

10 Top Tips Ensuring coaching delivers tangible benefits and an excellent return on investment

1. Schedule coaching sessions in the morning, early in the week

 Most people's biorhythms become less energised later in the day and later into the week; therefore to increase the likelihood of tangible benefits emerging from coaching support; it is better to conduct the coaching sessions on a Tuesday morning as opposed to a Friday afternoon. It also provides the coachee/protégé with plenty of opportunities to see the benefits of applying the action points back in the workplace, which in turn will help to maintain the motivation to tackle challenges, deliver outcomes and achieve more.

2. Never agree to less than three coaching sessions for any Coachee/Protégé

 For any tangible results and benefits to be realised, a minimum of three sessions, ideally scheduled between 3 to 6 weeks apart, are necessary not only to ensure an effective tracking and review process, but also to be able to make any necessary adjustments if and when action points do not always go according to plan. To conduct only one session runs a real risk that the person receiving the support will be disillusioned because they may not feel that any tangible improvement has been made, which may lead to a feeling that the process is pointless and of no value. For coaching support to be considered a success by all parties concerned, it really needs to be conducted thoroughly, ensuring that the key priorities are suitably addressed and progress can be clearly seen by all.

3. Identify the specific 'critical path' that will deliver measurable results

 When embarking upon the coaching process, encourage the coachee/protégé to identify 'what success will look like' and capture that in terms of tangible benefits. This leads to mapping out the 'critical path' to be taken (including timescales) and any barriers to be overcome or averted.

4. Provide the Coachee/Protégé with a short-list of options that will assist them in maintaining focus on the priority areas – not just their own discretionary preferences

 If a core priority list is identified within the coachee/protégé's work assignments/business objectives, invite them to select the one area that needs to deliver the most important, long-lasting results. This helps the coachee/protégé to clear any 'fog of uncertainty' about what they should focus upon, in order to capitalise on their priority areas.

5. Establish a currency of success within the coaching process

 Each aspect of a coaching plan could be ranked or scored; this will highlight any 'soft' or 'hard' targets/achievements. For most people, it is more likely that they will want to have more 'hard' targets (e.g. 'promotion') and achievements registered, with the 'softer' ones (such as 'improve communication'; 'be more assertive' etc.), which are less likely to be the desired outcomes. Most people tend to gravitate towards achieving a clear result. The coaching support can reflect and even measure this by building it into the fabric of the coaching protocol.



6. Start each coaching session with a review of when a previous plan or initiative made by the Coachee/Protégé had a successful outcome

 Maintaining a focus on successful progress experienced by the coachee/protégé, helps them to become accustomed to being more confident about addressing any future challenges and issues. Each coaching session will also reflect upon the previous session in relation to progress made.

7. Build a chart showing progress and developments that captures results and successes

 By physically displaying the route and the options taken, as well as the results and progress made, all parties involved will feel a greater motivation to deliver on commitments and actions. This will mitigate the very real threat of a weakening of commitment, which can be caused by ill-defined discussions. A clear map – preferably in hard copy – will be much more compelling than a notional (electronic) list of points. This will, in turn, convert into clear outcomes and deliverables.

8. Encourage/Arrange all Managers/Leaders to be Trained Coaches

 By creating a culture of coaching, where all Managers/Leaders embrace the fact that effective coaching can significantly enhance leadership skills, the results from each individual involved, as well as the group/team/department, will be significantly enhanced.

9. Train all Managers/Leaders to ILM certification/endorsement standard

 This may be as little as three days' delivery (scheduled to fit around work commitments), which encourages each Manager to follow up on coaching support commitments/action plans. The only situation where coaching support does not deliver tangible benefits is when there are no disciplines in place to follow up on agreed action points/plans.

10. Advertise that coaching support is a core component of the business/team – in the same way that management meetings are considered to be vital to run any organisation successfully

 By confirming publicly that coaching is valued, it encourages all parties to commit to the process. Organisations that do not incorporate coaching within the normal working practices tend to perform poorly in comparison with those that have coaching support as a key discipline. When it is publicly known that coaching is a core part of the team and leadership dynamics, everyone involved is likely to be motivated by the peer pressure, which will, in turn, have a very positive effect on return on investment.

If you or your organisation would be interested in creating a coaching culture or learning how to become a business coach (ILM accreditations available), please call 01937 579 649 or email phil@dicksontraining.com

