



Programme: BA (Hons) Leadership and Management Skills for the Workplace

Coaching and Mentoring Skills for the Workplace

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Introduction

This study explores the definitions, distinctions, and key features of coaching and mentoring, focusing on the skills and traits necessary for success in these roles and how they support professional growth. The report reflects on these practices from the perspective of an employee at Find Yourself, a company dedicated to helping individuals and organizations achieve their goals. The reflection follows the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988) to analyse experiences, assess impact, and identify areas for improvement (Gibbs, 1988).

Coaching aims to help individuals realize their potential and achieve specific goals, while mentoring involves a more experienced individual offering guidance for broader personal growth. This report highlights the importance of Whitmore's GROW model (2017), a widely used coaching framework. It also covers essential coaching skills, such as empathy, active listening, and asking insightful questions (Whitmore, 2017).

In conclusion, the report examines coaching and mentoring, discusses their applications, and offers recommendations for promoting career advancement through these methods (Parsloe & Leedham, 2016).

The Purposes of Coaching and Mentoring in the Workplace

In the workplace, coaching and mentoring are often used to promote organizational objectives, boost employee development, and increase performance. The main goal of coaching is to assist people in overcoming obstacles or achieving particular objectives. Parsloe and Leedham (2016) claim that coaching is a methodical procedure that uses feedback and directed questioning to help people reach their full potential. In the workplace, coaching is frequently used to boost confidence, decision-making abilities, and leadership abilities—all of which eventually help individuals and organizations succeed.

As a result, mentoring is typically a longer-term connection with the goal of comprehensive growth. According to Clutterbuck (2004), mentoring is especially useful for promoting knowledge transfer, succession planning, and career advancement. Through mentoring, experienced professionals provide guidance, impart knowledge, and assist mentees in pursuing their career goals. Mentoring places more of an emphasis on developing long-term competencies and promoting professional progress than coaching, which is more concerned with short-term goals (Clutterbuck, 2004).

Comparing and Contrasting Coaching and Mentoring

While supporting individual growth is a common objective of both coaching and mentoring, their methods, areas of emphasis, and organizational structures are different. Coaching is typically non-directive, goal-oriented, and short-term. According to Whitmore (2017),

coaching is centred on posing insightful queries that encourage self-awareness and accountability while assisting people in discovering their own answers. Mentoring, on the other hand, takes a more directive approach in which the mentor uses their knowledge and experience to help the mentee (Ragins & Kram, 2007). According to Ragins and Kram (2007), mentoring is better suited for long-term professional development since it frequently incorporates aspects of advocacy and role modelling.

Another crucial difference is the role of the mentor or coach. A coach serves as a facilitator, assisting people in reaching goals without offering answers. In mentoring, the mentor frequently assumes the position of a reliable counsellor, providing guidance and encouragement derived from their personal experiences. While mentoring frequently looks back on past experiences to offer context and learning, coaching concentrates on present and future goals (ICF, 2020).

Furthermore, the abilities and qualities needed for mentoring and coaching are different. Active listening, empathy, and the ability to pose challenging questions are all essential for effective coaching (Whitmore, 2017). But mentors must be well-versed in their subject, have excellent people skills, and be able to establish rapport and trust with their mentees (Clutterbuck, 2004).

Shared Benefits and Applications

Regarding their distinctions, coaching and mentoring have similar advantages, including raising employee engagement, developing skills, and fostering career advancement. In both coaching and mentoring partnerships, Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) emphasizes the value of learning via observation and interaction. When properly applied, these strategies can promote cooperation, establish a culture of ongoing learning, and propel organizational success (Bandura, 1977).

In summary, mentoring and coaching have different but complementary roles in the workplace. Mentoring stresses long-term development and information sharing, whereas coaching concentrates on short-term objectives and self-directed growth. Organizations can effectively use these tools for both individual and group advancement by comprehending their special qualities and uses (Parsloe & Leedham, 2016).

Top 10 Effective Coaching Skills and their Importance

Listening: Ensures understanding and builds trust (Whitmore, 2017).

Questioning: Encourages reflection and clarity (Whitmore, 2017).

Building rapport: Establishes connection and mutual respect (Clutterbuck, 2004).

Empathising: Demonstrates care and understanding (Whitmore, 2017).

Summarising and reflecting: Clarifies points and confirms understanding (Whitmore, 2017).

Unlocking limiting beliefs: Encourages growth and removes barriers (Whitmore, 2017).

Staying focused: Maintains direction and achieves goals (Whitmore, 2017).

Being non-judgmental and open-minded: Fosters a safe and inclusive environment (Whitmore, 2017).

Giving constructive feedback: Promotes improvement and development (Whitmore, 2017).

Resisting temptation to tell: Empowers others to find their own solutions (Whitmore, 2017).

Critically Analysing the GROW Coaching Model

One of the most popular coaching models is the GROW model, which was created by John Whitmore in 2017. Goal, Reality, Options, and Way Forward are what the acronym stands for. This methodical technique provides a clear framework for coaching discussions, promoting self-awareness, goal-setting, and practical solutions (Whitmore, 2017). The model has limits even if it works very well in many situations.

Advantages of the GROW Model

The simplicity and adaptability of the GROW model are two of its main advantages. Both beginner and experienced coaches can methodically navigate coaching conversations thanks to the planned format. The methodology assists clients in defining their goals by beginning with the Goal, which fosters direction and focus. In situations involving performance management or career advancement, this phase makes sure that the coach and client are directing their efforts toward the same goal (Whitmore, 2017).

To promote self-awareness and accountability, the Reality phase invites clients to consider

their existing circumstances. Whitmore (2017) asserts that this step makes the process more perceptive and productive by assisting clients in identifying possibilities and obstacles. It's particularly helpful when people need to comprehend their difficulties, like when dealing with problems related to work performance.

The Options phase encourages creativity and process ownership by giving clients the freedom to generate ideas for possible solutions. This is helpful when making decisions like deciding between job options or resolving disputes at work. Lastly, the Way Forward stage guarantees results that can be put into practice, encouraging dedication and execution. This phase is perfect for goal-oriented situations like project planning or skill development since it encourages individuals to specify precise next steps (Whitmore, 2017).

Disadvantages of the GROW Model

Given its advantages, the GROW model has disadvantages. Sometimes, especially in situations that are complex or emotionally intense, its structured character might feel constrictive. The model's dependence on the coach's capacity to lead the process and pose insightful questions is another flaw. The discussion may become shallow or neglect to address deeper problems if the coach is not equipped with the right abilities. Furthermore, individuals who lack motivation or self-awareness could find it difficult to fully interact with the model, which could reduce its efficacy (Whitmore, 2017).

The GROW model's emphasis on immediate, actionable results may sometimes work against it in circumstances that call for more thorough investigation or long-term development. For example, a more comprehensive strategy that incorporates reflection on prior experiences and personal values may be advantageous for mentoring relationships or leadership development initiatives (Whitmore, 2017).

Situations Where the GROW Model is Most Useful

When circumstances call for precise objectives and prompt action, the GROW model performs exceptionally well. It works very well, for instance, in performance coaching when staff members need to solve specific problems or enhance quantifiable results (Whitmore, 2017). In a similar vein, it works well for career coaching, as clients want to define their goals and determine how to get there.

By directing team members toward common objectives, the GROW model can be applied in collaborative situations to support decision-making and problem-solving. For example, the model assists teams in defining goals, assessing resources, and creating workable strategies during project management conversations (Whitmore, 2017).

The GROW model is a strong and useful coaching paradigm that has obvious advantages in situations that are performance-driven and goal-oriented. Its drawbacks, however, emphasize how crucial it is to modify coaching techniques to fit the requirements of the client

or circumstance. A helpful tool for coaches in a variety of professional contexts, the GROW model promotes self-awareness, accountability, and actionable results when applied properly (Whitmore, 2017).

Reflection on Coaching Session Using the GIBBS Model

Description:

During the coaching session with Miroslav, he shared his struggles with feeling overwhelmed and stressed at work. This stress intensified after his team took on additional projects. He highlighted the constant deadlines and lack of breaks, making it difficult for him to manage his workload effectively. Throughout the session, I used open-ended questions to help Miroslav reflect on his feelings and explore the root causes of his stress. We also discussed potential strategies to help him regain control of his workload and manage his stress in a sustainable way.

Feelings:

At the start of the session, I felt empathetic towards Miroslav's situation, understanding how work pressures can negatively impact both well-being and performance. I aimed to create a supportive environment, allowing Miroslav to reflect on his stress levels and identify areas where changes could be made. As the conversation progressed, I sensed Miroslav becoming more self-aware and open to discussing potential solutions. I felt motivated to help him find practical steps, but I was also concerned about the long-term impact of his stress on his health and productivity.

Evaluation:

The session offered valuable insights into the sources of Miroslav's stress. By asking when the stress began, Miroslav revealed that the problem emerged when his team took on more projects. The constant deadlines and increased workload were significant stressors. While Miroslav identified potential solutions, such as more time for each project and additional help from his team, I felt that we didn't fully explore these solutions. We could have discussed

practical steps, such as prioritizing tasks or setting boundaries, to address his stress more effectively.

Analysis:

One strength of the session was Miroslav's openness in sharing his feelings. This allowed for a trusting coaching environment where he could reflect on his challenges. The open-ended questions I used, like "What aspects of your work make you feel most stressed?" and "How has this impacted your work?" helped Miroslav identify key stressors. However, I believe I could have used more probing and Socratic questioning to help him explore deeper insights into his stress. Questions like, "Why do you think deadlines are affecting you so much now?" or "How do you typically manage stress in high-pressure situations?" might have prompted Miroslav to reflect more on his coping strategies and thought patterns.

Additionally, while Miroslav identified potential solutions, we didn't break them down into actionable steps. I could have asked follow-up questions like, "How could you negotiate for more time or additional support?" or "What small actions can you take now to feel more in control?" These questions might have helped him create a more concrete plan of action.

Conclusion:

The session helped Miroslav articulate his stress and consider potential solutions, but there is room for improvement in guiding him to explore solutions in more detail. In future sessions, I will use more probing questions to encourage deeper reflection and uncover actionable insights. I will also focus on helping Miroslav break down solutions into smaller, achievable steps.

Action Plan:

For the next session, I will prepare questions that encourage Miroslav to explore different strategies for managing stress and regaining control of his workload. I will help him create an action plan with clear, measurable goals, such as delegating tasks or negotiating deadlines. By guiding Miroslav to identify specific actions, I can help him manage his stress and workload more effectively.

Reflection on Mentoring Session with Miroslav Using the GIBBS Model

Description:

I met with Miroslav one month after our coaching session. In the previous meeting, he had shared his struggles with stress due to overwhelming workloads and tight deadlines at work. In this follow-up meeting, I offered to be his mentor, which he accepted. We discussed setting up weekly face-to-face mentoring sessions to create an action plan aimed at managing and reducing his stress. This meeting focused on establishing a structure for our sessions and discussing future steps for addressing his stress.

Feelings:

At the start of the session, I felt a sense of responsibility to ensure Miroslav's needs were met meaningfully. I was excited to offer him mentoring support, believing it would provide him the accountability and guidance needed for progress. Miroslav seemed relieved and motivated by the idea of having regular support and someone to check in with, which encouraged me to ensure the sessions were productive and helpful.

Evaluation:

The meeting went well in terms of setting the foundation for future sessions. We established a plan for weekly meetings, which Miroslav seemed comfortable with, and he showed a positive attitude towards creating an action plan for stress management. However, we did not get into specific details about the steps Miroslav should take to manage his stress. While we agreed on the focus of the plan, the lack of concrete actions or tools in this meeting was a missed opportunity for immediate impact.

Analysis:

A key strength of the session was Miroslav's engagement and openness to having a mentor. His positive response highlighted that he was ready to work on his stress management and appreciated the structure of weekly meetings. This will provide the accountability he needs. However, the lack of a detailed action plan is an area for improvement. Mentoring requires a balance between support and autonomy, and while I wanted to provide guidance, Miroslav also needed to be more involved in developing specific strategies.

Moving forward, it is crucial to ensure that we create measurable, clear goals for Miroslav. This will include setting timelines and introducing practical stress management tools, such as time management skills or relaxation techniques, to make the action plan actionable.

Conclusion:

This mentoring session was a positive step forward, as it set the framework for ongoing support. By agreeing on weekly meetings, we established a foundation for Miroslav's growth.

However, in future sessions, I will focus on developing a more detailed action plan with concrete steps for managing his stress. I will also incorporate specific techniques he can immediately apply to his work, building resilience and better stress management strategies.

Action Plan

For future sessions, I will ensure Miroslav, and I collaborate to create a specific action plan with clear, actionable steps for managing stress. I will introduce practical stress-reduction techniques and check on his progress each week. By the next session, Miroslav should have clear goals and a timeline to measure his progress, ensuring that he can begin addressing the sources of his stress effectively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, coaching and mentoring serve distinct but complementary roles in fostering professional development within the workplace. Coaching is typically goal-oriented, focusing on short-term objectives and encouraging self-awareness, accountability, and empowerment. It helps individuals overcome obstacles and achieve specific goals, particularly in performance and career advancement. Mentoring, on the other hand, involves a longer-term relationship aimed at holistic personal and professional growth. It leverages the mentor's experience to guide the mentee through career challenges and development, with a focus on knowledge transfer, succession planning, and overall career progression.

The application of these practices, supported by key coaching skills such as active listening, questioning, and empathy, can significantly impact employees' growth and productivity. The GROW model, while effective for setting clear, actionable goals, highlights the need for flexibility in its application to ensure it aligns with the unique needs of everyone.

Reflecting on the mentoring and coaching sessions with Miroslav, both experiences offered valuable insights into the importance of structure, accountability, and actionable plans. Moving forward, it will be essential to create more specific, measurable goals, incorporating stress management tools and techniques to ensure tangible outcomes. Regular check-ins and continued support will further enhance Miroslav's growth and stress management strategies.

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Appendix 1 Feedback of Coaching Session:

BMSW 6005	FEEDBACK	Date of Interview:	02.11.2024				
Coach	Atanas	Coachee	Miroslav				
Coaching Model:	SMART /GROW/MMM/RAW		SMART				
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.			Rating 5 4 3 2 1				
Is the coach asking open ended questions or closed questions <i>The questions used were well structured, different techniques were used to create a rapport between coach and coachee, here you may want to review socratic and probing techniques</i>			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
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? Active listening and full attention to details practiced, the coach was relatively calm and approachable and letting coachee enough time to talk			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is the coach focused on the coachee's agenda? <i>The Coach focus on the coachee's agenda - Time Management skills – 15 minutes were fully utilised with a summary of the conversation provided</i>			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>The coach was professional and at any time acted as judgmental. The session was professional and well planned</i>			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
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>			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Has the SOLER technique been applied Good attempt			☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Additional Comments Coaching skills were satisfactory							