



BA Leadership and Management

Coaching and Mentoring Skills for the Workplace

Module code: BMSW6105

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Individual Report

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Reflective Report: Coaching and Mentoring Experience

Introduction

Coaching and mentoring are essential tools in the modern workplace, playing a significant role in employee development, organizational growth, and performance enhancement. These approaches, while sharing the common goal of fostering growth, differ in their methods, focus, and timeframes. Coaching is primarily goal-oriented, aiming to improve performance and address specific challenges through structured, solution-driven conversations. It is often short-term, focusing on achieving measurable outcomes, and aligns closely with organizational objectives. Mentoring, on the other hand, is a longer-term developmental relationship that focuses on personal growth, skill-building, and career guidance. Mentors share their experience and provide support to less experienced individuals, nurturing both professional and personal development.

The purpose of this report is to critically evaluate the purpose of coaching and mentoring in the workplace, examining their distinct roles and methodologies. It will also provide a deeper analysis of the GROW model of coaching, a widely-used framework, and reflect on two practical experiences—coaching focused on goal setting and mentoring with feedback provision. The reflection is structured around Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) and aims to explore the practical challenges faced in applying coaching and mentoring techniques, as well as identify areas for personal and professional growth. Through this analysis, the report will highlight the importance of these approaches in enhancing employee performance, personal development, and organizational success, while also identifying the key skills required for effective coaching and mentoring in the workplace.

Evaluation of the Purpose of Coaching and Mentoring in the Workplace

Coaching and mentoring serve as vital tools in the workplace to enhance employee development, foster organizational growth, and improve overall performance. Both approaches provide frameworks for learning, skill development, and motivation, but they achieve these outcomes through distinct methods and objectives.

Coaching is primarily goal-oriented and performance-focused, aiming to unlock an individual's potential and improve their output through structured, solution-driven conversations. (Kerrigan, 2018) It is often short-term and specific to particular challenges, such as improving leadership skills, enhancing time management, or achieving key performance indicators. For example, a coach may use the SMART goal-setting framework

to help an employee establish clear, actionable objectives, ultimately driving measurable results for both the individual and the organization. Coaching aligns closely with organizational goals, making it an effective tool for addressing performance gaps and fostering accountability.

Mentoring, on the other hand, is developmental in nature, focusing on long-term growth and relationship-building. It often involves a more experienced individual guiding a less experienced mentee, offering advice, sharing insights, and fostering personal and professional development. (Hopwood, 2024) Mentoring is particularly effective in onboarding new employees, supporting career transitions, and preparing future leaders. By creating a safe, nurturing environment, mentoring enables individuals to explore broader aspects of their roles and aspirations.

Although coaching and mentoring share similarities in fostering growth and using effective communication techniques, their approaches differ significantly. Coaching emphasizes empowering the individual to discover their solutions, often following structured models like GROW. Mentors, however, take a more directive approach, sharing their experiences and providing guidance based on their expertise (Hamlin, 2024)

The contrasting views of coaching and mentoring can be further analyzed through their applications. Coaching is lauded for its ability to achieve quick, measurable results, making it suitable for addressing immediate challenges. However, critics argue that its focus on performance may overlook emotional and psychological factors that influence behavior. Mentoring, in contrast, is praised for its holistic and supportive approach but may face criticism for being less structured and potentially fostering dependency if boundaries are not established. (Palacio, 2024)

In practice, coaching and mentoring complement each other when used strategically within the workplace. For instance, coaching can address specific performance issues while mentoring fosters long-term growth and cultural integration. Combining the two approaches can create a comprehensive development framework, addressing both immediate needs and future aspirations. Coaching and mentoring are indispensable tools for workplace development, each with unique strengths and applications. By understanding their distinct purposes and methodologies, organizations can leverage these approaches to build a motivated, skilled, and resilient workforce.

Critical Analysis of a Specific Model of Coaching

The GROW model, developed by Sirgy, is one of the most widely used frameworks for coaching. The acronym stands for Goal, Reality, Options, and Will, representing the four key stages of

a coaching session. This structured approach provides a clear pathway for both coach and coachee to identify objectives, explore challenges, brainstorm solutions, and commit to actionable steps. (Passmore, 2016)

- **Goal:** The coachee articulates a specific, measurable goal for the session or long-term development. This ensures clarity and direction from the outset.
- **Reality:** The current situation is assessed through reflective and probing questions. This stage involves exploring the coachee's perceptions, challenges, and resources.
- **Options:** Potential strategies and solutions are discussed collaboratively, encouraging creativity and ownership of the process.
- **Will:** The session concludes with actionable steps and a commitment to achieving the defined goals.

The simplicity and flexibility of the GROW model make it suitable for a wide range of coaching scenarios, from performance improvement to personal development. Its emphasis on open-ended questioning empowers coachees to reflect deeply and take ownership of their progress.

However, the GROW model is not without limitations. While its structured approach is a strength, it can also be a drawback in complex, non-linear situations where issues are multifaceted and dynamic. Critics argue that the model may oversimplify the coaching process, potentially limiting the exploration of deeper psychological or emotional barriers (Passmore, 2016)

The model relies heavily on the coach's skill in questioning and summarizing. Inexperienced coaches could find it difficult to keep the session on track or explore deep discoveries.

The GROW approach works especially well in settings that emphasize performance, such as project management or leadership development. For example, the GROW model led an organized conversation about time management during my coaching session with Atanas. We were able to produce a definite, quantifiable result by investigating Atanas' present difficulties and working together to determine feasible solutions.

Still, the paradigm might not work as well when dealing with deeply ingrained problems or situations that call for emotional support. For instance, coaching someone going through major personal crises may call for a less goal-oriented and more sympathetic approach, like the Co-Active Coaching model, which combines relational and emotional.

Reflection on Practical 1: Coaching and Goal Setting

Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988), I will reflect on my first assessed coaching session, which focused on goal setting using the GROW model. This reflection aims to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and the broader implications of the session for my professional and personal growth.

The session focused on creating an open and supportive environment for Atanas to articulate his concerns regarding time management. Instead of aiming to identify specific goals, the primary purpose was to hear Atanas' voice, allowing him to express his thoughts freely. By applying active listening techniques and structured questioning, I facilitated a discussion where Atanas could reflect on his challenges and feel heard. The session concluded with a summary to ensure clarity and mutual understanding. I felt confident and at ease during the session, largely due to my preparation and understanding of the coaching process. Creating a space for Atanas to share his thoughts felt rewarding, as I observed his increased comfort and engagement as the session progressed. However, I also noticed moments where I struggled to balance listening with asking follow-up questions, which made me reflect on the need to refine my questioning techniques.

- **Evaluation:** The session successfully achieved its purpose of giving Atanas the opportunity to voice his concerns. My use of active listening and non-judgmental communication helped establish a trusting and open atmosphere. However, I realized that some of my questions could have been simpler and more intuitive to encourage deeper exploration. Feedback from my lecturer also suggested incorporating more probing and empathetic questions to better support Atanas in his reflection.
- **Analysis:** The session highlighted the importance of prioritizing the coachee's agenda and creating a safe space for open dialogue. By focusing on hearing Atanas' voice, I was able to practice essential coaching skills such as active listening and summarizing. However, the feedback regarding my questioning techniques emphasized the need to expand my approach. Using simpler and more empathetic language could have further encouraged Atanas to delve deeper into his thoughts.
- **Conclusion:** This session reinforced my understanding of the value of creating space for coachees to express themselves. It demonstrated the significance of active listening and non-directive questioning in fostering a meaningful coaching dialogue. While I felt prepared and effective in creating a supportive environment, the need to refine my questioning techniques remains a key area for growth.

- **Action Plan:** Moving forward, I will focus on enhancing my questioning skills by studying and practicing different types of questions, including empathetic and probing techniques. I will also seek opportunities for peer feedback to improve the clarity and impact of my communication. By addressing these areas, I aim to create even more supportive and engaging sessions in the future.

Reflection on Practical 2: Mentoring and Providing Feedback

Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988), I will reflect on my second assessed session, which focused on mentoring and providing feedback to Atanas. This session was a continuation of the initial coaching session and aimed to evaluate any progress on the time management challenges discussed previously. Additionally, I presented an action plan to guide Atanas in addressing his ongoing challenges.

After one month, Atanas and I reconvened to assess whether any improvements had been made in his time management since our first session. Unfortunately, the issues remained unchanged, prompting me to share a structured action plan I had prepared. The action plan outlined specific, practical steps that Atanas could implement to improve his time management skills. During the session, I provided constructive feedback, ensuring that my suggestions were clear and actionable. Both Atanas and I left the session feeling satisfied with the outcomes and direction.

I felt more confident and prepared for this session due to the work I had done on the action plan. However, there were moments where I doubted whether I had maximized the potential of the session. While both Atanas and I were happy with the session, I sensed that I could deliver even more impactful sessions with further development of my mentoring skills. This realization left me feeling both motivated and reflective about my own growth.

The session succeeded in its aim to provide Atanas with a clear path forward. The structured action plan was well-received, and the feedback I provided was constructive and actionable. However, I noticed moments where I hesitated to explore more deeply why no progress had been made since our first session. This highlighted an area where I could improve—delving deeper into the root causes of challenges rather than focusing solely on solutions.

This session demonstrated the importance of preparation in mentoring. Having a structured action plan allowed me to provide targeted feedback and ensured the session had a clear direction. However, the lack of progress since our first session also emphasized the need for a deeper exploration of underlying barriers. This highlighted an opportunity for me to enhance my questioning and analytical skills, enabling me to uncover deeper insights and tailor my mentoring more effectively.

While the session achieved its objectives and left both Atanas and me feeling satisfied, it also revealed areas for my growth as a mentor. I learned that while preparation and structure are critical, flexibility and deeper analysis are equally important to address challenges effectively. I also realized that building my confidence and showcasing my full potential are areas I need to focus on to deliver even better sessions.

Moving forward, I will focus on developing my confidence by engaging in more mentoring practice and seeking constructive feedback from peers. Additionally, I will work on refining my questioning and analytical skills to better uncover underlying issues during sessions. By addressing these areas, I aim to deliver more impactful mentoring sessions that truly bring about change.

Conclusion

This reflective report has critically evaluated my experiences with coaching and mentoring, framed through Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988). It has highlighted the theoretical and practical aspects of both approaches, emphasizing their unique purposes and methods within the workplace. Key theories, such as the GROW coaching model and the Johari Window for mentoring, have been explored to underline the importance of structured approaches to development. Additionally, essential skills such as active listening, non-judgmental attitudes, and the use of techniques like SOLER were identified as pivotal in fostering successful coaching and mentoring sessions.

In evaluating the effectiveness of both coaching and mentoring, I concluded that coaching is goal-oriented, often focusing on specific performance improvements, while mentoring offers long-term developmental support. The integration of these two methods can provide a comprehensive framework for employee development, addressing both immediate challenges and future growth. Through my own practical experiences, particularly in goal setting and feedback provision, I learned the value of preparation, active listening, and the need for deeper analysis in mentoring.

Moving forward, my experience with coaching and mentoring will inform my future practice by encouraging me to refine my questioning techniques and develop more empathy and flexibility in my approach. By continually building on these skills, I aim to foster more meaningful relationships with coachees and mentees in the workplace, ultimately supporting both individual and organizational growth. This reflective process has provided valuable insights into my personal development, motivating me to continue learning and improving as both a coach and mentor.

References

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Appendix :

BMSW 6005		FEEDBACK	Date of Interview:	02.11.2024											
Coach		Miroslav	Coachee	Atanas											
Coaching Model:		SMART /GROW/MMM/RAW		GROW											
The numerical rating system is based on the scale below.															
Scale:	5 – Yes	4 – Most of the time	3 – Some of the time	2 – Almost never	1 – No										
Explained the purpose of the session first.			<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="5">Rating</th> </tr> <tr> <th>5</th> <th>4</th> <th>3</th> <th>2</th> <th>1</th> </tr> </table>			Rating					5	4	3	2	1
Rating															
5	4	3	2	1											
Is the coach asking open ended questions or closed questions <i>The questions used were structured allowing the coachee to respond <u>accordingly</u>, however you may also want to review different questions <u>technique</u> such as probing and <u>socratic</u>.</i>			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>☐</td> <td>☒</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>			☐	☒	☐	☐	☐					
☐	☒	☐	☐	☐											
Is the coach patient? Is He/She giving the coachee time to think through issues and arrive at a conclusion in the way THEY process information? <i>Active listening and full attention to details practiced , the coach was relatively calm and approachable</i>			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>☒</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐					
☒	☐	☐	☐	☐											
Is the coach focused on the coachee's agenda? <i>The <u>Coach focus</u> on the <u>coachee's</u> agenda - Time Management skills – 15 minutes were fully utilised with a summary of the conversation provided </i>			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>☒</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐					
☒	☐	☐	☐	☐											
<i>The coach was professional and at any time acted as judgmental</i>			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>☒</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐					
☒	☐	☐	☐	☐											
Is the coach acting as a problem solver, providing the solutions for the coachee? <i>The coach did not provide solutions but instead planned for a mentoring session without solving problems</i>			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>☒</td> <td>☒</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>			☒	☒	☐	☐	☐					
☒	☒	☐	☐	☐											
Has the SOLER technique been applied Applied			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>☒</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐					
☒	☐	☐	☐	☐											
Additional Comments Coaching skills were satisfactory, but a smile goes a long way															

Ability: Investigate