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COACHING & MENTORING SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

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Introduction

In this assignment the author will be defining the meaning of coaching and mentoring, their similarities and differences, advantages and disadvantages. The author also will be critically analysing and selecting the most suitable model of coaching and mentoring which can be used within the designated working environment, chosen by the author. Application of the selected strategies to make coaching or mentoring within the selected organisation more effective also will be discussed during this assignment. The final part of assignment will be dedicated to the methods of overcoming existing organisational, operational and individual barriers within the selected workplace and the suitable recommendation will be specified in the conclusion.

Definitions of coaching and mentoring

iMentoring (2018) defines coaching as “a method of achieving set goals”. Basically, it’s a dialogue between coach and coachee (client), where coach helps the client to set the goal correctly, find the best route to accomplish that goal and to release the client’s concealed internal potential while working on the given task.

The history of coaching goes back to ancient times. The meaning of coaching came from the Greek gymnasias where the most talented athletes were taught by the former champions in the same kind of sport. That’s how role of the sport coaches in ancient times became widely used in the modern world to describe the process of training within the workplace. In the modern culture the meaning of the coaching was reintroduced by Timothy Gallwey in his book “The Inner Game of Tennis”, first time published in 1974. He, a good tennis player himself, described the main principles of working as a sports coach. He also explained in his book in easy and understandable way how the principles of the sport coaching can be transferred into other parts of our life. In UK principles and theory of coaching were introduced by another former sportsman, professional racing driver, John Whitmore. Whitmore and Gallwey first met in 1971 and started studying coaching together. Then in later 1980’s Whitmore developed the Model GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, What), which later will be discussed more comprehensive in the due course of this assignment. In 1992 Whitmore also published book “Coaching for Performance” and became the main theorist of the modern coaching.

The history of mentoring also started in the ancient Greece. The Greek myth described in the Homer’s tale *The Odyssey* tells us about the son of Odysseus named Telemachus, who was supervised by the old trusted friend named Mentor. The best description of mentoring in the modern days is given by Reh (2019). He states that mentor is helping you with your career development, giving advice about life in general or managing your internal growth and progress over the long – term period. Now after establishing the meanings of coaching and mentoring the author will be critically analysing the similarities and differences between those two methods of training.

Critical analysis of similarities and differences of coaching and mentoring, identifying benefits and costs of coaching and mentoring

According to Management Mentors (2019), there are some distinct differences between coaching and mentoring. After careful analysis the author identified 5 main differences between those two methods of training which later can be used when applied in the selected working environment. Table below presents those differences:

<i>Coaching</i>	<i>Mentoring</i>
1. It is <i>task oriented</i> and focused on specific issues such the need to communicate more effectively or speak more coherently.	1. It is <i>relationship oriented</i> and focused on mentee's personal issues such as work/life balance, self – confidence and self – awareness.
2. Timewise it is a <i>short-term</i> oriented process. Sometimes a few lessons are enough.	2. Always a <i>long – term</i> process. Building a trust between mentor and mentee requires some time.
3. Oriented on improving the <i>performance</i> of the coachee involving enhancing current skills or acquiring the new ones.	3. Oriented on the <i>development</i> of the mentee not only for the recent job, but for the future career.
4. Doesn't require a <i>design</i> . Can be performed immediately on any topics chosen.	4. Does require the <i>design</i> stage, in order to identify the strategic purpose for mentoring, including the areas of relationship and mentoring models.
5. Immediate manager of the coachee is the most <i>critical partner</i> in coaching. He or she identifies the areas where the coaching needs to be done by the coach.	5. <i>No direct link</i> between manager and mentor. It's not necessary for them to communicate during the mentoring process.

Table 1: 5 main differences between coaching and mentoring, based on source: (Management Mentors, 2019 & Author's research)

After establishing the main differences between coaching and mentoring the author will look at the similarities between those two methods with the help from Brown Mackie College (2019). He was able to identify 5 main similarities:

1. In the working environment both the coaching and mentoring are conducted by the initiative of the line manager.
2. Both processes are open, honest relationships formed between coach or mentor and coachee or mentee.
3. The coach or mentor are both working in the client's best interests.
4. Nor coaching or mentoring is about to tell the client what and how to do it.
5. The coach or mentor role is to promote and enforce the client's self – awareness by asking the right questions in the right time and in the right atmosphere. That will stimulate the client to make well – thought decisions.

Now the author will try to describe the main benefits of coaching and mentoring to the individuals and the whole organisation. His description will be based on the research completed by Accipio, (2018) and presented as the table shown below:

Benefits of coaching	
Individuals and teams	Organisations
1. Enhanced performance and productivity.	1. Employees becoming less dependable on their managers giving managers more time to concentrate on other tasks.
2. Progressive employee development.	2. People within the organisation becoming more creative.
3. Improved relationships.	3. Manpower, skills and resources can be used more effectively.
4. Improved learning.	4. After undertaking coaching employees feel more valued and invested in.
5. Improved quality of life for individuals.	5. Improving company's culture.
	6. Improved leadership skills of managers of all levels.

Table 2: Benefits of coaching, based on source: (Accipio, 2018)

Benefits of mentoring	
Mentees	Mentors
1. They are getting independent advice outside of their next level of management.	1. Possibility to enhance and improve their own mentoring techniques.
2. Possibility to develop long – term supportive relationship.	2. Increases job satisfaction.
3. Problem-solving skills are improving.	3. Develops individual and professional relationship.
4. Improved self – confidence.	4. Enhancing own interpersonal skills.
5. Possibility of professional development and career change.	5. Provides personal satisfaction by supporting the development of other individuals.

Table 3: Benefits of mentoring, based on source: (Accipio, 2018)

And now let's see how costly coaching and mentoring can be. According to Accipio (2018) setting up coaching programmes can require money to be invested and time to be spent. Time is one of the reasons why in many businesses managers just too busy to arrange coaching sessions. Inviting the external coaches can be very expensive. Therefore, in author's opinion it is better to invest less amount of money into developing internal professional coaches rather than paying more to outsiders. With some time ahead this investment will start paying back and as a result the benefits of coaching and mentoring will become more and more visible.

After establishing the differences and similarities between coaching and mentoring and describing the main benefits and costs of coaching and mentoring the author start to analyse the purpose of coaching and mentoring in the specifically selected working environment.

The purpose of using coaching and mentoring within selected organisation of Abbey Cars

For this purpose, the author has selected the company where he works as a private hire driver, Abbey Cars UK Group. He was employed in the company's Heathrow branch in West London. Author's employment history started from driver position, later becoming shift controller and now he is working as a branch manager assistant on part – time basis. In this assignment the organisation will be simply called Abbey Cars.

A short introduction of the Abbey Cars. It is beginning as a family business going back to 1968. Nowadays it is one of the utmost well - established private hire and taxi operators in Greater London and South – East Anglia region. Abbey Cars UK Group operates in many areas of Greater London, including Hammersmith, Chiswick, Feltham, Dulwich and Dagenham. Abbey Cars has its own pick -up/drop – off ranks at Heathrow Airport, London City Airport, Gatwick, Luton and Stansted airports. The company hires around 5,000 drivers on various types of working agreements. Abbey Cars provides facilities ranging from minicab and chauffeur service to coaches, minibuses and overseas transportation. The company also has long – term running accounts with Hammersmith and Charing Cross hospitals, transporting their medical staff and patients. Also, the company serves Pinewood Studios, BBC and BP Headquarters in Chertsey area.

According to CMN (2017), in our days, any business structure which wants to keep up with organisational development, being able to adapt to incoming changes caused by business expansion and mergers, to maintain highly skilled and productive workforce needs to seek help from coaches and mentors. Abbey Cars it's not an exemption here. Based on the author's experience of working with this company, Abbey Cars has been using a few types of coaching and mentoring: business coaching and mentoring, performance coaching and mentoring and skills coaching and mentoring. In the table shown below the author will give a brief description of each of those types and explain how they are related to Abbey Cars:

<i>Types of coaching and mentoring, their brief description</i>	<i>Relation to Abbey Cars</i>
<i>1. Business coaching and mentoring:</i> 1.1. Helps to keep up with organisational development. 1.2. Provides the workforce with necessary support. 1.3. Focused on individual, enhances morale, motivation and increases productivity.	1.1. Coaching and mentoring is provided to the staff on newly acquired branches, in author's case, in Heathrow branch. 1.2. The author received all the support from the branch manager, shift controller and senior drivers through "on the job" and one - to - one training and coaching.

1.4. Helps to reduce staff turnover, makes members of the workforce feel valued and respected. <i>2. Performance coaching and mentoring:</i> 2.1. Performance enhancement now available not only for managers, but for any member of the workforce. 2.2. Managing of work/life balance is important part of performance coaching and mentoring.	1.3. As a result of communications with the branch manager the author's morale and motivation were increased. 2.1. During the mentoring process, which is still ongoing, performed by the branch manager the author has received some valuable advice how to better manage his work/life balance. 2.2. The branch management always ready to offer performance coaching and mentoring to any member of the workforce.
<i>3. Skills coaching and mentoring:</i> 3.1. To be performed by highly skilled coaches and mentors. 3.2. Offers flexible, adaptive approach, not your usual classroom training and can be performed in "live" environment. 3.3. Specifically tailored to the needs of the individual, taking to account their knowledge, previous experience and personal circumstances.	3.1. All the coaches and mentors in Heathrow branch are highly skilled professionals of the trade. 3.2. While attending classroom training the author was also coached by the senior driver, they spent a couple of days driving together to various landmarks of London in order to learn and memorise the best driving routes and parking places. The coaching was performed on One – to – One basis and was very helpful. 3.3. Further skills coaching was completed when author started doing duties of shift controller.

Table 4: 3 types of coaching and mentoring and their relation to the working environment of Abbey Cars, based on source: (CMN, 2017 & Author's research)

After establishing the purpose of using coaching and mentoring within Abbey Cars and how it was applied in the authors case, the author will try select the most suitable model of coaching or mentoring suitable the best for the selected organisation.

Selection of the most suitable model of coaching applicable to the context of Abbey Cars

As it was mentioned before, the author started exploring of new position within Heathrow branch when he was offered role of branch manager assistant on part – time basis due to author's studying commitments. Some aspects of that position are involving coaching of the newcomers to the company. While still being mentored by the branch manager, the author also will need to be coached to become effective coach himself. For that purpose, the branch manager appointed one of the senior shift controllers to be the author's coach. The coach suggested that author should use coaching GROW Model to help to identify goals the author wants to achieve, the obstacles on his way to those goals and the methods to overcome those obstacles. As author stated earlier in this assignment, the GROW Model was originally developed in the 1980s by Sir John Whitmore in cooperation with Graham Alexander and Alan Fine. Mind Tools (2019) in their research presented the modern version of that method of coaching and mentoring, called GROW Model Tool. Presented below as a table is the author's completed GROW Model Tool:

My GOALS 1. What do I want to accomplish? 2. How I will know when it is achieved?	1.1. I want to become branch manager. 1.2. I want to become a fully qualified coach within the organisation of Abbey Cars. 2.1. When I will be appointed as branch manager and start coaching the members of the company's workforce.
My REALITY 1. What's happening right now in terms of achieving my goals? 2. How far away I am from the achieving my goals?	1.1. In terms of achieving my goal to be a branch manager I am currently fulfilling the position of the branch manager assistant. I am constantly gaining relevant working experience in this role and receiving mentoring support from the branch manager. 1.2. In terms of becoming a coach I am currently in the process of receiving coaching training from the senior shift controller. The additional help comes from my studies at the university. 2.1. Branch manager goal: 40% completed so far. 2.2. Coach goal: 30% completed so far.
My OBSTACLES 1. What is standing on my way? Me? Other people? 2. Lack of skills, knowledge, experience? 3. Financial problems? 4. Physical environment?	1.1. Me: lack of self – confidence, self – esteem and motivation. 2.1. Not enough communication skills, team leadership skills and coaching skills. 3.1. No financial obstacles now. 4.1. Struggling to manage work/life/study balance.
My OPTIONS	1.1. I need to attend and complete all mentoring sessions to boost my self –

1. What options do I have to overcome those obstacles?	confidence, self – esteem and motivation. 1.2. I must take further training in order to improve my communication, leadership and teamworking skills. 1.3. I must fully participate in the coaching process to gain the skills of the professional coach. 1.4. I must start better management of my work/life/study balance.
My WILL 1. Which option I will commit to?	1.1. I will make sure that I am fully committed to achieving my goals by receiving the support from my mentor and coach. 1.2. My progress in mentoring process will be reviewed once a month. 1.3. My progress in coaching process will be reviewed on weekly basis.

Table 5: Author's personal GROW Model, based on source: (Mind Tools, 2019 & Author's research)

As we can see from the table the structure of the GROW Model Tool is very simple, but at the same time it's very powerful framework helping to build the most effective coaching and mentoring sessions. That's why it's being used widely all over the world. However, there are a few rules need to be observed while working with this Model Tool, Sari (2018) states:

1. All the goals set up in the **GOALS** part of the Model Tool must be "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Time – bound).
2. The starting point of achieving the **GOAL** must be carefully considered. This will help the coachee to gather all the relevant information without missing some important parts of it.
3. Exploring the **OPTIONS** can done through coach – coachee brainstorming sessions so the coachee could discover as many options as possible. Later, during after – session discussion the best of the options can be selected.
4. Establishing the **WILL** is also very important part of the Model. It will help the coachee to commit to precise actions in order to achieve the desired goal or goals.

In author's opinion, practising this model upon himself will help the author later to organise and structure his own coaching sessions in the future.

Critical analysis of the qualities of an effective coach within the workplace of Abbey Cars

Based on author's own working experience and with some help from research conducted by CSP (2019) it was possible to summarise 10 qualities of the most effective coach to be working within the company of Abbey Cars. Those 10 qualities are including knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviour. They are displayed in the table shown below:

<i>Qualities of an effective coach</i>	<i>Relation to Abbey Cars</i>
1. Effective coach has well – developed self – awareness.	1. Coach in Abbey Cars did have such quality.
2. Effective coach always concentrate on problem areas requiring attention, where coach's involvement is necessary and coachee's improvement is needed.	2. Coach in Abbey Cars was very good at identifying problem areas, confirmed by the author.
3. Effective coach always comes prepared for each coaching session with all the relevant information, examples and ideas.	3. On his own account the author had a feeling that his coach knew the subject and agenda of each session very well.
4. Effective coach has a respect for his or her clients.	4. In author's opinion he felt respected by coach of Abbey Cars all the way through the whole coaching process.
5. Effective coach knows the strengths and weaknesses of his or her clients.	5. The author can confirm that through numerous conversations on one – to – one basis with his coach he did let the coach to know author's personality very well.
6. Effective coach always sets the expectations very clear at the beginning of each coaching session.	6. In author's case the so called "micro goals" were set up by the coach at the start of each coaching session.
7. Effective coach is a good listener and good communicator.	7. Coaches in Abbey Cars do have those qualities, confirmed by the author.
8. Effective coach always trying to encourage the client to re – evaluate big or awkward issue into something less frightening.	8. During some coaching sessions the author was shown by the coach how to take a different look at issues seemed to be impossible to resolve.
9. Effective coach knows how to provide the relevant additional resources, support and assistance.	9. The author has received an additional after – session support and guidance from his coach and it was very valuable.
10. Effective coach is always a good timekeeper. Completing coaching sessions within scheduled time requires coach's excellent timekeeping skills.	10. In the author's case sessions were always well – planned, starting and finishing within specified timescale.

Table 6: 10 qualities of the effective coach and their relation to the working environment of Abbey Cars, based on source: (CSP, 2019 & Author's research)

As we can see from this table the main qualities required from the effective coach are self – awareness, self – confidence, been able to pay attention to details, good communication skills, honesty, integrity and of course excellent timekeeping skills. The author was lucky enough that he met the coach just like described above within the working environment of Abbey Cars. It helped the author to get on the right track towards achieving his target goals.

Identifying common barriers to coaching culture existing within the workplace of Abbey Cars and methods to overcome them

In this part of assignment, the author will try to identify what kind of obstacles existing within the working environment will be on the way of developing coaching culture. Brook (2019) states that there are some quite significant gaps between theory and practicing of coaching in most of the business structures these days. Based on his research and using author's own work experience within Abbey Cars, the author was being able to classify 5 main barriers to the coaching culture in the workplace. They are presented in the table shown below together with their relations to the specific working environment of Abbey Cars:

Existing barriers	Relation to Abbey Cars
1. Not enough leadership coming from the top: CEO and executive managers should be more involved in the coaching process. They can set up an example for the managers of all levels to encourage them to get involved in the coaching culture. This on the other side will boost the morale and productivity of the whole company's workforce.	1. In case of Abbey Cars the author was told straight away that only coaches are operating in the branch with no one to help from head office. So, he waited for this person to become available for a couple of weeks.
2. Underestimating of the value of coaching for the workforce development: Another big obstacle on the way of coaching culture. In some organisations top management and HR department still see coaching as another time – wasting action. Instead of that they should make aware managers of all levels of importance and necessity of coaching, because any successful coaching programme requires strong management.	2. In author's case he must admit that asking the branch manager about the need of coaching and mentoring for himself didn't surprise the manager. It was pointed out that all the newcomers to the branch are offered some training, mostly class skills training, which is obligatory plus coaching as advisory. However, the decision of arranging coaching sessions was in the branch manager discretion. The involvement of the head office was very minimal.
3. Finding the time to learn and practice: Lack of time for organising coaching and mentoring is another big issue within most of the companies. According to recent reviews only 5% of organisations have trained managers as coaches or mentors in a proper way. Busy work	3. As it was already mentioned the taxi and minicab industry is very busy environment. It is always a challenge for the coach to find a spare time for the coaching session. In author's case, his coach organised his working time very smartly allowing him to have at least 4 –

schedule, long working hours and staff shortage are the main reasons for that.	5 hours weekly for coaching sessions. Well done, Mr Wahid.
4. Use of complicated coaching techniques: Some managers are becoming pseudo psychologists by using some complicated cognitive – behavioural models and techniques. They need to be trained by the organisation to use simple yet powerful models like GROW.	4. Thankfully in author's case the GROW Model Tool was recommended to him by the coach, so no complications in learning process whatsoever.
5. Coaches in most of the companies are not rewarded for their hard work and contributing to the business development: In order to get the best performance out of management system the work of coaches needs to be properly recognised and rewarded. Different schemes can be used, including additional paid holidays, in – store discounts or nominations of the best coach of the month.	5. In Abbey Cars case some rewards for coaching and mentoring are already in place, such as free rental weeks for shift controllers – coaches or additional days of paid holidays for managers.

Table 7: 5 main barriers to the coaching culture in the workplace and their relation to the workplace of Abbey Cars, based on source: (Brook, 2019 & Author's research)

The level of usage of the coaching is growing constantly. Lots of organisations these days now see it as a vital part of their learning and development process. But then again main problems continue. By identifying and attacking barriers to a coaching culture, companies can assure that coaching not only quickens learning and performance, but also advances a key driving force towards improving the development of the workforce and company in general. And if coaching method is used as the leadership style, according to Notion (2019), it can bring following benefits to the workplace including Abbey Cars:

- ✓ Positive and solution-based workforce;
- ✓ Increased team performance;
- ✓ Improved collaborative working skills;
- ✓ Increased ability to find powerful solutions to resolve oncoming issues;
- ✓ Improved client – customer interaction;
- ✓ Improved client management.

Conclusion

To summarise all the work and research being done during completion of this assignment the author can confirm that coaching and mentoring skills are playing very important part within the workplace. Starting with definitions of coaching and mentoring and their history of origin the author later was able to identify the purpose of using coaching and mentoring within the selected working environment of Abbey Cars. Also, the differences and similarities between coaching and mentoring were described by the author with help from reading relevant literature and extensive web research. Furthermore, the author selected and described the most suitable model of coaching to be applied within the working environment of Abbey Cars based on his own experience. Later in course of this assignment author provided critical analysis of the most important qualities of an effective coach within Abbey Cars workplace and identified common barriers to the coaching culture still existing within workplaces including Abbey Cars. Working on this assignment made the author willing to continue to study the art of coaching and mentoring in the future.

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Web links

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