

Coaching Skills for Managers Online Training Programme

Part One Fundamentals of Coaching

Participants Manual Video Seven The OSCAR Coaching Model

Developed by



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The OSCAR Coaching Model

The **Grow** Model

The **GROW** Model was made famous by Sir John Whitmore and is one of the most widely used and recognised coaching frameworks.

Goal	• What do you want to move forward on? • What can we achieve in the time available? • What do you want to take away from this session? (This is where you get the goal for the session).
Reality	• What is happening now? • What's actually happening? • Describe the current situation (This is where you get clarity around where the client is right now and its purpose is to raise the awareness of the coachee and is for the benefit of the client not the coach).
Options	• What could you do to move yourself forward? • What are your options? • How far towards your goal will that take you? (This is where you help the client generate as many alternative courses of actions as possible. This is where you make the client feel safe and listened to so they can express all their thoughts without judgement). Your job then is to reflect back exactly what they've said and help them to explore the possibilities available to them).
Willingness/ Wrap Up	• What will you do next? • How will you do it? • When will you do it, with whom? • On a scale of 1 to 10 how willing are you to take those actions? (This is where you help the client clarify the way forward and develop some sort of action plan)

Source: Concepts of Coaching (2004)

The **OSCAR** Coaching Model

The OSCAR Model builds on the GROW Model and is particularly suited to managing performance within organisations.

OUTCOME (Your destination)	• What would you like to achieve from today's session? • What is your long-term outcome? • What would success look like? (This is where you help the team member clarify the outcomes (for the session and long term) around the issue they have raised).
SITUATION (Your starting point)	• What is the current situation? • What's actually happening? (This is where you get clarity around where the team member is right now)
CHOICES and CONSEQUENCES (Your route options)	• What choices do you have? • What options can you choose from? • What are the consequences of each choice? • Which choices have the best consequences? (This is where you help the team member generate as many alternative choices as possible and raise awareness about the consequences of each possible choice).
ACTIONS (Your detailed plan)	• What actions will you take? • What will you do next? • How will you do it? • When will you do it, with whom? • On a scale of 1 to 10 how willing are you to take those actions? (This is where you help the team member to clarify their next steps forward and to take responsibility for their own action plan).
REVIEW (Making sure you are on track)	• What steps will you take to review your progress? • When are we going to get together to review progress? • Are the actions being taken? • Are the actions moving you towards your outcome? (This step creates an ongoing process of review and evaluation. This is where you help the team member to continually check that they are on course. This also helps you to be fully informed about what your team member is doing and why they are doing it).

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Clarity is Power!!

The **OSCAR Model** builds on the highly effective GROW model and is quite simply a framework on which to hang your coaching questions. It provides you with a simple structure that helps to keep the coaching process focused, structured and time effective.

Outcome

People with well-formed outcomes achieve much more than those without clear outcomes. Successful coaching sessions typically involve helping the coachee to develop a deeper understanding of the outcome they want. Our experience has shown that people are not used to thinking in terms of outcomes and therefore the initial outcome they present at the session has not got the clarity needed to become desirable and motivational. It is the skilful questioning of the coach that enables the coachee to develop a "well formed outcome."

We find that the term 'outcome' is much more powerful than the word 'goal' which often is linked with targets (they HAVE to be done!). The word goal and target are often anchors to a feeling of demand and pressure. The word Outcome is often anchored to a feeling of collaboration and involvement. Positive outcomes are often achieved in an environment of collaboration and mutual support.

Telling someone to achieve a target is very different from allowing an outcome to be defined in partnership and allowing a mutually agreed action plan to emerge to achieve it.

Situation

Once the coachee has clarified and tightly defined their outcome the next step in the process is to clarify the current situation. In our experience most coaches and managers as coaches in particular, spend too much time focusing on the current situation, thus allowing the coachee to get bogged down in the problem rather than focus on the outcome.

The emphasis here is to get the coach to use this step of the model to help the person being coached to acknowledge the current situation and to recognise the impact the issue is having on them and perhaps the rest of the team, the organisation, their family etc.

The purpose of asking 'what is the current situation' is to raise the awareness of the person being coached and to help them understand the full impact of the current situation and what the implications will be if they are not able to deal with it effectively.

In effect, the OSCAR model allows the coachee to conduct a gap analysis thereby raising the motivation to move towards the outcome. Alternating between desired Outcomes and the current Situation helps the coachee to 'reframe' their thoughts and beliefs.

By just using the first two components of the model the manager is unconsciously starting to apply some key psychological principles to the process.

Choices and Consequences

By using OSCAR the coach/manager encourages the team member to generate a number of options to choose from. The aim is to get the coachee to generate at least three choices. Having multiple choices raises awareness in the coachee that they do have control of their decision making i.e. the coachee is no longer able to say "I don't have a choice" or "It's all out of my control" or even, "I have to do this or that." - using OSCAR enables the coach to put the control firmly back into the hands of the coachee.

For many managers the key problem they face is remaining neutral or detached when an employee comes up with an inappropriate choice. The OSCAR model enables them to remain neutral whilst at the same time, ensuring that the employee doesn't make a totally inappropriate choice.

By asking 'What are the consequences of that choice' the coach forces the coachee to look deeper at all the upsides and downsides of that choice. Again, the simplicity of the model enables the manager to use the technique of 'force field analysis' to help raise the awareness of the coachee about the impact of their behaviours, attitudes and decisions. Therefore, using the OSCAR model the coach is able to stay neutral whilst enabling the coachee to make better, more mature choices.

It is worth noting that at this point the motivational aspects of pleasure and pain can be used to encourage the coachee to take action (Anthony Robbins 1997). There are, after all always at least two choices – do something, or do nothing. Doing nothing is often the most popular choice people make. It is only when the consequences of the choice to do nothing are explored that the coachee will be driven to want to act. Upside consequences and downside consequences, positives and negatives, pluses and minuses, pleasure and pain – easily understood language and a technique most people have already used when they have made decisions in the past.

Have you ever made a decision by writing the pluses and minuses on a piece of paper? Choices and Consequences is the same process.

Once the coachee has generated sufficient choices, and a degree of motivation has been achieved, the next question to ask is "Out of all those choices, which one(s) will best move you towards your outcome?" This is the action step within the OSCAR model.

ACTION

Here the coach helps the coachee to formulate the:

1. Specific actions they will take,
2. When they will take those actions
3. And on a scale of one to ten how willing they are to take them.
4. Ongoing process of review.

It is vital that the coachee takes full responsibility for the actions to be taken. All the actions must be time framed, measurable and reviewable.

A big problem facing managers is that team members struggle to come up with actions. This happens either because:

- a) The outcome hasn't been defined enough to provide clarity.
- b) It isn't something that they feel they have control of.
- c) They are so conditioned to being told what to do that the first time they are asked what they are going to do they are wary of giving the 'wrong' answer.
- d) They really don't know what to do, i.e. they haven't got the knowledge they need.

If they truly don't know what action to take, then the manager is now aware that there may be a training or communication issue that needs to be addressed. If they feel they have no choice in the matter, the manager needs to raise awareness in the employee that there is always a choice.

If the person being coached doesn't believe that their actions will make a difference then they will be reluctant to voice them let alone commit to take them.

Has anyone ever told you they were going to do something – then didn't do it? Why does this happen? Simply, it was not important enough to the person committing to take those actions. What raises the commitment to action is a clear outcome, a desire to move from the current situation to that outcome, involvement in the logical process of making the best possible choices by considering the upsides and downsides of each choice.

It is only after these steps that real commitment can be made to actually following through and taking action.

The role of the coach is to remain neutral through the coaching process. However, the problem for line managers is that they can never truly be neutral because whatever action their team member takes the ultimate responsibility lies with them and that is why the review component of OSCAR is so important.

Review:

When the coach and coachee agree to review the action plan, a subtle pressure is left with the coachee that the choice not to take the actions agreed is no longer an attractive choice. It is vital that the manager as coach ensures these reviews are held – otherwise a strong message is given out that the actions agreed are optional!

In business it is often far too easy for the agreed actions to get lost in the everyday 'urgent' issues of the job. To stop that happening and to ensure that the person being coached prioritises their agreed actions it is key that they commit to taking some action within the immediate future – to develop momentum and maintain motivation.

The review component of OSCAR allows the line manager to monitor the team member's progress and commitment. This is also useful for another reason – namely that the manager's 'manager' will want some assurance that the manager knows what's going on in their team!

Therefore, when the manager's manager asks them what's happening about a particular issue, they can respond not only with the clear agreed actions being taken – but also with all the thinking that has gone into formulating the action plan itself. This is seen as "real control" rather than the "illusion of control" - a world that many managers find themselves living in on a regular basis!

Regular review, allows managers to monitor progress and to stay in control of their own department. During review the questions are asked, "Are the actions being taken?" "Are the actions moving you towards the outcome - If not what corrective action needs to be taken?"

The review component is also important for the coachee, as it encourages them to think about how they will review their progress. It might well be that they've taken massive action but none of it has moved them towards their outcome. By sitting either with the coach, or self reflecting, they can review which actions have worked, and why, which haven't and why and what they are going to do differently moving forward.

If during the review process with their manager, they recognise that the agreed actions haven't been taken, the question the manager should ask is "What stopped you from taking that action?" or if self reflecting, "What stopped me from taking that action?"

A further question from the manager would be "What will you do to ensure that you can take that action before the next review?"

Ref: The OSCAR Coaching Model: Simplifying Workplace Coaching (2009)

Activity:

Think about your own workplace.

How might using the OSCAR model help you and your colleagues?

Debrief:

Coaching Note Template

To be used as a template to provide structure to your future coaching sessions

Outcome: (What do you want to achieve)

Situation: (What is the current situation?)

Choices and Consequences: (What options can you choose from? What are the likely consequences of each choice? What are the best options to choose?)

Actions: (Based on your choices, what actions are you going to take, when, and on a scale of 1 to 10 how committed are you to taking them?)

Review: (What date will we review your progress and what steps are you going to take to review your progress?)
