# *Coaching for Results: An Overview of Effective Tools*

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## *Abstract*

Companies see value in coaching as a leadership development tool because its effective implementation can positively impact business results. Coaching can help clients become aware of their existing behaviors and habits, develop new ways of working, and reinforce new patterns of behavior. Appropriate tools, techniques and practices can greatly enhance coaching effectiveness. With the increased popularity of coaching in the past decade, the number of coaching tools has increased as well. The paper describes the value and usage of practices, tools and assessments taken from our own coaching experiences and covers the coaching process from the initial contracting phase to the final assignment of homework at the end of a coaching session.

## *Introduction*

*The call was a familiar one. Dave Jones* was promoted to an Executive VP position at Standard, Inc, a struggling but still viable large cap company. Dave had been with the company for 12 years and had 'grown up' there. He had done extremely well in previous positions, however, he hit a roadblock in his current role. Although he had a great understanding of the business, and was able to deliver consistent results, both peers and direct reports complained to Dave's management that he blew up in meetings and "chewed out" people for not answering questions the way that he wanted them answered. He was sometimes curt with peers and did not inform them of critical information in a timely manner. Dave was beginning to have major retention problems. In fact, his turnover rate was the highest in the division. We were asked if we could provide some coaching.*

Coaching has grown in popularity as a leadership development tool and so have the choices in approaches available to both external and internal corporate coaches. We strongly believe that coaches have a responsibility to familiarize themselves both with the variety of tools available and the best time and manner to implement them. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of practices and tools that coaches can use to initiate and conduct a coaching engagement. The article will cover the contracting process, tools to assess needs and use within the coaching session itself, observation and homework as additional practices, action planning and finally a list of resources for coaches.

## *The First Step: Contracting (or do you really want to take this assignment?)*

The first step in coaching is contracting. Corporate coaches are typically called in through line management or the human resources department. Sometimes the coaching client initiates the contact. Usually, a manager requests a coach for a direct report, although sometimes clients seek out coaching help on their own. Contracting has two steps when the request is not directly from the client. The first is to meet with the requesting party and the second is to meet with the client.

### *First Meeting with Client's Manager*

During our contracting meeting with the requesting manager, we want to determine the manager's perception of the coaching "problem. " We do not accept assignments unless the situation is a true development experience for the client with a manager who actually wants the person to succeed. For example, we do not accept assignments if it becomes clear that the real desire is to fire the person and the company wants to be able to say that they offered coaching. The best remedy for dealing with sub-par performance is for the manager to give specific, behavioral feedback and put the person on a "corrective action" path. Coaching cannot and should not substitute for this process.

The first meeting has several desired outcomes or goals.

- **Inquire about the client's willingness to be coached.**
  When the client is not a willing participant, their resistance means the engagement cannot be successful. Coaches should also be wary about taking such assignments.

- **Determine how involved the manager would like to be in the process with the coach.**
  Some managers want to be consulted shortly after the process begins, others halfway through, and still others just want to see results. It is our recommendation that the coach arrange for at least one session to touch base with the manager after the coaching begins. For some clients, the meetings with the manager are held with the client present. This allows the client to ask for feedback and role clarity that seems to be best provided with a neutral party present (the coach).

 

- **Determine how involved the manager is willing to be in giving ongoing feedback to the client as the coaching process progresses.**
  Because the manager is much more likely than the coach to witness changes and/or improvements in behavior, getting the manager involved in giving positive reinforcing feedback for behavioral improvements 'in the moment,' as they occur adds tremendous power to the coaching process.

- **Ask for Permission**
  Finally, we ask the manager for permission to share some if not all of what has been covered in the conversation.

***First Meeting with Client***
In the first session with the client, coaches typically aim to get a sense of the reasons for coaching. They also get a sense of the client's leadership aspirations, values, and overall goals. Coaches also inquire about success factors that the client thinks are important to others, for instance their boss, direct reports and peers, as well as their perception of the greatest challenges. This information is helpful to the coach in determining which tools to choose from their 'toolkit.'

Typically, the first session includes contracting on the coaching process itself. Coaches with their clients need to determine the following items:

- **Purpose of Coaching**
  It is important to emphasize that coaching is solely for the client's growth and development, to enhance their strengths and minimize 'flat spots' so that they can be most effective. Companies typically hire coaches for their best and/or high potential employees. Explaining this can help alleviate any resistance to coaching.

- **Length of meetings**
  Our recommendation is that coaches budget one and one-half hours for face-to-face meetings and one hour for phone meetings. Phone meetings tend to be much more focused.

- **Frequency of meetings**
  How often meetings are held will vary with clients. Generally coaching meetings held twice a month add urgency and yield better results. Some corporate clients find it hard to schedule meetings that often. Therefore, it is important to convey the importance of agreeing to minimally schedule a meeting once a month in order to "get traction" in the coaching process.

- **How long coaching relationship will last**
  Generally, coaching relationships last a minimum of four to six months and some can last as long as a year. The actual length depends on the nature and complexity of the coaching issues to be covered. This should be discussed in the initial meeting.

 

- **In Person or by Phone**
  Generally, most coaches give clients an option although holding the initial session in person is usually most optimal for building a trusting relationship. Coaching seems to work best when there is a mixture of both phone and in-person meetings. Some coaches do work quite effectively holding all sessions on the phone. This, of course, needs to be decided and communicated in the contracting session.

- **Scheduling Guidelines**
  Through trial and error we have found things work most smoothly when we tell clients upfront that we have a 72-hour cancellation policy and that there is a charge for canceled meetings.

- **Process Checks**
  Coaches and clients agree on how they will each assess the progress of both the coaching process itself and results on an ongoing basis. A simple "what worked, what didn't work today," is often enough to keep things on track.

- **Notes and Action Items**
  In general, we recommend that the coach send meeting notes after the session that capture the essence of the meeting as well as agreed upon action items.

- **Confidentiality**
  We tell clients what we will and will not share with their manager, and state that we will always get their permission before sharing any information. We state that general information about what we are working on may be communicated, but not the specifics. For instance, any observations about others or information about products and strategy will not be shared. With permission, we will share that we are working on particular skills, competencies, mindsets, etc. Because coaching is a developmental activity and there will inevitably be both some learning and unlearning, we want to make sure that anything that is shared will not inadvertently jeopardize the client's performance evaluation.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Contracting: Key points to cover</th></tr>
<tr><td>With Manager<ul><li>What is your perception of coaching “problem?</li><li>What outcomes are you seeking?</li><li>What will success look like?</li><li>Is the direct report a willing participant?</li><li>How will the manager communicate this conversation to their direct report?</li><li>How involved does manager want to be in the coaching process?</li><li>Confidentiality</li></ul></td><td>With Client<ul><li>Reasons for coaching</li><li>What are the client’s leadership goals, aspirations?</li><li>What will success look like?</li><li>What success factors are important to your boss, direct reports and peers?</li><li>Challenges</li><li>How often shall we meet?</li><li>How will coach and client know that we are both on track?</li><li>Cancellation policy</li><li>Confidentiality</li></ul></td></tr>
</table>

After the initial contracting meetings, it is time to begin the coaching process itself. The following sections describe some of the tools and practices.

## *Assessments*

There are numerous assessment tools available to coaches. Assessment tools add value because they provide both a focus for coaching and a framework for quantifying qualitative information. Tools should be considered as a means to extend the coach’s own well-developed analytic and interpersonal skills, not as a replacement for them. The following general criteria apply to any assessment tools you may choose:

- **Ease of Use and Understanding**
  The tool itself should be easy to administer and not require an inordinate amount of client time. There should be a clear process for analyzing the results, as well as a presentation format that is relatively easy for the client to understand. The clearer and more behavioral the feedback, the more likely that changes will take place.

- **Match to client style**
  Some clients, particularly engineers, want instruments with data driven, objective results. Others prefer more conceptual data. It is important to find out what style of tool is the best fit for the client.

- **Match to client situation**
  The most powerful feedback results are those that have a direct application to the client's current situation. Keep this in mind when choosing an instrument.

- **Validity and reliability**
  Make sure there is substantial research data indicating that the instrument is valid, i.e., measures what it says it is measuring, and reliable, i.e., similar results are likely to occur if instrument is administered to the same person at another time.

- **Requirements for training or certification**
  Our recommendation is that coaches get training or certification if the publisher of the assessment requires it. Sometimes it is useful for coaches to get training on an instrument even if it is not required so that their comfort level is high for working with the client.

This section covers one example each of our most frequently used assessments and tools. Those include 360-degree feedback, self-assessment instruments, personality style assessments, behavioral style assessments and specific situational assessments. Also included are examples from both the fictional Dave Jones case referenced at the beginning of the article and other clients.

***360-Degree Feedback***

Three hundred and sixty degree feedback is focused on development rather than assessment. The goal of the feedback is to help the client understand how their manager, peers, direct reports and sometimes their customers perceive them. Combining feedback from each of these groups of people creates a full circle, 360 degrees, around the client, hence, the name of the assessment tool. 360-degree feedback can be administered via a standardized instrument or via an interview process. In both cases, each group of raters is asked the same questions about the client's behavior. In the standardized version, the client generally receives a computer-generated report that summarizes results by skill area, importance and by rater group. The result is a development plan based on the feedback of the 360-degree assessment. The focus is on leveraging the identified strengths and determining an action plan for improving the critical, challenging areas.

In addition to, or sometimes instead of a standardized instrument, coaches conduct 360-degree interviews with a set group of questions (See chart below).

 

| Typical 360-Degree Interview Questions |
| --- |
| What does the manager do really well? or What are his/her greatest strengths?<br>What could they do better?<br>How would you characterize their ability to articulate a clear and compelling vision?<br>How are they at providing direction to others?<br>How are they at giving constructive feedback?<br>How are they at assessing performance?<br>How are they at communicating critical information in a timely manner?<br>What do you think is a blind spot?<br>If you had one piece of advice for this person to be a more effective leader, what would it be? |

Coaches ask their client to identify 10 –15 people from whom they want feedback and who will provide an accurate assessment of the client's behavior and skills. Coaches interview the identified group individually in person or by phone. Coaches look for patterns in the data that are provided to a client in a synthesized report.

It is important to recognize that people tend to be defensive when receiving their 360–degree feedback. This is a natural and normal reaction. The best way to deal with defensive behavior is to first let people know prior to giving them feedback that defensiveness is a typical response. For example, a couple of usual reactions are: "I got this rating because of the tremendous lack of resources here," or "I don't think that it's true about me." When clients exhibit this behavior, it is best to remain calm, ask them questions and draw them out in a way that elicits their true reactions. Another technique is to say, " What if this were true, why might people be saying this?"

It is critical that the coach not only be well grounded in the methodology and implications of the results, but more importantly, help clients 'connect the dots' between their greatest strengths, leadership aspirations, and the actions that will provide clients with the greatest opportunity for reaching their goals.

*For example, the coach used 360 degree feedback with Dave Jones so that he would be more aware of his direct reports' and his peers' concerns about him. It became clear in the feedback session that his interpersonal skills were an issue. Dave's strengths, his achievement orientation and drive to get results, were not tempered by an ability to motivate and develop his direct reports. He also did not listen well. Dave was able to see that all of his rater groups shared a consistent view of him. He also got strong validation for the strengths responsible for his success to date.*

Whether you use a standardized instrument or one you design, the process is always voluntary and the information is confidential and anonymous. The assessment should not be tied to the client's performance review. Usually coaches wait until a person has been in their position at least 6 months before administering a 360-degree feedback process, because raters need enough time to get to know the person in a variety of situations so that they can provide accurate and meaningful feedback.

A coach's real value to the 360-degree process is in the giving of the feedback and guiding the client through a self-discovery process. This value can be delivered either through a standardized 360-degree tool or a qualitative process.

***Self- assessment: Leadership Architect® Competency Sort***

The Leadership Architect® Competency Sort Cards (see References and Resources at end of article) are often used when clients are not aware of their strengths and development areas or when they want to know what to work on next or when it is not feasible to do a 360 degree feedback process. Clients like the card sort because it is tangible, tactile, thorough, practical and well thought-out. Coaches like it, because certification is not required and it is easy to use and interpret. It is our recommendation that coaches become very familiar with the process and with resources to help clients build on their strengths and improve their development areas. We also strongly recommend purchasing a deck of the Leadership Architect® Competency Sort for each client, because they love the cards and like to keep them for reference. Clients can also use the cards with their direct reports.

Coaches typically explain the origin of the cards to the client and have the client sort the 67 competency cards during a coaching session or beforehand. When the cards are sorted, the coach looks over the results, which are captured on a tally sheet. An Excel spreadsheet can also be used. Coaches ask their clients if they see any patterns or themes, and also ask them if their manager or peers would rate them the way they rated themselves. In some cases, coaches can ask the boss, direct reports and peers to complete a card sort for purposes of comparison. The card sort can help the client become more aware of coaching goals, leadership aspirations and competencies, and also focus on the 2 to 5 behaviors that will have the greatest leverage for their success. Using the Career Architect Development Planner, or FYI, or the Successful Manager's Handbook (see References and Resources), coaches work with clients to choose actions that will enhance their greatest strengths and minimize the leadership behaviors that compromise their performance.

***Personality Style Assessments: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator***

The MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) is the world's most popular and practical measure of personality dispositions and preferences based on the work of Carl Jung. MBTI is especially helpful when a person's style or personality is the coaching challenge or when a client is having a particular problem with an employee, peer or boss. The MBTI can often shed light on the situation so that clients understand the differences and will make some adjustments to their way of handling a situation.

The MBTI has 16 different types and is a preference test. Certification is required for administering, scoring and analyzing the instrument. Coaches usually tell clients that the object is to understand themselves and others better with respect to communication, problem-solving and decision-making styles. Helping clients understand their own type and then look at some of their employees or their manager through the lens of type can be very useful to the client. Coaches are sometimes asked to do a follow up MBTI session with the client's whole team.

*For example, a client had a strong preference for the "T" (Thinking) function. All her staff had high "F" (Feeling) function. The staff felt as though the manager never gave them recognition. The client thought that since they were doing their job they didn't need feedback. She was then able to regain commitment from her team after an MBTI session with her whole team, because she gained understanding of the differences in their thought and feeling processes that helped her realize that the staff needed to be recognized for doing their jobs well.*

In another example, the MBTI assessment was just what Dave Jones needed to understand the differences between his very high preference for 'telling things the way they are' and others' need for a softer, gentle approach. This understanding led to a dramatic shift in his daily actions.

***Behavioral Style Assessments: Personal Profile System***™

There are numerous behavioral style and work style assessment tools. These instruments tell the client how they and others 'show up' in the world. We frequently use the Personal Profile System (see References and Resources) for clients to understand their behavioral profile, to learn about themselves, and to identify the environment most conducive to their success. At the same time, clients can learn about the differences of others by having their team complete the profiles. Clients can understand the environment that their team requires for maximum productivity. The coach can help the client by explaining behavioral dynamics and increasing the client's knowledge of his or her unique behavioral pattern.

The Personal Profile System is not a test and there is no pass or fail. There is no best profile. It is self-scoring and provides immediate feedback. Coaches must prepare by familiarizing themselves with the instrument and the scoring. There is no certification required for using the instrument, however, a thorough understanding is necessary for the coach to be effective with the instrument. The booklet contains an interpretation section and gives a few exercises that coaches can assign their clients for gaining a deeper understanding of themselves. If using the instrument with a team, some team related questions are helpful in the interpretation phase. Some examples are "what is my value to the team?" or "how can the team help me with the following developmental behaviors that I want to work on?"

*The coach used the Personal Profile System with Dave Jones. His results indicated that he was more likely to get things done by dominating others, rather than influencing them. The results of the Personal Profile System dovetailed with his 360-degree feedback and MBTI, and the coach was able to help him make the connections. The Personal Profile System offered Dave some clear behavioral clues for recognizing the behavioral types of those he interacted with, as well as very specific suggestions for modifying his behavior* *when interacting with different types. The coach was able to observe this and give him practical feedback using Personal Profile System language as a model.*

Some organizations have the executive team do a Personal Profile System feedback review together so that each team member shares their personal results with the rest of the team. After this event their individual results can be shared with other parts of the organization. Coaches can effectively use this executive team information with other clients in the same organization to help them improve their communication and interaction with the executives.

***Specific Situation Assessments: Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)***

There are some tools that are helpful for a specific behavior or situation that a client might have. *Dave Jones did not handle his anger very well in meetings where decisions had to be made. In order to help him understand and change his behavior, the coach chose to use the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Management Inventory* (see Reference and Resources at end of the article). The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) is an easy to administer instrument that does not require certification. The booklet has the test in it and gives a good explanation of the conflict management grid for the coach to easily understand and teach to the client. The client's profile of scores indicates the repertoire of conflict-handling skills that an individual uses in the conflict situations that s/he may face. Coaches usually leave the booklet with their clients so that the clients can refer to the explanations in the booklet for greater understanding and for a refresher if necessary. The instrument takes about 10-15 minutes to complete and can be completed in the coaching session so that coaches can explain the results and apply them to current situations of their clients.

The instrument explains how certain styles are useful in specific conflicts and not as useful in other situations. Educating clients about conflict is very effective. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument can be used in several ways. Some clients decide to use the tools with their entire team. Another use is for conflict resolution between two executives to help them see the differences in their styles and how to approach each other knowing these differences. Coaches need to facilitate these sessions for clients to gain the most value from the tool.

 

## *Exercises and Behavioral Tools During the Coaching Session*

There are a number of exercises and behavioral tools that can be used with the client as part of the coaching session. These exercises and tools help the client focus more quickly on what they need to work on and help them practice new behaviors during the actual coaching session. One tool is a leadership 'map' and another is behavioral practices or role plays. Observation techniques are discussed in this section as well.

### *Leadership Map*

One exercise that is often used prior to administering any other assessments is a series of questions to clarify the clients' aspirations and goals while creating a map of their leadership style for achieving successful business results. As coaches go through the coaching process, and clients go through the process of self-discovery, many of the questions listed below are answered and captured, either in writing or graphically on a large piece of paper or on the client's whiteboard. This creates a word 'map' or picture for the client to see.

1. Imagine it is 3-5 years from now, what is your leadership legacy? What have you accomplished?
2. What are your greatest strengths?
3. What are your blind spots?
4. What challenges have you overcome so far? What are you most proud of?
5. What are your top 3 defining values?
6. What are the key relationships that you will need to nurture in order to be successful in this company?
7. What mentors do you need in order to flourish?

The leadership map is helpful because it focuses the coaching on high leverage areas and leads to more effective actions. Coaches review leadership maps with clients in the sessions on an ongoing basis until the actions are completed. When actions are not completed, this process helps illuminate possible issues and 'stuck points' for coaches to discuss and review with their clients.

### *Behavioral Practice (Role Plays)*

Coaches use behavioral practice when the development of new skills is required. Some clients resist the term 'role play' so coaches should be sensitive to the language that they use when explaining the practices. It is important that the coach be well grounded in solid management methodologies when introducing role plays. Coaches can learn effective management practices through attendance in reputable training courses. Some clients need a demonstration for role modeling, so the coach should be prepared. Be aware of not demonstrating or encouraging behavior that will not get the intended results. For instance, saying in a demanding voice, "get this done right away or you are fired," not only violates human resources policies, but also does not effectively motivate a worker. Finally, it is important to encourage clients to trust their own reaction to behaviors.

*Dave Jones had a major retention problem with a couple of his direct reports who had skills critical to the business and whose loss would have far-reaching implications. Over the course of two sessions, each dedicated to one of the people on the verge of resigning, the coach used a questioning process to ensure that Dave could really 'put himself in their shoes', understand their motivations, as well as their reactions to his behavior. The coach used the Personal Profile System model as information in preparing the conversations. The coach rehearsed worst-case employee behaviors with the client. The coach then debriefed each go-around, asking Dave to add improvements until he felt satisfied that he could comfortably handle the situation. The actual conversations went extremely well because of these focused practices in the coaching session.*

Practicing behavior in a safe environment with a coach is a very good way to help clients build both skill and confidence. Some clients particularly like getting instantaneous feedback and are able to make immediate improvements that are later repeated when it counts.

***Observation***

Observation by the coach can be a key tool for getting practical information to clients by giving them feedback on what you see them doing or not doing well. Some venues for observation are staff meetings, meetings with clients and their manager, offsite meetings with their team, all-hands meetings, and presentations.

Coaches usually set up some agreements with their clients ahead of the meeting on what will be observed and how they prefer to receive difficult feedback.

*In the Dave Jones example, the coach discovered that his behavior in staff meetings was an issue. After establishing trust, we discussed that the coach would sit in on 2 or 3 meetings to observe his behavior and provide feedback. Dave let his team know ahead of time that an outside person would be attending as an observer, and that that observer would only be watching him. The coach sat in the back of the room, as inconspicuously as possible. After the first session, Dave reflected on what he thought he had done well, and what could have been done differently. The coach then added additional observations. Dave made a point of incorporating some of the improvements in his next meeting and in fact, asked the coach to do an informal poll among his staff on how he was doing. By the third meeting, he was more aware of his behavior and began to catch himself when he slipped back into old patterns.*

Because the coach cannot always attend critical meetings, one approach is to assemble a 'feedback team,' of the client's manager and human resources or organization development person. The coach meets with the 'feedback team' to describe what behaviors to observe and how to provide effective, consistent feedback.

 

## *Practices to Assign as Homework*

The coaching process does not finish at the end of a session. In order to reinforce new behaviors or to have clients observe their behavior, coaches should assign clients homework to continue progress between sessions. Coaches generally call these 'self observation practices.'

As coaches, we want to reinforce new behaviors and help clients achieve a level of awareness of the new behaviors. We found that self-monitoring certain competencies or behaviors assists people in developing awareness of themselves and is more likely to result in behavioral change. Self-observation practices are especially effective for increasing awareness of influence skills, decision-making competencies and defensive behavior.

*For example, at one high technology firm, the client noticed that he was defensive in meetings. As a homework assignment, he was asked to observe himself and write in a journal when, with whom and in what situations at work and at home led to the defensive behavior.*

*As he kept a journal, he discovered that he was not defensive at home. The behavior mainly happened in group meetings when he felt that someone challenged or attacked his new product ideas at a presentation. The coach analyzed his new awareness and realized that being questioned put him on the defensive. Since he had recently moved from Asia to the U.S.A., the questioning in American meetings surprised him. It is not common in Asia for others to question management in a group meeting. The coach worked on the cross-cultural influences to increase his understanding. His defensive behavior dropped significantly once he became aware of when it occurred, understood the cultural differences and learned a couple of tips for responding to questions meetings.*

Some clients such as those in high technology don't like to keep journals, as it seems too time consuming and conceptual. Instead, Excel spreadsheets with which they are already comfortable can track their awareness and behaviors by checking off the boxes that were established by the coach and the client. Clients have found that they could easily summarize some of the patterns that they observed by tallying the columns. Since some clients do not like to write and will not keep a journal, an Excel Spreadsheet can be the answer.

Coaches who are able to assign appropriate homework to motivated clients usually find that results happen more quickly. This is because awareness is always the first step for lasting changes.

 

## *Action Planning*

A key element of the coaching process is the development of a focused action plan. Coaches find that when clients develop their action plans, plans are more likely to be implemented. The process used to develop the action plan is more important than the format. An effective approach is to ask the client what type of action plans have worked in the past, and what action plans have "stayed on the shelf." Based on that information, the coach and client can craft a format and process that will ensure implementation.

There are a number of formats for action plans. Typically, an action plan includes a behaviorally specific objective, specific actions to be taken to achieve that objective, names of those whose involvement is required, due dates, and results. Sometimes, a column is included to track progress by percentage of accomplishment.

*For example, in working with Dave Jones the coach discovered that he had completed 360-degree feedback twice in his career. While speaking to him, he pulled out his binder from the past and one of his untouched action plans fell out. It became clear that the traditional format had not been successful at engaging him and eliciting action.*

*Through discussion the coach found that what had produced successful change in the past was for him to reflect on a challenging issue and come to what he called a "realization" about his specific behavior and why he was doing it. He was then able to develop actions based on those realizations. Upon further reflection, he realized that if he "installed" some daily, weekly and monthly habits that enabled these new behaviors, he would be most likely to be successful.*

In this case, the "documentation" would look something like the following two tables:

**Developmental Action Plan**

| Behavior Targeted | Realization | Actions to Change Behavior | Summary of Tips to Reinforce Behavior |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blowing up in meetings | I am expecting everyone to think And act like me | Consciously slow down, breathe and listen when others are talking. Do not respond<br>unless I give a positive response | • Send meeting agenda before meeting so that staff can be more prepared<br>• Give others more responsibility and expect them to figure out 'how' |

 

| Habits To Enable Behavioral Changes | |
|---|---|
| Daily | Check my level of anxiety and take concrete steps to keep it in check, e.g. jogging |
| Weekly | Hold 1:1 meetings consistently and handle challenges in those meetings |
| Monthly | Ask staff for feedback on effectiveness of meetings |

*In this case, the coach met with Dave and Dave's manager to share the action plan. The process of action planning led to significant results, because of the management support and follow-up.*

Thus, the key elements of successful action planning are finding out what has worked for the client in past behavioral changes and adapt a plan that mirrors that success. Couple the plan with a facilitated meeting between the client and manager to make sure that new behaviors are both reinforced and recognized.

## *Books, Articles, Tapes and Executive Summaries for Clients*

Books, articles, tapes and executive summaries can be particularly helpful for clients who wish to increase their awareness and understanding about specific leadership skills or competencies. It is helpful to use these resources for those clients motivated to learn by reading and/or listening to tapes.

Each client has a different learning style. Some clients learn best by observation, others by listening to audiotapes, others by trying new behaviors or by reading. It is important to find out the learning style of your client. You can do this by asking them to reflect on a time when they learned the most and their method of learning. Tailoring the client's action plans to include assignments that work with their learning style can increase their effectiveness more quickly. *For example, the coach gave Dave Jones an article on emotional intelligence by Daniel Goleman* (see References and Resources) *to enhance his understanding of his interpersonal skills. He had indicated that he liked to read and did not have much time. Therefore, the coach assigned him an article instead of a book. After he completed the reading, the coach asked some focused questions about the article to increase the applicability of the article to his situation.*

We use bibliographies with clients to highlight books and/or articles that emphasize skill building or that increase awareness of leadership. When you have a client who likes to learn by reading, here are some steps to follow for putting together or adapting a bibliography.

- Determine the subject matter as precisely as you can by skills, competencies, or leadership/management practices. Some bibliographies are built on the following

 

  - Influence Skills
  - Group Process Skills
  - Decision making Skills
  - Global/Diversity skills
  - Basic management skills
  - Overall leadership processes
  - Differences between Leadership and Management
  - Biographies or autobiographies of great leaders

- Get titles, authors and current status from your favorite on-line bookseller
- Look in reference books such as Successful Managers Handbook for ideas by subject matter
- Ask colleagues for suggestions when stuck

In working with clients, we provide a brief summary on most frequently used books with bulleted discussion points. This summary and discussion reinforces the learnings from the books, articles and tapes. Be sure that you have read the book or books that you recommend so that you can have a follow-up discussion. In addition, several executive book and tape services (see References and Resources) provide short summary materials or taped summaries of popular business books.

## *Conclusion*

The following chart summarizes the coaching tools covered in this article and when to use them during a coaching engagement. Tools and practices help clients focus their work on the behaviors that will provide the greatest leverage for achieving their goals and aspirations. As coaches, we need to both master our ability to listen, analyze, and summarize, as well as our ability to choose and use appropriate tools.

**Summary of Coaching Needs and Tools to Use**

| Coaching Need | Tools to Use |
|---|---|
| Determine coaching focus | Leadership Map, Leadership Architect® Competency Sort |
| Disciplined coaching process | Contracting |
| Awareness of strengths and developmental needs | 360-degree feedback, Leadership Architect® Competency Sort cards |
| Development plan | Leadership Map, 360-degree feedback, Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Leadership Architect® Competency Sort |
| Aware of team's and/or peer's response to client | 360-degree feedback |
| Conflict in styles | Interviews, Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Personal Profile System inventories |

 

| Coaching Need | Tools to Use |
|---|---|
| Difficulty dealing with conflict or conflict resolution | Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) |
| Practice new skills | Role play |
| Change specific behaviors, e.g., influence, decision making, defensiveness, assertiveness, | Self-observation and journaling, observations by coach |
| Increase leadership competencies, e.g., think more strategically, communicate more effectively, understanding differences between leadership and management | Reading assignments, find internal mentor(s) |

## *References and Resources*


***Contracting***

Block, Peter (2000) Flawless Consulting a guide to Getting Your Expertise Used (Second Edition), Jossey-Bass

biech, elaine (1999) The Business of Consulting: The Basics and Beyond Jossey-Bass

***Assessments***

Lominger Limited, Inc.
The following items can be ordered through the Lominger website at www.lominger.com

- The Leadership Architect® Portfolio Sort Cards
  These are a result of highly regarded research that focused on what made high achieving executives successful. The research established 67 leadership competencies and 19 career stallers and stoppers that are defined behaviorally on the cards themselves.

- Eichinger, Robert W., Lombardo, Michael (1996) The Career Architect Development Planner

- Eichinger, Robert W., Lombardo, Michael (2000) For Your Improvement, 3rd Edition

- Eichinger, Robert W., Lombardo, Michael (2001) The Leadership Machine

Myers Briggs Type Indicator
Myers Briggs Type Indicator forms and materials can be ordered through Consulting Psychologists Press. Their website is www.cpp-db.com. Their phone number is 1-800-


 

624-1765. To qualify for ordering, one must have completed a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and successfully completed a course in interpretation of psychological tests and measurements or an MBTI workshop given by one of several organizations. For more information, consult Consulting Psychologists Press.

Personal Profile System
Personal Profile System is available through Inscape Publishing Authorized Distributors only. For more information contact Inscape Publishing at www.inscapepublishing.com. Their phone number is 763-765-2222.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)
The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument can also be ordered through Consulting Psychologists Press. Their website is www.cpp-db.com. Their phone number is 1-800-624-1765. No certification is required.

***Article***

Goleman, D. (1998) What Makes a Leader? Harvard Business Review, November-December, 92-102

***Books***

Davis, Brian L., Gebelein, Susan H., Hellervik, Lowell W. Sheard, James L., Skube, Carol J. (1996) Successful Managers Handbook: Development Suggestions for Today's Managers Minneapolis, MN; Personnel Decisions International

Kiersey, David (1998) Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, Intelligence Del Mar, CA; Prometheus Nemesis Book Company

Kroeger, Otto, Thuesen, Janet M. (1988) Type Talk: The 16 Personality Types That Determine How We Live, Love and Work, New York; Delta

Pearman, Roger, Albritton, Sarah C. (1997) I'm Not Crazy, I'm Not Just You. Palo Alto; Davies-Black Publishing

***Book Summary***

The Audio-Tech Business Book Summaries provide both written and audio-tape summaries of recent business books. They can be reached at 1-800-776-1910.

*Fictionalized composite name and situation

 

## *About the Authors*

Marcia Ruben, principal of Ruben Consulting Group, is a certified management consultant who helps individuals, teams, and companies improve performance. Her firm focuses on organizational change management, executive development and coaching. She has worked with leaders of Fortune 500 high technology and financial services companies for over twenty years. She is certified in the Lominger Voices 360-Degree feedback process, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, and also uses a variety of other tools in her practice. Ms. Ruben graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of California, Berkeley, and received her Master's of Science degree in counseling from California State University. She is currently engaged in doctoral studies in Human and Organization Systems at the Fielding Institute.

Jan M. Schmuckler is an organization psychologist and leadership coach who helps executives and managers achieve goals by aligning vision, developing staff, and by individual coaching. Her expertise, drawn from 25 years of experience in the education, business, and non-profit sectors, brings a unique perspective, which enables organizations to meet challenges and compete more effectively. Dr. Schmuckler holds a Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from the Wright Institute, Berkeley, and a B.A. and M.Ed. from Temple University. She is certified in the Myers Briggs Type Indicator and The Manager as well as the Executive 360-degree feedback process of Personnel Decisions, Inc. (PDI).

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