

**BA (Hons) Leadership and Management Skills for the
Workplace**

**Module: Coaching & Mentoring Skills for the
Workplace**

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Introduction

Coaching and mentoring as two organizational practices are crucial in the development of people and retain a strong influential correlation. Clutterbuck (2014) has given his definition of mentoring as a process of having a less experienced person provide by a more experienced one, while coaching relates to the procedure of improving performance of an individual or group to achieve predetermined objectives. In this reflective statement, we are going to discuss a role-play session of coaching during which I had to help Maria Cook, a basic grade microbiologist at Healthcare International, address her performance problems and recommence her motivation. This reflection will employ Gibbs' (1988) Reflective Cycle, where the author will describe, analyze, evaluate, and reflect on the coaching process at the organization, the effect of the process on performance and morale, and the specific skills and characteristics of an effective coach.

Reflection of the Role-play Session

Description

During the role-play activity, the character assigned for me was that of Philippa Graham who was responsible for not only helping Maria Cook analyze her performance difficulties but also for building a connection with her to create a safe space for open discussion. This initial rapport-building was crucial in helping Maria feel understood and supported. As a result, the morale and the job satisfaction of Maria who worked for Healthcare International for four years without a promotion were very low and she was planning to leave. Those around her had observed that she had developed a general feeling of resentment that was unfavourable to the team. It was a coaching session focused to understand her concerns and prioritize those issues that made her dissatisfied with her job and how she can be helped to improve her performance. Our debriefing followed the GROW model: Goal, Reality, Option and Will as proposed by Whitmore in 2002. This model was useful for thinking deliberately and systematically about Maria's goals, her situation, potential courses of action, and her readiness to act on changes. Specific performance problems were discussed, Maria's career goals were discussed and discussing an action plan that will be realistic in achieving these goals.

Feelings

During the preparation phase of the session, I was still unsure how I could properly execute the coaching dialogue. One of my worries was how to confront Maria about her poor performance without compromising her feelings and advise her in a constructive manner. My main concern was to make the session as helpful as possible for Maria, so I must admit I took the session with some concern. Over the course of the session, I was able to build confidence in the course direction of the discussion and in helping Maria reflect on herself. I could empathize with Maria's predicament which made me want to assist her to come up with actionable strategies. At the end of the session both the tutor and Maria gave encouraging feedback which confirmed my strategies were within acceptable coaching practices. The positive response indicated that my tactics are appropriate and that I was able to cultivate a nurturing atmosphere for Maria.

Evaluation

The session had the following highlights of strength. One uncovered strength was the ability to use open-ended questions effectively, which not only focused on Maria's feelings about her performance but also helped in deepening the bond between us. However, reflecting on the lecturer's feedback, more time could have been devoted to building this relationship before diving into performance issues. Establishing a stronger initial connection could have made the session even more effective. (Egan, 2013). Such questions helped Maria to express the opinions and analyze her difficulties in a relevant manner. Thus, by questioning herself, Maria got an opportunity to receive profound thoughts and perspectives that she had never thought of before.

I was able to apply the concept of active listening as I ensured that Maria knew she was being listened to and understood by using some of the components of cultural competence (Mineyama et al. , 2007). I ensured that I did not interrupt Maria a lot and allowed her to discuss her problems during the session. It provided the opportunity to gain a deeper insight into her issues and design appropriate procedures for their solution.

Nevertheless, there were some aspects in the evaluation conclusions where progress was seen as insufficient. **Reflecting on the lecturer's feedback**, more time could have been devoted to building this relationship before diving into performance issues. Establishing a stronger initial connection could have made the session even more effective. Additionally, the indecisiveness

between the coaching or mentoring approach proved to be a time-consuming factor. This indecisiveness could have possibly affected the outcomes of the session had it not been resolved timely. Moreover, using question formulations that sought to get more information about Maria's motivations and constraints was difficult. The conversation, aimed to provoke deep thinking and various angles of the issue, revealed the major issue of the present project—the problem of creating questions that would inspire both the speaker and listener to think deeply and come up with thoughts that would shed new light on the issue at hand.

Analysis

Such reality because of the role-play highlighted the importance of the interventionist technique known as coaching in dealing with performance related concerns and morale. Grant (2011) explains that coaching enhances goal realization, and booster, cognition, which are key in human development. Using the GROW model, I was able to facilitate Maria's understanding of goals, the obstacles to her performance and chart out a plan. The usage of the GROW model helped Maria to get structured overview of her issues and possible solutions that can be applied.

Coaching is known to have positive effects on the performance and the morale because people get to reflect on their behaviors and gain control over their learning processes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, during the coaching session with Maria, she comprehended that her general behavioral problems significantly relate to her lack of motivation and overall job dissatisfaction. It is true that Maria came up with an action plan to replace the problems facing the employees so that he or she would be able to handle them in an effective and efficient manner which led to maximum performance and morale among the employees. This outcome outlines the importance of coaching for the promotion of career planning as well as, individual advancement.

The session also defined the competencies of a good coach in relation to the skills, behaviour, attitudes, beliefs and values. It has been argued that competence skills, especially in the area of communication, understanding, patience and the ability to make people feel empowered are core competencies in coaching (Kimsey-House et al. , 2010). Self-awareness as discussed by Goleman (1995) of a coach is very important in dealing with feelings at the time of coaching.

Promoting empathy for the coachee's position, feedback, and general encouraging approach of the coach is a core component of the method.

Watching the session, it is possible to discuss the process of applying the coaching approaches and identify several factors that define the success of the future coaching session. This has to do with the tricks that the coach is able to employ in a bid to ensure that there is trust between the coachee and the coach as well as ensuring that dialogue is held in safe spaces and that the approaches that are used by the coach are as much collaborative as they are directive. The session also highlighted that establishing a strong connection with the coachee is a fundamental competency for a coach. The rapport built early on facilitated trust and openness, which are essential for the effective implementation of coaching techniques. This aligns with the feedback that more time spent on bonding would have further enhanced the session's impact.

Conclusion

This practical exercise was very useful in terms of understanding the process of coaching and its enlightenment effects on individuals, as well as on the results. This experience demonstrated that coaching is not only about guiding clients toward awareness and ownership of their difficulties but also about building a strong initial connection that can enhance the overall effectiveness of the coaching process. This in turn results in the increase of motivation and job satisfaction among empowered workers. The session also stressed the need to acquire key coaching skills including listening and effective questioning and interpersonal intuition. Effective problem solving is necessary for creating changes to occur in a purposeful manner while helping learners to develop into better people and professionals.

From the session with Maria, the functionality of GROW model as a guideline to coaching was well illustrated. Using this model with Maria, I showed her the reality of the situation, helped her to notice the existing obstacles, and think about the changes for a better outcome. This case of positive improvement on her performance and morale made me appreciate the role that coaching plays in the vested improvement of an individual and subsequently the achievement of organizational goals.

Action Plan

In future coaching sessions, I plan to focus on several key areas for improvement:

Decision-Making: Regarding the second learning, I will focus on improving the speed of making choices whilst considering what will actually serve the coachee better, whether it is business coaching or business mentoring. This involves the evaluation of the situation as well as ideas concerning the coachee goals and the issues he/she encounters. The idea here is that by improving my decision making ability, the support which I offer shall be much more focused and useful.

Question Formulation: To achieve this, I will make sure I frequently create questions that will help the participants to think as an end goal. The steps in the question development will be informed by such theories as Egan's Skilled Helper Model that has been discussed in Egan (2013). This will help to call more attention to problems and, in general, refine the questions thus encouraging more substantial conversation.

Feedback Incorporation: I will make sure that I go to my colleagues and trainers and ask them to give me constructive criticism on how I can improve my coaching skills or areas that I have challenged confronting. Such action will improve my practices in coaching in the long-run because practice makes a man perfect. Integrating feedback will help me refine my strategies and hence improve the methodology to attain more effectiveness.

Continued Learning: I will carry on reading theoretical frameworks and models of coaching which include the frameworks proposed by Grant (2003) and Whitmore (2010). This means that by updating my knowledge on the existing best practices in the field, I will be relevant in the line of coaching.

Emotional Intelligence: To enhance emotions, I will focus on practicing the appropriate emotional intelligence that requires coaches to respond to the clients' feelings appropriately in order to support them effectively (Goleman, 1995). Advanced emotional intelligence will result in the creation of more solid working relationships with the aim of achieving most effective results.

Conclusion

Coaching is therefore a central factor in enhancing performance and motivation within any firm, as exemplified by this reflective statement. Coaching provides people with all that they need to look at their problems, problems that they are expected to solve themselves. The session that implied the role-play showed the necessity to master key aspects of coaching: communication, understanding of participants' emotions, and motivation to change. To further advance the skills and providing the feedback, I envision my practice in coaching and contributing to people's professional success. While seeking constant improvement of the self and optimized performance in the provision of coaching services, my goal is to support the positive growth and development of people in organizations.

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Appendix

Roleplay Script: Philippa Coaching Maria Using the GROW Model

Characters:

- Philippa Graham (Manager) played by Akos Molnar
- Maria Cook (Basic Grade Microbiologist) played by Bogdan Draghici

Location: Philippa's Office

1. Opening the Conversation

Philippa:

Hi Maria, thank you for joining me today. I wanted to take some time to talk about your current role and how you're feeling about your work. How are things going for you?

Maria:

Well, to be honest, Philippa, I feel like I'm stuck in a rut. I've been here for four years, and I don't see many opportunities for growth or promotion. It's frustrating.

Philippa:

I hear you, Maria. It's understandable to feel frustrated when you don't see a clear path forward. Let's take some time to explore this together.

2. Establishing the Goal

Philippa:

What would you ideally like to achieve in your career?

Maria:

Ideally, I want to move into a more senior role where I can take on more responsibility, maybe even lead a project or a small team. I want to feel like I'm progressing, not just doing the same thing day in and day out.

Philippa:

That sounds like a great goal, Maria. Moving into a more senior role would definitely be a significant step up. Let's work on making that goal more specific. What kind of senior role are you aiming for? Is there a particular position or area within the company that excites you?

Maria:

I'm really interested in project management within our department, especially in areas where I can apply my microbiology background while also learning more about leadership and team dynamics. I'd love to manage a team, or a major project related to new product development.

Philippa:

That's a clear and achievable goal. A role in project management would align well with your skills and ambitions. Let's keep that in mind as we continue our discussion.

3. Exploring the Reality

Philippa:

Now that we've identified your goal, let's look at where things stand currently. What do you think is holding you back from achieving this right now?

Maria:

Well, there don't seem to be many opportunities here. I've been applying for jobs outside the company, but I haven't had much success. Also, I think sometimes I let my frustration show, which doesn't help my relationships with the team.

Philippa:

It's good that you're aware of the impact of your frustration on team dynamics. That's an important aspect to consider. What other factors do you think might be contributing to the lack of opportunities?

Maria:

I think part of it is that I've been so focused on my current tasks that I haven't really stepped outside my comfort zone. I haven't taken on any new challenges or tried to expand my skill set. Maybe that's why I'm not being considered for higher roles.

Philippa:

That's a very insightful observation, Maria. It's easy to get caught up in day-to-day work and lose sight of the bigger picture. What's the current situation with your workload and responsibilities? Do you feel you have the time and energy to take on more?

Maria:

My workload is manageable, especially with the new automation processes we've implemented. I think I could take on more, but I need to find the right opportunities to do so.

4. Generating Options

Philippa:

Let's brainstorm some options together. What steps do you think you could take within the company to start moving toward your goal of a more senior role?

Maria:

Maybe I could look for opportunities to take on more responsibility in my current role. I could ask to be involved in more challenging projects or try to develop some new skills that would make me a stronger candidate for promotion. I could also try to improve my relationships with the team to create a more positive work environment.

Philippa:

Those are excellent ideas. Taking on more responsibility, developing new skills, and improving

team dynamics can definitely help position you for future opportunities. What specific skills or areas of knowledge do you think would be most beneficial to develop?

Maria:

I think I need to work on my leadership and project management skills. I'm confident in my technical abilities, but I haven't had much experience leading others or managing complex projects from start to finish. Maybe I could find a mentor within the company who could guide me in these areas.

Philippa:

A mentor could be very valuable, especially someone who has experience in project management. I can help connect you with someone who might be a good fit. What about volunteering for new projects? Are there any upcoming initiatives that interest you?

Maria:

I heard there's going to be a new product development project starting soon. It's still in the early stages, but I think it could be a great opportunity to get involved and learn more about the project management side of things.

Philippa:

That sounds like a perfect opportunity, Maria. I can speak with the project lead and see if there's a way for you to get involved. In the meantime, how do you plan to approach improving your relationships with the team?

Maria:

I think I need to be more patient and understanding. I've been letting my frustration get the better of me, and it's caused some tension. Maybe I could try to be more supportive and collaborate more with my colleagues, rather than just focusing on my own frustrations.

Philippa:

It's great that you're willing to work on that. Positive relationships with your colleagues will definitely support your career growth and create a more enjoyable work environment.

5. Way Forward

Philippa:

Let's talk about the way forward. How would you feel about setting up regular check-ins so we can discuss your progress and any new opportunities that arise?

Maria:

I think that would be really helpful. It would keep me focused and give me some accountability. Plus, it would be good to get your feedback on how I'm doing and where I can improve.

Philippa:

I'm happy to do that, Maria. Let's aim for monthly check-ins. In the meantime, what's the first step you can take this week to start moving toward your goal?

Maria:

I think the first step would be to have a conversation with you or another manager about my

career aspirations and see where I can contribute more. I'll also start looking at any upcoming projects that might need extra help.

Philippa:

That sounds like a solid plan. I'm here to support you, so don't hesitate to reach out if you need guidance. Let's work together to help you get out of this rut and move toward the career progression you're looking for.

Maria:

Thank you, Philippa. I really appreciate your support. I'm feeling more optimistic already.

Philippa:

I'm glad to hear that, Maria. I'm confident that with the right focus and effort, you can achieve your goals. Let's keep the momentum going.