



Team Coaching Competency & Skills

A self assessment for team leaders

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Team Coaching is a process underpinned by a set of competencies and skills rather than a leadership approach or style. This does not mean that personality and style are not important. Your unique personal style will, of course, influence the way each competency or skill is applied or expressed.

A set of team coaching competencies and/or skills is outlined below along with a short description of each. It is likely that you will already possess most if not all of these competences and skills to some degree.

To support your own development planning you may find it useful to reflect on your own team coaching skills and competencies with a view to identifying which of these skills you would like to focus on when building your team coaching capability. To help your thinking, there are some questions associated with each area of skill/competence. Many of these are framed so you can provide a quick yes/no answer to get a general sense of where your strengths may be. When you have more time, you may like to think of these questions more deeply, by reframing them as an open question.

For example:-

Consider the question, **do you** coach your team? [Yes/No].

This question could be reframed as **to what extent** do you coach your team? [to open up a more detailed response].

After considering all the areas of competence and skill outlined in the following pages, select just 3 changes you could make in the short term to enhance your team coaching capability?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Of these three changes, what single change in the way you work with your team could you make immediately? Think about what you will do differently to make a significant impact the next time you meet with your team as a whole?

What will you do to make this change happen?

How will you know that the change you have made has been successful in achieving the desired impact or results?

Asking Powerful Questions

Asking the right question, at the right time in the right way is fundamental to all coaching processes. Do your questions focus attention on team process and performance strategies? Do you ask the right questions during team meetings and events to engage everyone in the team in working effectively together? How do you know if your questions are the 'right' ones?

Listening Skills

After each question is posed, it is important that the response is heard. Listening is, therefore, another core competence for every leader who coaches their team. When you listen to the different voices in your team, do you really hear what people have to say? Do you check that you have fully understood what you have heard? Do you listen to different perspectives? Do you hear the underlying unspoken messages that connect the information you are given? How do you know that you have heard the key messages your team needs you to hear?

Using Silence Effectively

Creating opportunities for others to contribute through the appropriate management of silence is another core competence in team coaching. Do you allow your team to 'pause for thought' when they are discussing issues or making decisions? Do you ensure that every voice is heard? How do you know that everyone who wishes to make a contribution has been able to do so?

Appreciation of the whole team process

In team coaching it is the interactions between team members that provide the input the leader needs to understand the underlying dynamics of the team. Do you make your team process explicit? Do you bring your team together to work on performance strategies? Do you bring your team together to engage in development activities designed to improve the relationships amongst and between team members? Do you bring your team together often enough to ensure that your team is performing at its best? Do you create meaningful 'beginnings, middles and ends' and celebrate every team success in some way? How do you know that the way you work with the whole team process is effective?

Providing feedback

When coaching your team as a single entity, feedback from the leader as coach is framed at the level of the team and intentionally directed for the benefit of the team as a whole. When you coach your team do you ensure that feedback is set at the appropriate level? Do you provide positive performance enhancing feedback to the team as a whole? Do you focus your feedback appropriately on the behavior or process you would like to improve? How do you know that the feedback you provide is both useful and effective?

Working with Stories

In the team context every team member may have a different viewpoint and if left unheard and untended, the wider story can become fragmented into separate 'sub-plots'. Do you look after the story of your team? Do you have an ending in mind? Is your 'team story' positive and motivating for every team member? Does your team story motivate you? Does your team story need a new chapter [or episode]? Does your team need a new story? How will you know when the team story is 'right' story for the team?

Framing and Reframing

Related to the skill of working with stories, are the related skills of being able to frame and reframe information, perspectives and situations. Do you set positive 'frames' for your team? Do you identify negative 'frames' and change them [reframe] so the messages you are giving to your team are positive? How do you know that the frames you use are effective?

Creating and maintaining a strong sense of Team Identity

Team identity is important because it is this sense of the team being an 'entity' in its own right that gives your team members a sense of belonging. In day-to-day conversations around the office, is 'we' used more often than 'me or I'. Do you have a photo of your team which is kept up to date as new members leave or join? Do you feel proud to be a member of your team? Do others feel proud to be part of the team? Do others want to join your team because of your strong reputation for being successful in what you do? What are the key factors that give you/others pride in simply belonging to the team? How can you work with your team either to maintain or add to these factors? How will you know when the Team Identity you have, is 'right' for the team?

Managing and preventing conflict.

Conflict within teams is a common issue brought into individual coaching. When dealing with only one perspective in isolation the scope for resolving conflict in a manner that is good for both the individual and the team as a whole can be especially challenging for the leader as coach. Do you allow your team members to engage in constructive conflict? Do you notice when the early warning signs of serious conflict appear? Do you actively manage your team process to prevent serious conflict from developing? How do you know that your approach to managing and preventing conflict is enabling the team to perform their best work together?