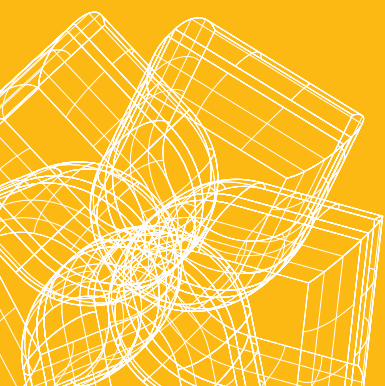


# coaching skills

coaching white paper



**DEAKINPRIME**  
corporate education

**DeakinPrime—Coaching skills**  
*Coaching White Paper*

**Authors:** Noel Posus and Helen Kosmopoulos

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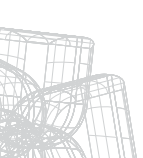
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# What is coaching?

The term 'coaching' as we refer to it today in terms of personal and professional development is mostly attributed to the late Thomas Leonard who was the first practitioner to call himself a Life Coach. Since then, coaching has spread around the world, and tens of thousands of coaches of various types offer a wide variety of specialist coaching services.

Coaching was born from a number of fields of research and industries including humanistic psychology, counselling, adult education, organisational development and corporate training, consulting, mentoring, sports coaching and the rise of the human potential movement of the 1960's. The 'toolkit' used by today's coaches is made up of information, research, models and strategies which have been developed from these various other professional services for over seventy years.

There are many different 'styles' of coaching as there are individuals to assist. This is because the coach is focused on the needs of the client, what they want to achieve, how they learn best, how they may need support and/or challenge, and what tools and strategies may be the most effective for the client. The coach adapts to the needs of the individual, versus their own preferred style of coaching. This means that effective coaching is nearly always customised to the unique situation and needs at any given time.

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## Definition(s)

A simple way of defining coaching is that the coach works with a client to assist them raise awareness, make decisions and modify behaviour or take action.

The ICF International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as 'partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential'.

The client sets the agenda of what they want to achieve, and the coach facilitates a process by which the client can achieve their desired outcome. The coach does not provide the solution, give instructions or direct the client on a course of action to take. Instead, the coach uses a number of tools and strategies to achieve the following:

- clarifying objectives in a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant way, including time frames for the goal
- identifying the inspiration and/or motivation behind the objective
- defining the client's core values, or in other words, what is most important to them
- exploring, and sometimes challenging the beliefs, attitudes and choices of a client



- inventorying the strengths, skills, potential and opportunities
- identifying potential obstacles and limitations, and co-designing solutions for them before and/or as they occur
- teaching and sharing personal and professional development information, tools, techniques and strategies, and working through various application options relevant to the client
- creating an action plan for goal achievement
- celebrating accomplishments, both the milestone moments as well as the end result
- supporting the individual throughout the process in a non-judgemental, unbiased and solution focused approach
- encouraging the client to acknowledge their achievements and skills, and inspire them to continue their development journey.

*Coaches work with individuals and groups to achieve their desired outcomes. We do this through a combination of sophisticated training, expanding awareness and designing supportive environments which inspire growth.*

Dave Buck, CEO – Coachville

This is a very important definition of coaching as it breaks down previously upheld beliefs that coaches only ask a series of questions to help the client achieve their own outcomes. Although this questioning approach is very much a part of coaching, coaches typically access many more tools in the process.

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## Value and benefits

The first worldwide survey\* of coaching clients, conducted from September to November 2008 and commissioned by the International Coaching Federation, revealed that coaching 'generates a solid return on investment for clients and creates positive changes in client goal areas for both individuals and companies'.

The survey included interviews, focus groups, and an online survey involving 2165 coaching clients from 64 countries.

The results reveal that an overwhelming majority (82.7 percent) of individuals who experienced professional coaching report being very satisfied with their coaching experience, and 96.2 percent said they would repeat it given the same circumstances.

*Eighty percent of coaching clients report that they have experienced a positive change in self-esteem/self confidence as a result of partnering with a professional coach. In addition ... respondents also reported experiencing a positive impact in relationships, communication skills, interpersonal skills, work performance and work/life balance as a result of their coaching partnership.*

(International Coaching Federation, 2008)

coaching skills

It is also reported that companies that use or have used professional coaching for business reasons have seen a median return on the investment of seven times their initial investment.

\*The full article can be accessed on the International Coaching Federation's website: <[www.coachfederation.org/articles/index.cfm?action=view&articleID=464&sectionID=1](http://www.coachfederation.org/articles/index.cfm?action=view&articleID=464&sectionID=1)> (accessed July 2009).

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## Effective practice

### Managing confidentiality

DeakinPrime has the responsibility of ensuring that the ethics and practical implications of confidentiality are fully discussed during the scoping of the coaching intervention and that appropriate agreements are reached. This is particularly true in coaching engagements where the coaching is designed to support the improvement of performance for teams and individuals.

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## Key coaching elements

### Assessment

In all coaching engagements it is critical to assess the client's current situation in order to co-create a plan to achieve the desired outcomes. Assessments can include 360 degree assessments, profiling tools, strengths inventories, interviews and other methods. DeakinPrime can design and implement 360 feedback mechanisms.

### Contracting

Contracting occurs at numerous levels, starting with the initial conversation with the coachee and appropriate management about the objectives of the coaching engagement, and continues through to the individual commitments the coachee makes to their coach during each coaching session. Contracting allows the coach to keep the coachee accountable, and vice versa, to the agreements made.



## Goal setting

Goal setting is the cornerstone of all coaching and in best-practice is generally documented, including the plan to achieve the goal, and the progress and performance against the objective.

## Transitioning to long-term development

From the very beginning of the coaching relationship there needs to be a plan for the eventual end of the formal coaching engagement. This includes the following key elements:

- regular assessments of 'how the coaching is going' from both the coachee, coach and other stakeholders
- final assessments to compare results against initial assessments from the beginning of the coaching engagement
- facilitating a 'we're nearing the end of our formal coaching' conversation which helps structure the process of wrapping up
- conducting the final session, including ensuring there is a documented plan for the coachee to continue their personal and/or professional development
- negotiate follow-up sessions, (e.g. six months) to check on progress and performance
- offer additional ongoing support services such as email coaching, teleconferences, newsletters, etc.
- encourage the coachee to engage with internal peer coaching within the organisation.

The long-term development plan needs to be relevant to the coachee and the coachee's environment such as the organisation. Where the organisation is not equipped to fulfil the coachee's needs, the coach assists the coachee to brainstorm other development resource options.

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## Recommendations for use

Coaches can provide assistance across a number of general areas, such as:

- identifying goals and how to achieve them
- enhancing self-leadership and leadership of others
- improving career growth
- changing habits
- increasing the sense of self-worth and confidence, in order to achieve their objectives

- establishing, growing and maintaining successful relationships
- learning new skills from goal-achievement through to communication
- overcoming barriers, including self-limiting thinking and habits
- raising self-awareness in order to make more confident and positive choices
- enhancing emotional intelligence
- building awareness and developing wisdom.

There are as many different 'styles' of coaching as there are individuals to assist. This is because the coach is focused on the needs of the client, what they want to achieve, how they learn best, how they may need support and/or challenge, and what tools and strategies may be the most effective for the client. The coach adapts to the needs of the individual, versus their own preferred style of coaching.

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