



ONE-ON-ONE CONNECTIONS

Coaching

Session Purpose: Provide a basic coaching framework for developmental conversations. This model is debriefed by Ben-Yehuda (<https://trainingindustry.com/articles/performance-management/the-soon-funnel-4-coaching-questions-the-best-managers-ask/>)

Objectives:

- Guide conversations with team members using a simple SOON Funnel Model
- Utilize a coaching format instead of a directing format to foster growth
- Empower team members to invoke their own wisdom

Session Overview: This conversation provides a selection of questions that will assist a manager to frame a conversation around a coaching framework.

Time Estimate: 15-60 minutes.

Supplies: Predetermined questions applicable to the situation and inspired from examples below.

INTRODUCTION: According to the *International Coaching Federation*, coaching is the action of partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. For supervisors, “clients” are of course, your team members, Research has found that a coaching style in supervision which is predicated on questions, has increased employee engagement, retention, goal attainment, ownership, and enhanced employee well-being. Effective coaching requires the supervisor to be truly curious about the employee’s talents and ideas with the willingness to defer to them. Also critical is active listening, being present with appropriate and affirming body language, trust and rapport-building skills, and the ability to help the team member reframe when necessary.

There are many effective models for coaching employees. The SOON Funnel of coaching stands for “success,” “obstacles,” “options,” and “next steps.” Starting with the particular topic in mind, walking the employee through this questioning framework can result in excellent outcomes.

SUCCESS: In the first step, you are seeking to open up the employee’s mind to what a successful outcome looks like. Ask questions around possibilities and the best results possible.

Sample Success Questions
What do you hope to achieve with this project?
How will you know when you have reached your goal?

What is your definition of “finished”?

OBSTACLES: Uncovering and understanding the overt or hidden challenges that concern the employee and may impede progress is critical to success. By asking questions, we can unearth and prioritize the challenges.

Sample Obstacles Questions

What is preventing your success or achieving this goal?

What is stopping you or holding you back from starting or proceeding?

What concerns you the most about the situation?

OPTIONS: There are likely multiple paths to this goal and as such, it is important to honor the talents of the employee to determine the most effective one for them. Starting with multiple options, leads to a more refined and effective outcome.

Sample Options Questions

What have you already tried and how did it go?

Would you like to brainstorm ideas?

If you could do anything you wanted with this, what would you do? How can we make even part of this happen in our context?

NEXT STEPS: Now with the details in hand, it's time to unpack action. Exploring what it will take to clarify, measure, and track progress is important. Also, helpful is activating their self-efficacy with optimism and understanding what they can control.

Sample Next Steps Questions

What is the first small step? Or an even smaller more doable step?

How are you doing on a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being the best possible? What do you need to do to increase your score by one?

What is the action plan or action you will take?

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