to rely on annual performance review conversations as being the key focal point for ‘workplace coaching’. But organisations globally are coming to believe that annual performance review conversations are insufficient

Table 1. The focus and core characteristics of first-, second- and third-generation workplace coaching approaches.

	The main focus is on	Core characteristics
First generation 1990–1999	Performance management Compelling others to change Dealing with ‘difficult’ or remedial employees	Command and control Coaching to specific rankings/ratings Highly transactional
Second generation 2000–2010	Changing others/driving change Maintaining authority and hierarchy Holding standardised 1-2-1 conversations Attaining specific predetermined goals	Prescriptive ‘how to coach’ models Sees change as linear and to be controlled Highly jargonised training material Propriety coaching language IP owned by coach training company
Third generation 2010–?	Attraction not coercion Leaders modelling change behaviours Shifting individual and organisational mindsets Putting principles into practice Attaining organisational goals/actualising values Change in both individual and system Ensuring synergetic goal alignment	Highly flexible and agile Coaching as a quality conversation not a goal-focused manipulation Appreciates the complexity of change Seamlessly integrates with organisation’s language, brand, culture and values (more than white-labelled)

Notes: Generational delineations are presented as a guide only. As approaches to coaching and organisations themselves develop, organisations’ approaches to coaching will show aspects of a number of different generations. Some organisations will retain first-generation approaches to deal with performance management issues, and may not be ‘mature’ enough to fully adopt a third-generation approach.

(Pulakos & O’Leary, 2011). Hence we are seeing a shift away from a rigid mandated time-bound performance review conversation model towards more flexible, more frequent performance conversation cycle (Adler et al., 2016). However, these approaches still tend to focus on enhancing performance, that is, taking people from low performance to average performance (performance management), or from average or high performance to stellar performance (peak performance coaching). But this is not the only dimension that counts. The other dimension that is equally important is the well-being dimension. Indeed, short-slightly focusing solely on performance can lead to distress, disengagement and burn out – unintended outcomes all too familiar to contemporary organisations. The Performance/Well-being Matrix (Grant, 2012) illustrates this point visually (see Figure 1⁴).

Technical definitions of ‘well-being’ have developed considerably over the years from Bradburn’s (1969) classic research to more contemporary approaches to mental health (e.g. Keyes & Haidt, 2003; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). It should be noted that the notion of ‘well-being’ referred to in this workplace context does not require the manager to have in-depth knowledge of mental health, psychopathology or diagnostic skills, and does not require employees to self-disclose personal or sensitive information.

In the workplace context, a pragmatic approach to well-being is needed. Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012) argue for a pragmatic understanding of well-being that centres on a state of attaining an equilibrium in terms of life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect when dealing with life/work events or challenges, and that such balance is achieved when the resources available to an individual are sufficient to deal with the challenges being faced. The use of the Performance/Well-being Matrix does not require an ‘objective’ evaluation of an employee’s mental health, rather it serves as a pragmatic heuristic or lens through which to guide the workplace coaching process.

A focus on both performance and well-being

The importance of well-being in the workplace and its relation to business outcomes is well recognised (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003). A myopic focus on performance

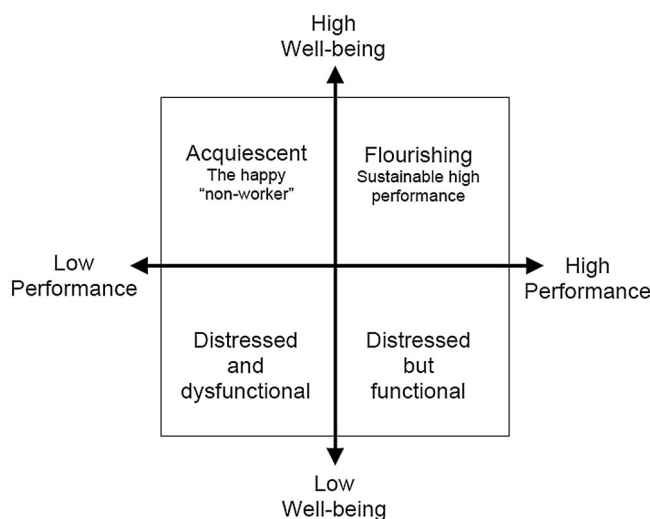


Figure 1. The Engagement and Well-being Matrix ©.

without taking into account developmental needs or aspects of well-being runs the very real risk of pushing people from (say) the distressed but functional zone (quadrant two) into the states of distress, dysfunctionality and burn out represented by quadrant three.

In response to the changing demands of the contemporary workplace, the third generation of workplace coach training explicitly focuses on the development and well-being of the leaders, managers and employees *as well as* the acquisition of performance-enhancing workplace coaching skills. The aim here is to give leaders and managers the tools and skills so that they can coach employees (and themselves) into the top right-hand quadrant – the space of sustainable high performance. The aim here is to create a culture of quality conversations where performance and developmental conversations are the everyday norm.

This is more than second-generation behavioural coaching. It requires HR professionals, consultants and those who are responsible for the design and implantation of workplace coaching programmes to really understand the problems associated with first- and second-generation approaches. As stated previously these include the following:

- lack of flexibility;
- too much technical or pseudoscientific jargon;
- coaching models and language seen as being foreign or external to client organisation;
- it outsources cultural DNA – the IP is owned by entity external to the client organisation;
- mandated organisational goals and imposed participation;
- poor transfer of training – high rate of ‘rejection’ by the organisational system.

Coaching agility: the Quality Conversations Framework

Past approaches to workplace coach training tended to focus on training skills for formal ‘sit-down’ coaching conversations such as those needed for performance reviews. However, as mentioned, organisations worldwide are shunning annual performance reviews in favour of more frequent performance-orientated conversations (Adler et al., 2016). There has been some controversy as to whether the move against annual reviews is throwing the baby out with the bathwater (Woehr & Roch, 2016). Time will tell if this is indeed a productive development or a new, self-defeating management fad. Regardless of the utility of abandoning annual reviews, organisations do need far greater coaching agility – and coaching agility is a cornerstone of the third-generation approach.

The problem lies in how to conceptualise and teach such agility. The Quality Conversations Framework provides useful framework for doing so (see [Figure 2](#)). At the far left-hand side of the model sits the ‘informal’ everyday collaborative conversations that people need to have in order to communicate effectively in the cut and thrust of day-to-day corporate work. Moving to the right towards the more ‘formal’ end of the scale, we have ‘corridor coaching’. These are the short, three- to five-minute ‘on-the-run’ coaching opportunities that arise with regularity in the workplace. These could be before or after a meeting, on the way to a sales call, or in response to a query from a direct report. The important point here is for the manager or leader to be able to recognise the coaching moment

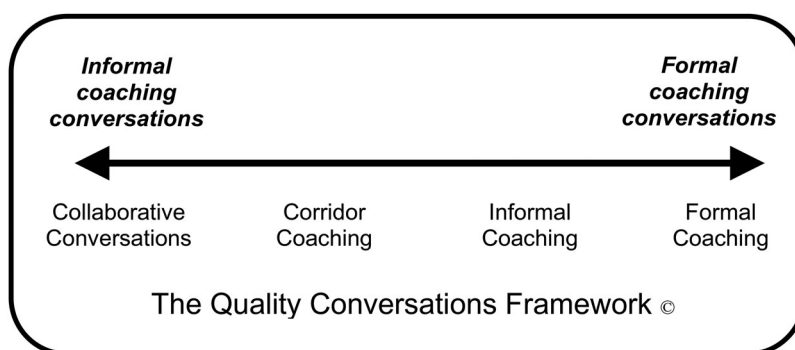


Figure 2. The Quality Conversations Framework ©.

when it presents itself, ask the right questions, respond in a way that moves the conversation forwards and finally agree on some specific actions steps.

Next we have the spontaneous unplanned goal-focused coaching conversations of, say, about 10–15 minutes. For example, a manager or leader could be in a meeting which may have veered off track. Recognising the need to be more goal-focused, they might say something like ‘we have about 15 minutes left, what’s the key thing we need to focus on?’. Having time-framed the conversation and elicited or articulated a specific goal, they could then move into exploring the reality of the situation, listing some options, and then wrapping up with some specific actions steps – using a common coaching model such as GROW (Whitmore, 1996). It is only at the far right-hand side of this framework that we find the formal ‘sit-down’ pre-planned 30 minutes to an hour coaching session that tends to characterise the first- and second-generation approaches to coaching. Of course, not every manager will use all these approaches with every employee. Rather, this framework provides a means for managers to conceptualise different types of coaching conversations and to make explicit links between, and in doing so develop the ability to move across these dimensions with agility.

The bad is stronger than the good: reduce anxiety to make change stick

In order to make workplace coaching programmes truly effective, organisations need to minimise the anxiety and uncertainty associated with the introduction of these kinds of activities. It has long been recognised within psychology that unpleasant experiences have a far stronger impact than good experiences (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). Disagreeable emotions, distasteful experiences with leaders and unpleasant feedback experiences have a deeper impact than good ones, partly because bad information is processed more thoroughly than good. This effect has long been established within psychology and has been found to be of relevance in relation to a wide range of human activities including evaluations of other people (Forgas & Bower, 1987), political campaigning (Meffert, Chung, Joiner, Waks, & Garst, 2006) and mentoring relationships (Eby, Butts, Durley, & Ragins, 2010).

A potential strength of the third-generation approach is that it may reduce the anxiety and uncertainty associated with this kind of change and development. It has the potential to do this by emphasising that the coaching content should be explicitly aligned with the

organisation's values, culture and language *as well as* by being congruent with individual's personal values, needs, aspirations and worldviews. Although such goal/value alignment requires some coaching skill on the manager's part, in this way workplace coaching initiatives have the potential to become embedded in the organisational system on both individual and systemic levels. Indeed recent research using social network analysis has identified a 'coaching ripple effect' where the positive impact of individual coaching can be observed to spread from individual to individual throughout the organisational system creating systemic change (for details see O'Connor & Cavanagh, 2013).

Key characteristics: simplicity, deep personalisation and effectiveness

The emerging approach to workplace coaching focuses on the development and well-being of the participants *as well as* the acquisition of coaching skills. The solution-focused cognitive-behavioural (SFCB) coaching methodologies that can be utilised in this approach have been demonstrated as being highly effective in many peer-reviewed randomised-controlled studies in terms of facilitating attainment (Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt, 2010), enhancing well-being and resilience (Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009), increasing solution-focused thinking and associated 'growth mindsets' (for a review see Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2013) as well as helping people deal with the challenges of organisational change (Grant, 2014).

The key principles underpinning this approach are simplicity, deep personalisation and effectiveness. If we want to create genuine organisational or cultural change through workplace coaching then the training methodology itself needs to be simple and accessible. The ethos embodied in the third-generation approach suggests the use of straightforward, practical language and models that are easily learnt, understood and applied. There should be no complex acronyms to memorise, no need to complete a new degree in biology, neuroscience or psychology.

It also needs to be simple to use. Managers need to coach people in a wide range of situations from short collaborative brainstorming conversations, through on-the-run corridor-coaching conversations through to formal sit-down coaching sessions. This kind of 'coaching agility' is what organisations are looking for (Gravett & Caldwell, 2016), yet few workplace coach training programmes have managed to impart these skills in a simple, effective fashion.

Many second-generation approaches have complex acronyms and over-engineered scientific (or pseudoscientific) rationales, and fail to adequately address the real-life problems faced in the contemporary workplace (Billett, 1995). The challenge here is to balance a solid scientific evidence-based approach with simplicity, genuine flexibility and real-life practicality. This is the challenge for the next generation of workplace coaching.

Deep personalisation facilitates embedding

The personalisation principle is important at both the systemic and individual levels. On an individual level, it is important that participants in the 'Leader as Coach' programme feel that any taught coaching material is congruent with their personal values and their sense of self. Encouraging individuals to express coaching principles in their own words, rather than rote-learning predetermined language or glib propriety phrases is important.

Coaching is, after all, a personalised rapport-based quality conversation that seeks to elicit discretionally intellectual effort and action from the coachee. Authenticity, realism and self-congruency are thus vital parts of the coaching conversation. What coaches say, and how they say it, is of vital importance. To train workplace coaches to reiterate stereotyped phrases or to spout proprietary jargon is surely to run against the very essence of coaching.

From an evidence-based perspective and in relation to systemic issues, the research indicates that embedding best takes place when people in the organisation can relate to the issues on a personal level (Casey, 2005). We want to avoid the risk of the new ideas and language being rejected like some kind of ‘foreign virus’ by the organisational system because it was perceived as an infection of sorts. Those of us who work in this capacity with our client organisations need to consider how best to introduce this material in way that the organisation will accept and fully unitise it rather than reject.

Some consultants attempt to do this by talking about ‘driving through’ organisational change by using workplace coaching. Of course the aggressive command and control ethos implicit in such language may well appeal to a certain type of individual or organisation, but it certainly appears to be strongly grounded in a second-generational command and control mindset. Other providers have tried to make their coaching IP and methodologies become part of the host client’s cultural DNA by the simple expedience of ‘white labelling’. Whilst this can be useful, this type of activity is really a form of rebranding, simply putting the client’s brand and logo on the consultant’s IP.

What is needed is a step beyond that. In order to facilitate genuine, organisationally congruent change, we need a genuine transfer of knowledge, with the end result being that the client organisation ‘owns’ the IP and coaching methodologies themselves. This is more than just ‘ownership’ or buying existing IP. The coaching methodology should be explicitly designed from the ground up using the client’s organisational values, language and cultural narratives. This is the new direction for workplace coaching methodologies; deep personalisation and a seamless integration that creates a genuine culture of quality conversations.

Case study example: CAN Coaching

For example, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) is an organisation with over 52,000 employees. This is the fifth largest bank in the world. Prior to 2012 CBA had a diverse range of propriety coaching models and methodologies in use throughout the organisation. Unfortunately, as in many similar organisations, the use of a sundry assortment of propriety coaching models led to confusion about what was ‘the’ CBA coaching approach, and this resulted in less than effective implementation of coaching methodologies. Rather than purchase yet another externally provided coaching framework, CBA senior leadership decided to create a CBA-specific coaching approach based on third-generation principles using SFCB methodologies. The aim here was to create an overarching CBA-specific coaching approach that would stand in place of the multitude of coaching methodologies then in use.

Internal branding and personalisation was a key issue here. The CBA key branding and marketing terminology utilised the word ‘CAN’. The CBA branding message to its customers was one of a positive, ‘can-do attitude’. This was reflected in the actual name that

was devised for the internal coaching programme ‘CAN Coaching’. The notion of a ‘can-do attitude’ was defined in CBA as a willingness to tackle a job and get it done; being confident and resourceful in the face of challenges; and characterised by vibrant, purposeful action – all facets clearly relevant to coaching. In addition, the CAN Coaching programme explicitly included a number of CBA core organisational values including collaboration and accountability – all highly relevant to coaching. The specific incorporation of CBA’s organisational values into the CAN Coaching programme is another example of the personalisation principle. The CAN Coaching Leader as Coach programme also explicitly made frequent reference to CBA organisational language, demonstrating the principle of personalisation and thereby embedding the coaching methodologies into the day-to-day operations of the organisation.

The well-being aspect of the third-generation approach was heavily emphasised throughout the CAN Coaching programme, and the notion of individual/organisation and goal/value alignment resonated strongly with the participants and the organisation as a whole. A video featuring the bank’s CEO was shown in each programme, and in this the CEO explicitly endorsed this approach, and spoke at some length about the importance of well-being and professional and personal development in the CAN Coaching programme. The impact of the well-being aspect of the programme was evident in a statistically significant post-programme increase in workplace engagement – a useful proxy measure of workplace well-being (Robertson & Cooper, 2010).

This programme has been extremely successful with (as at August 2016) over 3000 individuals going through various versions of the programme (CBA, 2016). Because CBA owns the IP, it is able to adapt and change the CAN Coaching programme over time as needed. Indeed, the CAN Coaching programme has now been through several iterations, being delivered in a range of formats, including several back-to-back face-to-face training days, single training days, short sessions and through elearning formats. These evolutions reflect the very nature of coaching itself: growth-oriented, goal-focused, agile, reflective and adaptive (for an extended discussion on CAN Coaching as an exemplar of the third-generation approach, see Grant & Hartley, 2013). This type of approach is the future of workplace coaching.

Conclusion

Contemporary evidence-based SFCB coaching has developed well-validated and robust methodologies that can create significant individual and personal change (Jones et al., 2016). The principles inherent in these approaches to workplace coaching have the very real potential to create significant positive organisational change. However, in order to meet the challenges faced by organisations in the turbulent conditions that constitute present-day commercial contexts, workplace coaching training methodologies themselves need to be agile, adaptable and seamlessly integrate into an organisation. It is no longer enough for those who provide workplace coaching training to rely on off-the-shelf, mechanistic second-generation workplace coaching methodologies or pseudoscientific jargon. We need to focus on enhancing both the performance *and* the well-being of organisations and their members in ways that are assessable, personally meaningful and self-congruent. In this way, a third generation of workplace coaching can act as a

significant developmental tool, creating the culture of quality conversations needed to deal with the challenges faced by contemporary organisations.

Notes

1. The third generation of workplace coaching discussed here differs considerably from Stelter's (2013) narrative approach to generational coaching. Workplace coaching as discussed here is primarily conducted by coaches internal to the organisation and is focused on organisational issues, rather than in Stelter's (2013) approach which is focused on deconstructing and reconstructing meaning-making narratives through dialogue with a professional coach.
2. It should be noted that there is, of course, some overlap between these various 'generations'. Some organisations, industries and countries will have adopted or discarded different approaches to workplace coaching at different times. Nevertheless, the idea of generational framework provides a useful lens through which to view the changing trends in workplace coaching over time.
3. GROW is a simple way of structuring the coaching session in four sections: Goal for the session, exploration of the Reality of the situation, various Options, and finally a Wrap-up stage where specific action steps are delineated.
4. Figures 1 and 2 are © Anthony M. Grant 2015. Reproduced here with permission.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributor



Anthony M. Grant, Ph.D., is widely recognised as a key pioneer of Coaching Psychology and evidence-based approaches to coaching, with over 100 publications in this area. In 2000, Anthony established the world's first Coaching Psychology Unit at the School of Psychology at Sydney University where he is the Director and holds an appointment as an Associate Professor. He is a Visiting Professor at the International Centre for Coaching and Leadership Development, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK, a Senior Fellow at the Melbourne School of Business, Melbourne University, Australia, and an Associate Fellow at the Saïd School of Business, Oxford University, Oxford, UK. In 2007, Anthony was awarded the British Psychological Society Award for outstanding professional and scientific contribution to Coaching Psychology, and in 2009, he was awarded the 'Vision of Excellence Award' from Harvard University for his pioneering work in helping to develop a scientific foundation to coaching. He was the 2014 'scientist in residence' for the ABC – the Australian national broadcaster – and the winner of the Australian Psychological Society 2016 Workplace Excellence Award in Coaching and Leadership Development. He also enjoys playing loud (but unfortunately not very good) blues guitar.

References

- Adler, S., Campion, M., Colquitt, A., Grubb, A., Murphy, K., Ollander-Krane, R., & Pulakos, E. D. (2016). Getting rid of performance ratings: Genius or folly? A debate. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 9(02), 219–252. doi:10.1017/iop.2015.106
- Barratt, A. (1985). Management development: The next decade. *Journal of Management Development*, 4(2), 3–9. doi:10.1108/eb051576
- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Bad is stronger than good. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(4), 323–370. doi:10.1037/1089-2680.5.4.323

- Bigelow, B. (1938). Building an effective training program for field salesmen. *Personnel*, 14, 142–150.
- Billett, S. (1995). Workplace learning: Its potential and limitations. *Education+Training*, 37(5), 20–27. doi:10.1108/00400919510089103
- Bradburn, N. (1969). *The structure of psychological well-being*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Bridgman, C. S., Spaethe, M., Driscoll, P., & Fanning, J. (1958). Salesmen helped by bringing out jobs' 'critical incidents'. *Personnel Journal*, 36, 411–414.
- Brock, V. (2009). Professional challenges facing the coaching field from an historical perspective. *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, 7(1), 27–37.
- Burdett, J. O. (1998). Forty things every manager should know about coaching. *Journal of Management Development*, 17(2/3), 142. doi:10.1108/02621719810206050
- Cameron, E., & Green, M. (2015). *Making sense of change management: A complete guide to the models, tools and techniques of organizational change*. London: Kogan Page.
- Carroll, A. B. (1975). The joining-up process: Issues in effective human resource development. *Training & Development Journal*, 29(8), 3–7.
- Casey, A. (2005). Enhancing individual and organizational learning: A sociological model. *Management Learning*, 36(2), 131–147. doi:10.1177/1350507605052555
- CBA. (2016). *Cba Coaching, Leadership, Career and Performance*. Paper presented at the APS COP Workplace Excellence Presentation Awards, Melbourne.
- Chambers, E. G., Foulon, M., Handfield-Jones, H., Hankin, S. M., & Michaels, E. G. (1998). The war for talent. *McKinsey Quarterly*, 1(3), 44–57.
- Craik, C. (1988). How to improve your management skills without going on a course. *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 51(12), 429–432. doi:10.1177/030802268805101207
- Dodge, R., Daly, A. P., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. D. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(3), 222–235. doi:10.5502/ijw.v2i3.4
- Driver, R. S. (1955). Training supervisors in remote company units. *Personnel Journal*, 34, 9–12.
- Eby, L. T., Butts, M. M., Durley, J., & Ragins, B. R. (2010). Are Bad experiences stronger than good ones in mentoring relationships? Evidence from the protégé and mentor perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 77(1), 81–92. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2010.02.010
- Evered, R. D., & Selman, J. C. (1989). Coaching and the art of management. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18(2), 16–32. doi:10.1016/0090-2616(89)90040-5
- Filippi, R. (1968). Coaching: A therapy for people who do not seek help. *Zeitschrift Fuer Psychotherapie und Medizinische Psychologie*, 18(6), 225–229.
- Forgas, J. P., & Bower, G. H. (1987). Mood effects on person-perception judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(1), 53. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.53.1.53
- Frohman, A. L., & Kotter, J. P. (1977). Coaching and counseling: How you can improve the way it's done. *Training & Development Journal*, 31(11), 50–60.
- Gaughan, P. A. (2010). *Mergers, acquisitions, and corporate restructurings* (5th ed.). London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership that gets results. *Harvard Business Review*, March–April, 70–90.
- Goleman, D., Welch, S., & Welch, J. (2012). *What makes a leader?* New York: Findaway World, LLC.
- Graham, S., Wedman, J. F., & Garvin–Kester, B. (1993). Manager coaching skills: Development and application. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 6(1), 2–13. doi:10.1111/j.1937-8327.1993.tb00569.x
- Grant, A. M. (2012). ROI is a poor measure of coaching success: Towards a more holistic approach using a well-being and engagement framework. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 5(2), 74–85. doi:10.1080/17521882.2012.672438
- Grant, A. M. (2014). The efficacy of executive coaching in times of organisational change. *Journal of Change Management*, 14(2), 258–280. doi:10.1080/14697017.2013.805159
- Grant, A. M., Curtayne, L., & Burton, G. (2009). Executive coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience and workplace well-being: A randomised controlled study. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(5), 396–407. doi:10.1080/17439760902992456
- Grant, A. M., Green, L. S., & Rynsaardt, J. (2010). Developmental coaching for high school teachers: Executive coaching goes to school. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 62(3), 151–168. doi:10.1037/a0019212

- Grant, A. M., & Hartley, M. (2013). Developing the Leader as Coach: Insights, strategies and tips for embedding coaching skills in the workplace. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 6(2), 102–115. doi:10.1080/17521882.2013.824015
- Gravett, L. S., & Caldwell, S. A. (2016). Why organizations should concentrate on learning agility. In *Learning agility: The impact on recruitment and retention* (pp. 9–17). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Harter, J., Schmidt, F., & Keyes, C. (2003). Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: A review of the Gallup studies. In C.L. Keyes, & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: The positive person and the good life* (pp. 205–224). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Howard, J. (1970). *Please touch: A guided tour of the human potential movement*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Jayne, M. E., & Dipboye, R. L. (2004). Leveraging diversity to improve business performance: Research findings and recommendations for organizations. *Human Resource Management*, 43(4), 409–424. doi:10.1002/hrm.20033
- Jones, R., Woods, S., & Guillaume, Y. (2016). The effectiveness of workplace coaching: A meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89(2), 249–277. doi:10.1111/joop.12119
- Kast, F. E., & Rosenzweig, J. E. (1972). General system theory: Applications for organization and management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 15(4), 447–465. doi:10.2307/255141
- Keyes, C. L. M., & Haidt, J. (2003). *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Kilburg, R. R. (2000). *Executive coaching: Developing managerial wisdom in a world of chaos*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Kondrasuk, J. N. (1979). The best method to train managers. *Training & Development Journal*, 33(8), 46–48.
- Leonard, T. J. (1999). *Becoming a coach: The coach U approach*. New York, NY: Coach U Press.
- Lewis, P. (1947). Supervisory training methods. *Personnel Journal*, 25, 316–322.
- Lindebaum, D., & Jordan, P. J. (2014). A critique on neuroscientific methodologies in organizational behavior and management studies. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(7), 898–908. doi:10.1002/job.1940
- Mace, M. L. (1950). *The growth and development of executives*. Boston, MA: Harvard University.
- Malone, J. W. (2001). Shining a new light on organizational change: Improving self-efficacy through coaching. *Organization Development Journal*, 19(2), 27–36.
- Meffert, M. F., Chung, S., Joiner, A. J., Waks, L., & Garst, J. (2006). The effects of negativity and motivated information processing during a political campaign. *Journal of Communication*, 56(1), 27–51. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00003.x
- O'Boyle, T. F. (1998). *At any cost: Jack Welch, general electric, and the pursuit of profit*. New York, NY: Knopf.
- O'Connor, S. A., & Cavanagh, M. J. (2013). The coaching ripple effect: The effects of developmental coaching on wellbeing across organisational networks. *Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research and Practice*, 3(2), 1–23. doi:10.1186/2211-1522-3-2
- Perley, J. D. (1957). How the personnel staff can serve line management. *Personnel*, 33, 546–549.
- Ponzo, Z. (1980). Management development roles: Coach, sponsor and mentor. *Personnel Journal*, 59(11), 918–921.
- Pulakos, E. D., & O'Leary, R.S. (2011). Why is performance management broken? *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 4(2), 146–164.
- Robertson, I. T., & Cooper, C. L. (2010). Full engagement: The integration of employee engagement and psychological well-being. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 31(4), 324–336. doi:10.1108/01437731011043348
- Rock, D. (2001). *Personal best*. Sydney: Simon and Schuster.
- Ryff, C., & Keyes, C. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(4), 719–727. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.69.4.719
- Sears, D., & McDermott, D. (2003). The rise and fall of rank and yank. *Information Strategy-Pennsauken*, 19(3), 6–11.

- Sherman, S., & Freas, A. (2004). The wild west of executive coaching. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(11), 82–90.
- Slater, R. (2003). *Jack Welch and the GE Way*. New York, NY: Tata McGraw-Hill Education.
- Spence, G. B. (2007). Further development of evidence-based coaching: Lessons from the rise and fall of the human potential movement. *Australian Psychologist*, 42(2), 255–265. doi:10.1080/00050060701648142
- Sperry, L. (1993). Working with executives: Consulting, counseling, and coaching. *Individual Psychology: Journal of Adlerian Theory, Research & Practice*, 49(2), 257–266.
- Stacey, R. D., & Griffin, D. (2005). *A complexity perspective on researching organizations: Taking experience seriously*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Stelter, R. (2013). *A guide to third generation coaching*. London: Springer.
- Stephen, M., & Sarah, C. (1994). Performance management as the key to customer service. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 26(11), 3–8. doi:10.1108/00197859410073736
- Theeboom, T., Beersma, B., & van Vianen, A. (2013). Does coaching work? A meta-analysis on the effects of coaching on individual level outcomes in an organizational context. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 9(1), 1–18. doi:10.1080/17439760.2013.837499
- Weigel, R. G. (2002). The marathon encounter group – vision and reality: Exhuming the body for a last look. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 54(3), 186. doi:10.1037/1061-4087.54.3.186
- Welch, J., & Byrne, J. A. (2003). *Jack: Straight from the Gut*. New York, NY: Business Plus.
- Wheatley, M. (1997). Goodbye, command and control. *Leader to Leader*, 1997(5), 21–28.
- Whitmore, J. (1996). *Coaching for performance: Growing people, performance and purpose*. London: Nicholas Brealey.
- Whitworth, L., Kimsey-House, H., & Sandahl, P. (1998). *Co-active coaching: New skills for coaching people towards success in work and life*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.
- Willemyns, M., Gallois, C., & Callan, V. (2003). Trust me, I'm your boss: Trust and power in supervisor–supervisee communication. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(1), 117–127. doi:10.1080/09585190210158547
- Woehr, D. J., & Roch, S. G. (2016). Of babies and bathwater: Don't throw the measure out with the application. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 9(2), 357–361. doi:10.1017/iop.2016.25
- Wolf, J. F., & Sherwood, F. P. (1981). Coaching: Supporting public executives on the job. *Public Administration Review*, 41(1), 73–76. doi:10.2307/975726
- Yalom, I. D., & Lieberman, M. A. (1971). A study of encounter group casualties. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 25(1), 16–30. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.1971.01750130018002
- Yarnhill, S., & McLean, G. N. (2001). Theories supporting transfer of training. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 12(2), 195–208. doi:10.1002/hrdq.7
- Zeus, P., & Skiffington, S. (2000). *The complete guide to coaching at work*. Sydney: McGraw Hill.