

WILY MANAGER

*Just-in-Time
Management
Advice*

How to Coach When You're Not the Expert



This is one of a series of booklets available at www.wilymanager.com

Coaching has become a very popular business trend in the past several years. As organizations get flatter and as you progress in your career to take on roles of increasing responsibility you will more often find yourself in a leadership or coaching role where you are not the 'expert'.

Don't worry – to coach well, you do not need to know more than the person you are coaching and our coaching model will provide you a framework for structuring an effective coaching session.

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What is Coaching?

One key role of any leader is to coach team members to achieve their best and to develop and improve during the process. Typically you might think of

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What is Coaching, continued

coaching as teaching or showing someone how to do something which requires that you, the coach, be the expert in that topic area. However, as we will show here, coaching is a process of discovery –***one in which you do not necessarily have to be the expert.***

Now, this may sound daunting. But if you arm yourself with some of proven techniques, find opportunities to practice and learn to trust your instincts, you can become a better coach, and so enhance your team's performance.

What Coaching IS

- An open and honest form of collaboration between two people. In many cases it will be an employee-supervisor relationship, but it does not need to be
- A focus on improving performance
- A versatile and positive form of interaction



What Coaching is NOT

Coaching differs from other forms of organizational interaction in a number of ways:

- Coaching IS NOT a command and control style of leadership
- Coaching IS NOT a teacher-student relationship, although there are aspects of teaching
- Coaching IS NOT therapy!



Benefits of Coaching

- Can be applied in almost any situation with individuals or with whole teams
- It focuses attention on future performance
- Professional skill development is an inherent part of coaching
- Coaching results are sustained over time
- It connects people to high level business results
- It brings out the best in individuals, and is tailored to their individual needs
- It encourages accountability and self-discipline

How Coaching Conversations are Different

- There is an articulated focus and purpose for coaching conversations
- Accountability mechanisms are built in to the coaching conversation
- Feedback and reinforcement are part of the conversation structure

The Coaching Process

A useful metaphor for the any coaching model is the plan you might make for an important journey:

1. First, you start with an agreement as to where it is that you and your team member are going (the Goal).
2. Next you'll want to understand where you are currently (the Current Reality). Without knowing where you are starting from, it's difficult to choose a good route.
3. Third you'll want to explore various ways (the Options) of making the journey; there is often more than one possible route, make sure you explore and consider different options.
4. In the final step, you need to make a decision on the route you will take as well as any other important details (when you will leave, what mode of transportation are we using, what obstacles might be encountered along the way and how will you deal with them etc.)

The Wily Manager Coaching model follows a very similar pattern.

The Wily Manager Coaching Model

When you are coaching and you are not necessarily playing the role of expert, the most important skill is in leading with questions. This is the key to powerful coaching that facilitates growth and development.

Use the following 5-step model to structure and guide a powerful coaching session (you can make notes on the [Coaching Worksheet](#) in Appendix A):

Related Wily Manager Topic Bundles

Managing Consequences

Action Planning

Dealing with Performance Issues

Communicating for Results

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Effective Measurement

Visit

www.wilymanager.com
to get free cheat sheets
about these topics
(and many others)

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The Wily Manager Coaching Model, continued

Context

This first step is really just about opening up the coaching conversation, setting some context for the discussion.

- What are we going to work on, and why is it important?
- How might the organization benefit from this?
- What organizational conditions or constraints will affect success?
- Are there any potential pitfalls or roadblocks to success?
- Are there other complementary or competing initiatives in the organization that may have an impact?

Clarify

During this step it is important to clarify what the goal of the coaching is, what is the desired outcome or future state. Some helpful questions during this step might include:

Clarify Vision/Goal

- How would you describe the way you want this project to turn out?
- If this went flawlessly ... what would be different, what will happen?
- Tell me specifically what it is that you want to accomplish.
- Tell me specifically what it is that you want to accomplish
- If you were able to improve your performance, what will happen?

Clarify Current Reality

- How do you feel about the project thus far?
- How would you describe your current reality?
- Clarify Issues or Concerns
- What if this or that constraint were removed?
- What is impeding your performance?

Create

Once you and your team member have clarified where you are headed, where you are and what might get in the way it's time to explore some potential routes between where you are and where you need to be. Help your team member generate as many good options as possible, and discuss these.

By all means, offer your own suggestions. But let your team member offer his or hers first, and let him or her do most of the talking.

Typical questions used to create options might include:

- What key things need to happen to achieve your objective?
- What else could you do? Can it be done another way?
- How likely is this option to succeed?
- How do you think that issue could be handled?
- What factors will you use to weigh up the options?
- Get out a pen...Let's quickly make a list of 5-10 things you might do.

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The Wily Manager Coaching Model, continued

Commit

Your team member should now have a good idea of how he or she can achieve their Goal. That's great - but it's not enough!

Too many coaching conversations end before specific action steps and measures have been created. Your next step as coach is to get your team member to commit to specific actions and determine how you will measure progress.



Useful questions:

- So what will you do now, and when?
- Tell me in your own words what's on your to do list from today's discussion?
- What specific commitments have you made?
- How might you ensure the changes are enduring?
- What else will you do? When?
- How would you summarize what we just agreed to?

Remember that it is always important to clarify commitments more than once. If commitments are written down, there is a much higher probability that those actions will be executed against.

Close

This last step is just about wrapping up the coaching conversation, expressing support and confidence in your team member:

- How do you feel about the work we did today?
- I think you made some important progress.
- Do you have any questions of me?
- Is there any addition support or clarification that I can offer?

The Wily Manager Coaching Model has been presented sequentially here. In practice, it is a much less linear process where you sometimes need to go back and revisit stages several times throughout the conversation. Use the model as a tool to help guide the flow of your conversations, it's not a script but make sure you cover each of the steps, and go back when necessary.

Related Topic Bundles

[Managing Consequences](#)

[Action Planning](#)

[Dealing with Performance Issues](#)

[Communicating for Results](#)

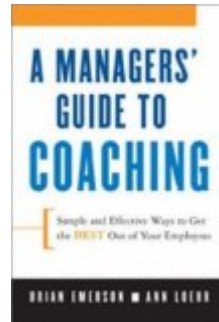
[Giving and Receiving Feedback](#)

[Effective Measurement](#)

Wily Manager Picks

[A Manager's Guide to Coaching: Simple and Effective Ways to Get the Best From Your Employees](#)

Anne Loehr and Brian Emerson



Too busy to read? Be a Wily Manager and keep up to date with book summaries instead.

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Appendix: Tools and Resources

A. [Coaching Worksheet](#)

B. [Where to Get More Information](#)

Visit www.WilyManager.com for more just-in-time management advice

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Just-in-time Management Advice

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Appendix A

Coaching Worksheet

Context

- Determine focus and importance of today's discussion

Clarify

- Seek and share information about the situation/task
- Identify issues and concerns
- Clarify the vision and goals, Clarify the current reality

Create

- Seek and discuss ideas
- Explore needed resources/support

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Appendix A, continued

Commit

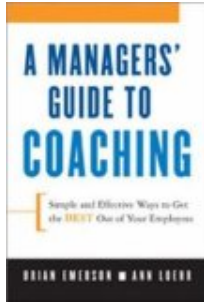
- Specify actions, including contingency plans if appropriate
- Confirm how to measure progress

Close

- Highlight important features of the plan
- Confirm confidence and commitment

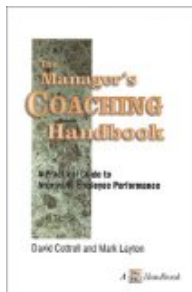
Appendix B

Where to Get More Information



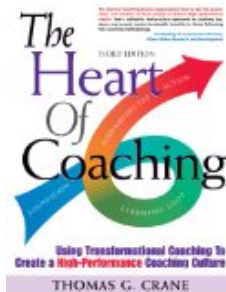
[A Manager's Guide to Coaching: Simple and Effective Ways to Get the Best From Your Employees](#) (Anne Loehr and Brian Emerson)

"Brian Emerson and Ann Loehr have spent years showing some of the country's top companies how to develop their most promising employees. Now in this helpful manual they guide managers through every step of the coaching process, from problem solving to developing accountability."



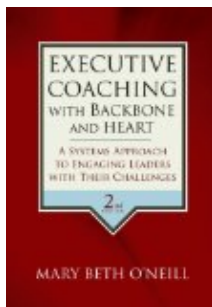
[The Manager's Coaching Handbook: A Walk the Walk Handbook](#) (David Cottrell and Mark C. Layton)

"The Manager's Coaching Handbook provides managers, supervisors, and team leaders with simple, easy-to-follow guidelines for positively affecting employee performance. Within these pages you'll find practical strategies for dealing with superior performers, those with performance problems, and everyone in between."



[The Heart of Coaching: Using Transformational Coaching to Create a High-Performance Coaching Culture](#) (Thomas G. Crane)

"More and more leaders and their organizations are becoming convinced in the business case for creating a 'coaching culture'. This book provides the tools for leaders and teams to develop a common language and shared protocol and a learning and development orientation towards people. These critical dynamics support the entire culture becoming a "feedback-rich, high-performance" organization. For this to occur, a common coaching approach driven by coaching UP, DOWN, and SIDEWAYS is necessary. Coaching flows in all directions to managers, peers, and direct reports. Coaching becomes the normal 'way we do things around here.'"

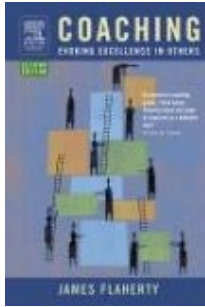


[Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart: A Systems Approach to Engaging Leaders with Their Challenges](#) (Mary Beth A. O'Neill)

"O'Neill writes in a way that allows you to see this experienced coach in action. What a wonderful way to learn!"

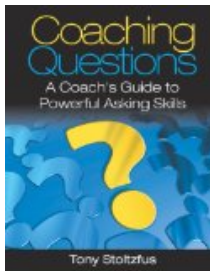
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Appendix B, continued



Coaching: Evoking Excellence in Others (James Flaherty)

"At long last, a book on coaching that moves beyond 'advice from the sidelines.'"

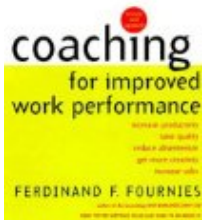


Coaching Questions: A Coach's Guide to Powerful Asking Skills (Tony Stoltzfus)

"Includes:

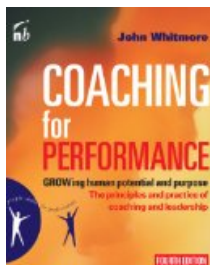
1. Dozens of asking tools, models, and strategies
2. The top ten asking mistakes coaches make, and how to correct each one
3. Nearly 1200 examples of powerful questions from real coaching situations
4. Destiny discovery tools organized in a four-part life-purpose model
5. Overviews of 15 popular coaching niches, with a tool and examples for each
6. A self-study schedule of training exercises to help you become a 'Master of Asking'"

how to get better results from your employees!



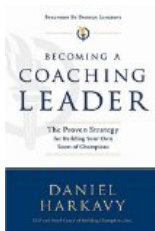
Coaching for Improved Work Performance (Ferdinand Fournies)

"In this book, you'll be taught specific face-to-face interventions you can use to enhance performance in every kind of workplace situation--from sales to creative brainstorming. There are also interventions uniquely suited to resolving problems ranging from low productivity to absenteeism to conflicts between individuals. You'll learn precisely what to say and do so that each person you supervise will want to give you his or her best work--even when that person was previously thought to be a 'problem employee.'"



Coaching for Performance, 4th Edition: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose (People Skills for Professionals) (John Whitmore)

"Good coaching is a skill that requires a depth of understanding and plenty of practice if it is to deliver its astonishing potential. This extensively revised and expanded new edition of Coaching for Performance clearly explains the principles of coaching and illustrates them with examples of high performance from business and sport."



Becoming a Coaching Leader: The Proven Strategy for Building Your Own Team of Champions (Daniel S. Harkavy)

"This book equips you with the skills, disciplines, and knowledge to turn your paycheck-driven teams into vibrant and successful growth cultures."