

giving effective feedback and coaching best practices

+ 1-ON-1 / REFLECTION TEMPLATES

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coaching best practices



coaching and managing, an introduction

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A COACH AND JUST A MANAGER

Existing management paradigms place focus on managers as controlling direct reports performance. This leads to a focus on managing job descriptions, not being a mentor. Managers worry about performance against job descriptions rather than helping them grow. As a result, performance becomes measured through “magically determined” standards or year-end rankings.

Coaching focuses on discovery and development. Coaching isn't just about evaluating performance, but guiding individuals. Coaches empower their team to contribute to team and organizational success without alienation. Coaching as managing doesn't place mentorship as a subset of management, but at the heart of it.

INSIGHT ON BEING A COACH, NOT JUST A MANAGER

Coaches create an environment where learning is at the heart of every interaction. They make managing about leading others within a collaborative setting.

Coaches challenge others to develop skills and abilities on an aspirational level. They help others become self-sufficient. The individual coached becomes setup to pass leadership skills to others around them. This turns others into leaders themselves. A coach seeks out opportunities to care about others' personal development. They challenge other individuals to grow, continuously.

approches to coaching

COACHING IS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL - ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS, INSPIRE OTHERS

PERFORMANCE BASED

Coaching for performance involves asking questions after a project or duration of time. The questions focus on self-reflection. From the perspective of the individual, coaching for performance prompts questions such as, "what were you trying to accomplish?" and "what is your perception of the results achieved?"

PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Coaching for personal growth focuses on how you help others succeed in their career. It hinges on the question, "What support or resources can I provide to help you reach your goal?"

QUESTIONS FOR COACHING

Coaching conversations bridge the gap between what the actual outcome was and the expected result. They form from the other person's own interpretation.

Conversations starters can include,

- what were you trying to accomplish?
- What were the actual results of what the project achieved?
- What caused the gap between what you wanted to achieve and results you actually did achieve?

A good coach can help a person think through what should be done next time to improve performance instead of telling them exact next steps.



providing effective feedback, time-over-time

PROPER GUIDANCE CONTRIBUTES TO CONTINUOUS TEAM SUCCESS AND FURTHERS GROWTH

Feedback is often a pain point in any performance management process. It comes with the unsaid intentions of telling people, "You need to change." Improvement discussions often create fractures and stress, not actual improvement. Feedback sessions become how someone needs to be different, not how they can grow. Confidence buzzkill.

TRUST AND KINDNESS LEADS TO RECEPTIVE COACHING

Trust is often interpreted as an action. What is often misunderstood is that trusting is not an instruction, but a feeling. You can't ask two people to trust each other and they will. There has to be the emotional willingness to trust. This starts when individuals get viewed as people, not just as subordinates in a vertical hierarchy.

FEEDBACK AS INTENTIONAL AND OPEN-ENDED

Feedback focuses on making people matter. Use kindness as a driving element of any feedback process. When providing feedback, question what assumptions you're bringing, so also be intentional.

Intentional feedback embraces being honest about imperfections. It adjusts to what the person receiving the feedback needs. Feedback is not about asking them to fit your own definition of improvement. Everything is a trigger for someone. Feedback is about being intentional with your words in the kindest way possible to find a collaborative outcome. This says that the other person's opinions also matter.



having effective 1-on-1s

considerations: preparing before your 1-on-1

BEING PREPARED SETS A TONE OF UNDERSTANDING AND TRUST, ELIMINATING DEFENSIVE RESPONSES

SET AN AGENDA

This keeps the meeting focused, allowing both parties to not get blind-sided. Both the facilitator and the feedback recipient should prepare and share an agenda of loose discussion topics and the purpose of the session. This includes the time you'll be conversing and what you want as the end result of the meeting.

Share the agenda a couple of days before the 1-on-1 so that both parties are aware of what the meeting is about. This gives prep time to come up with questions, answers, and further reflection before the meeting.

REVIEW PREVIOUS ACTIONS ITEMS AND FOLLOW-UP NOTES

Review notes from previous sessions, if available. Look for any action plans that got discussed that now need a follow-up.

If your teammate has created a draft of their reflection, go over the notes before the meeting so you're not blind sided.

considerations: being a coach during your 1-on-1

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF SUPPORT AND TRUST, DON'T GET DEFENSIVE OR POINT BLAME

PRAISE IN PUBLIC AND ALWAYS COACH IN PRIVATE

Choose a location that is private and neutral. A private corner in a coffee shop or a comfortable meeting room can provide an exclusive atmosphere. There's no fear you'll be overheard and misunderstood by anyone passing by. This ensures the meeting is focused without distractions.

BODY LANGUAGE FOR TRUST

Make sure you can sit across each other. This breaks down physical barriers. Engaging in eye contact builds trust. You're able to connect and add the human element to coaching. This makes it more than a task list based conversation. Have an open stance with uncrossed arms. This signals you're open and not unhappy to talk.

FOCUS ON THE CONVO AND TURN OFF ELECTRONICS

Do not look at your watch or your phone. This can signal that you're not listening and have more important matters than coaching. If you are expecting an important phone call, bring it up at the start of the meeting. Make sure that there are no surprises.

BE SURE TO SET A FOLLOW-UP

Ask questions that focus on the team member. Ask for feedback about yourself as a coaching manager.

Be sure to schedule a follow up session to track the progress of everything you just discussed. This also keeps the momentum going. Continue to set growth goals, together.



considerations: follow-ups and post-meeting action

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF SUPPORT AND TRUST, DON'T GET DEFENSIVE OR POINT BLAME

REVIEW NOTES FOR ACCURACY

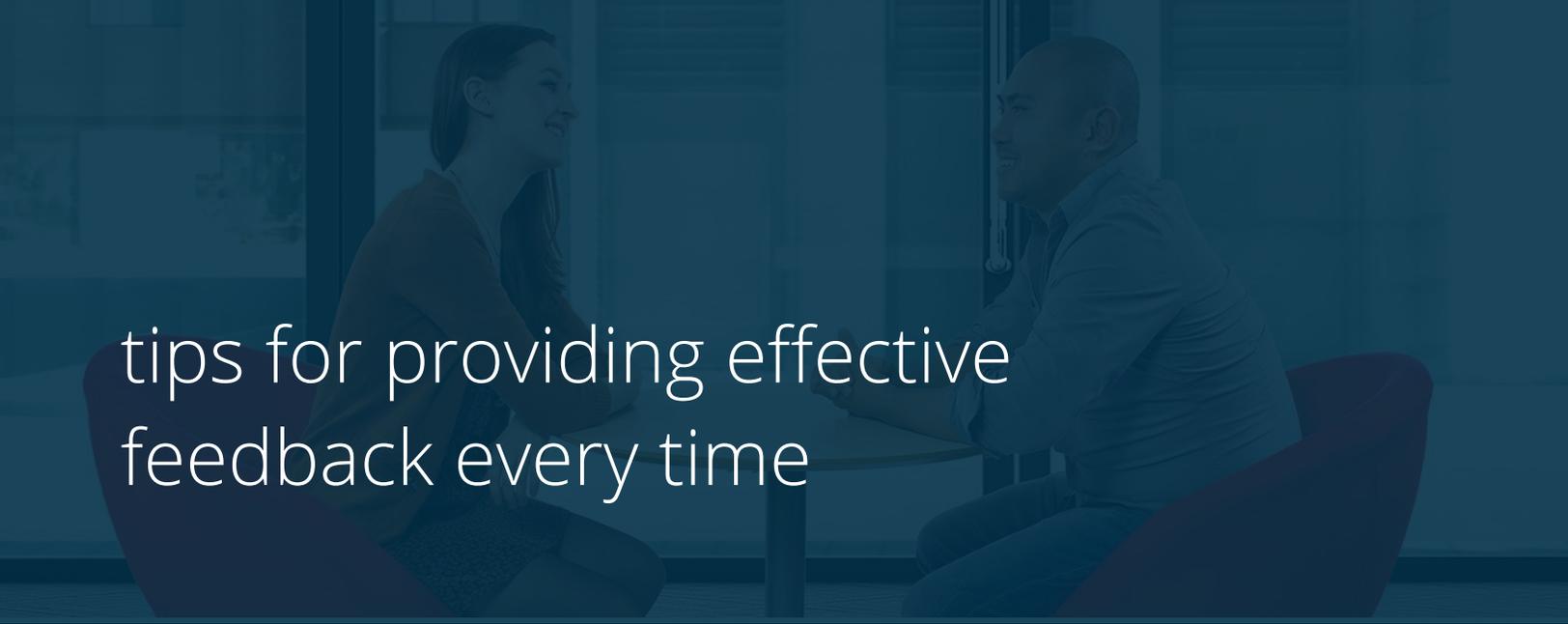
During a conversation take light notes along the way. After the meeting, review your notes for accuracy. Share them with the other 1-on-1 attendee to make sure you're both on the same page. This ensures there is a record of action items.

CONSISTENT FOLLOW-UPS

Effective coaching means continuous follow ups. Setting consistent deadlines for next steps and follow-ups creates continuous touch points. Everything discussed sets up an environment of accountability. This ensures promises, commitments, and ongoing help aren't forgotten.

ENSURE COMMITMENT

It's up to both the organization and the employee to commit to improvement. You can only go so far to help with growth if the resources aren't there to support both parties. Never make promises that the team itself aren't ready to commit to.



tips for providing effective feedback every time

ENCOURAGE, EMPOWER, AND ENABLE - THREE E'S OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

LEAD WITH A QUESTION

Nothing is more frustrating than a peer giving you feedback out of no where. Start by opening up with a question such as “How do you think you are doing on this specific matter?” It provides context to start with and makes the person feel included in the conversation. Feedback should be a conversation, not a one-way task-list.

BE MINDFUL OF YOUR OWN STATE

Be careful to separate emotions from your feedback. Reflect on your needs and emotions to ensure you're not being attacking, but intentional. Feedback is for helping individuals improve. It is not an outlet to rant.

STAY FOCUSED

Each feedback session should be about a

focused topic. Don't bring in extra people if it's unnecessary. Feedback should be between 2 individuals, about a particular aspect or action item. This keeps conversations from being an “us against them” meeting.

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Everyone is at different places with their career. Be mindful to set expectations based on previous coaching sessions. Do not expect everyone to be at the same level, at the same time. Feedback is about continuous growth, so be empathetic. Change takes time.

CREATE A CULTURE OF OPEN COMMUNICATION

Leading by example also means being open to help, and receiving feedback at any time. Continuity is key.



1-on-1 and reflection questions

1-on-1 templates: weekly, monthly, and quarterly

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- What's going well in your role? Any big wins this week?
- What challenges are you facing and how can the team help?
- What are the most important things that you did this week?
- Is there anything else that you need to talk about for next week?

MONTHLY QUESTIONS

- What's surprised you in the past 30 days that you'd like to share?
- What do you believe was your biggest success this month based on your priorities?
- What was most challenging for you this month and why?
- How can I empower you to continue to be successful?

MORE TEMPLATES: <http://bit.ly/1on1templates>

QUARTERLY QUESTIONS

- What are you proud of and or have learned this quarter?
- What were your biggest barriers to success and how can I help you overcome them next quarter?
- Is there anything you'd like to step-up to next quarter?
- Anything you'd like to stop doing?
- Any feedback on processes we're doing that you have insight on?
- Are there any resources that you need from me/the team to succeed further or grow your skills?

reflection templates: share ideas, short and long term

SELF-REFLECTION

- Which responsibilities do you view as most important and why?
- Is there anything that has helped or hindered your growth? How can I help?
- What are your stand-out contributions to the rest of the team? Anything outside your scope-of-work?
- What are your current professional development goals? Anything you don't want to do or want to start doing?

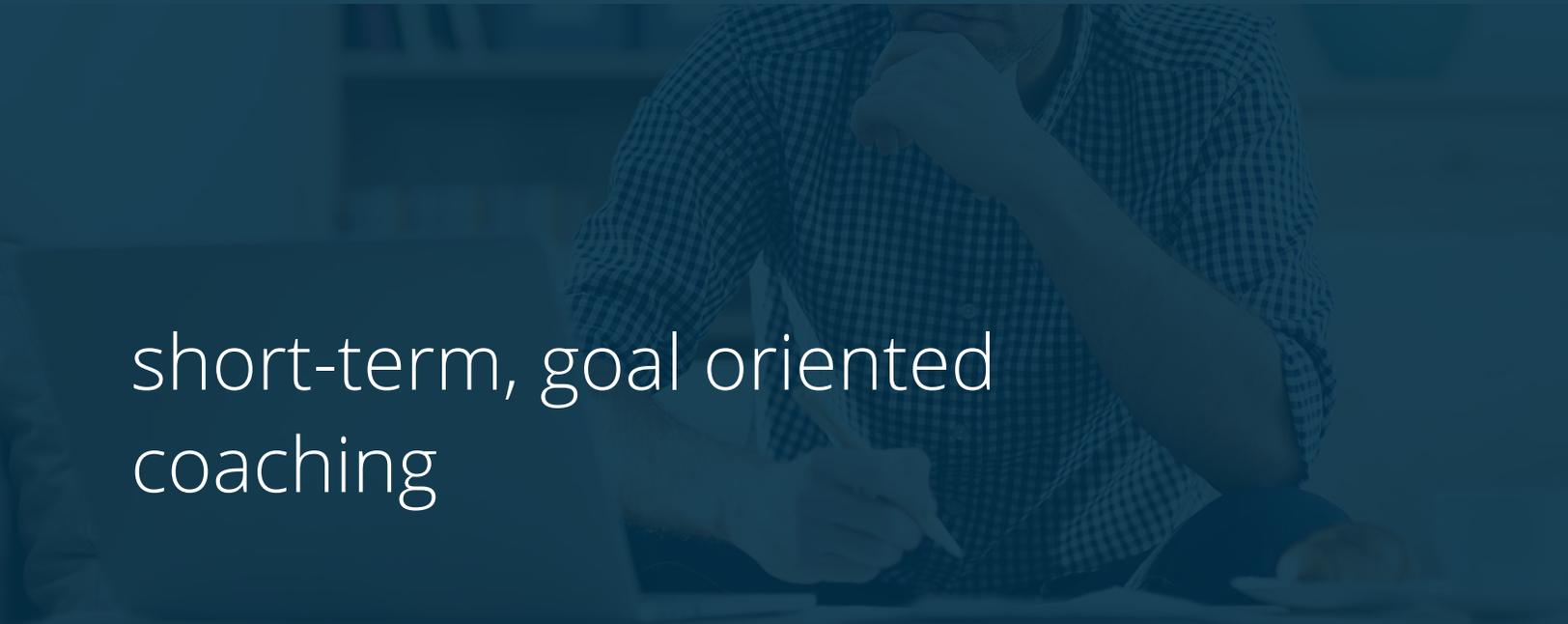
MANAGER/COACH REFLECTION

- Am I continuously reviewing my team's accomplishments and career plans?
- How am I providing support to help my team succeed?
- How can I better celebrate my team's success and highlight their growth?
- Have I been contributing to helping others grow/the team success?
- Have I provided an atmosphere where others can give me feedback?

ORGANIZATION REFLECTION

- What core-values have we strongly exhibited as a team the past year?
- What can we do to help further professional development of each team and or individual employee?
- How well are we doing keeping our strategy fresh, and employees tied to the vision and purpose of the team?
- If we could improve in any way, how would we do it?
- Are we missing out on opportunities?
- What self-suggestions as a leadership team can we discuss?

peer and team coaching methods



short-term, goal oriented coaching

MENTORS COACH MENTEES TO BE THE KEY DECISION-MAKER UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

BE A LEADER AND ROLE MODEL

Goal-setting coaches concentrate on keeping goals manageable and on-time. When you have a mentor, goals become less intimidating, providing more motivation to succeed and tackle roadblocks, together.

Short-term goal coaching should focus on the achievable, action oriented component of long-term achievement. Coaching keeps goals not just realistic, but relevant to the long-term personal development of the mentee. As a goal-setting mentor, you should keep goal conversations focused on, “can your goal really be done?” where you break down long-term goals into short-term, actionable items.

TRACK CONVERSATIONS IN 7GEESE

Have monthly 1-on-1s to track updates, roadblocks, and action items.

ROADMAP TO GOAL COACHING

At the core of goal coaching is having the mentee reflect and document the answer to, “how do you go about making decisions?” Helping someone understand how they work will lead to actionable next steps about how they can proceed to succeed.

Start by stating the focus of the short-term goal coaching session objectively. Next, help the mentee gather information, but do not try to solve any potential roadblocks that get brought up. Listing pros and cons can help provoke self-reflection about roadblocks and actionable ways to tackle the problem from the goal-setter themselves. This also helps create multiple solutions to tackling goals.



peer-to-peer coaching

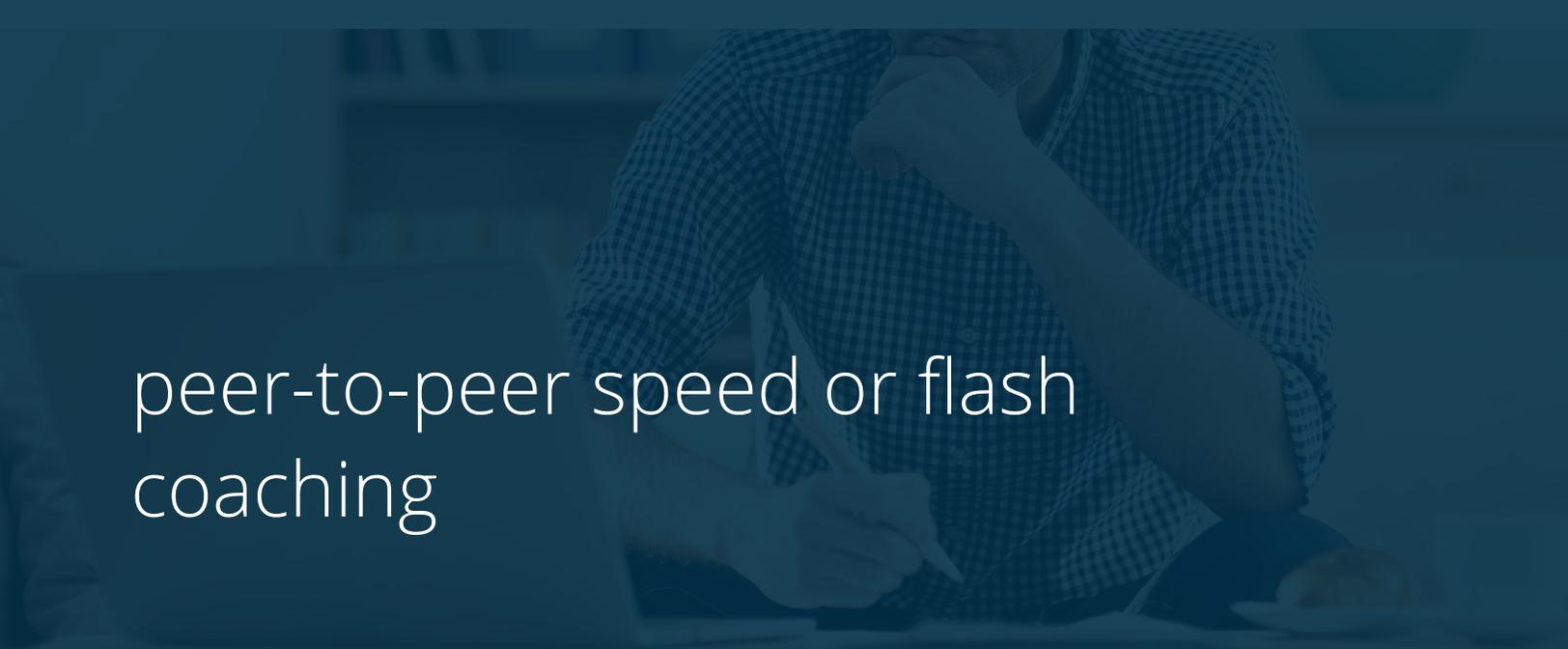
PAIR PEERS WITH OTHERS THAT OTHERWISE WOULDN'T INTERACT TO GET FRESH PERSPECTIVES

In any office space there is an abundance of peers - every singly team member is your peer, regardless if they are a manager.

Peer mentoring focuses on the personal commitment that is made to the other, to help the other grow in an a focused area. The result is a conversation coming from the place of intentional positivity to help, not a focus on, "you need to do better."

PEER-TO-PEER BENEFITS

- Both parties get to develop leadership, communication, and coaching skills.
- You get insights on trends within the field of your peer. This provokes expertise sharing, career strategizing, provides visibility into other career paths, and transforms everyone in a role model.
- New bonds get created that allow each peer to tap into new networks.
- Increased sense of contribution, evoking a collaborative environment where supporting others and growth is at the core.
- Exchanging ideas with peers provides fresh, and otherwise untapped into perspectives.



peer-to-peer speed or flash coaching

FLASH COACHING EMPOWERS TIP SHARING, FRESH PERSPECTIVES THAT INFORMS SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Flash coaching is a one-time meeting, typically with no longer than 30 minute intervals that involve providing tips on areas of improvement, strategies for achieving long-term career goals, advice in managing, suggestions for dealing with stress and work-life balance, or referrals to other individuals who could provide guidance on personal growth and career development.

The focus is quick-hit guidance coming from a fresh perspective you otherwise wouldn't actively seek out. There is no added long-term commitment, so discussions stay objective and focused on intentional, actionable feedback.

TEAM FLASH MENTORING

A great team exercise for building trust and rapport with your team is to do mini-series flash coaching events.

This is where you circle through your peers for a mini-series of 15 minute one-time mentoring sessions. Each session can have a different focus, but the goal is to tackle one question per session. During the 15 minutes, take turns answering and providing feedback/coaching for the other's question.

The main goal of flash coaching is to keep sessions short to obtain focused, small bits of actionable outcomes.

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