

The Ultimate Guide to Coaching Skills



MBM

Making Business Matter
Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry
80% of our Learners are still using their
new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

▶ **The Ultimate Guide to Coaching Skills**

The development of coaching skills has become a very hot topic for organisations over the last few decades. **Millions of articles have been written about coaching.** In fact, if you Google it, you'll get over 3 billion results. However, despite the wealth of information, the term is still often misunderstood.

In this Ultimate Guide, we aim to explain what coaching is and give you further insight into the key skills required of a great coach.

Whether you're a **leader or manager**, an internal coach or a professional coach, there are several key skills that you need to develop to coach effectively. We will help you understand what they are and provide you with some useful tools and tips. Furthermore, we will also give some examples of the best reading material to help you continue to develop your coaching knowledge.

This Ultimate Guide to Coaching Skills will deliver answers and understanding to the following. You can jump to the sections with the links below:

- [**What Is Coaching?**](#)
- [**Coaching Defined**](#)
- [**Coaching vs. Mentoring**](#)
- [**History of Coaching**](#)
- [**Why Coaching Works: The Science Bit**](#)
- [**A Model for Coaching**](#)
- [**GROW Model Questions**](#)
- [**Other Coaching Models**](#)
- [**7 Coaching Tools to Make the Learnings Stick**](#)
- [**The Top 10 Effective Coaching Skills**](#)
- [**Business Coaching**](#)
- [**Executive Coaching**](#)
- [**Manager as Coach**](#)
- [**Coaching Skills for Managers and Supervisors**](#)
- [**10 Top Tips for Being a Really Great Coach**](#)
- [**Further Reading and Resources**](#)

What Is Coaching?

Put quite simply, coaching is about **helping someone else to learn** – without telling them what to do or what to think. The idea is that the person being coached (the ‘coachee’) comes up with all the ideas and decisions. As a result, coaching helps people reach their full potential, by helping them to unlock their thinking and remove barriers. It’s worth noting that these barriers are often mental, created by the coachee themselves!

So, what exactly is the role of a coach? A coach *facilitates* learning, using their skills to help an individual to improve their own performance.

We mentioned above that the term ‘coaching’ is often misunderstood and it’s easy to see why. When we look at the **Oxford English Dictionary**, several definitions come up, all along the lines of:

- To train or instruct.
- Provide (someone) instructions about what to do or say in a particular situation.
- Give professional advice on how to meet goals.

Because all of the definitions tend to refer to teaching, telling or advising, they imply that the coach as an expert of some sort. However, in our context, this is exactly what coaching isn’t!

Coaching Skills Defined

The following quote is from one of the fathers of modern-day coaching, the late **Sir John Whitmore**, who gave a nice definition of what coaching is:

‘Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.’ – Sir John Whitmore.

Coaching is based on the belief that the coachee always has the answers to their own problems – and that’s why it’s so empowering! Your coachee might, however, need some help to find their answers – and that is where your essential skills come in.

So, in coaching, the responsibility for learning lies with the individual, and not with you, the coach. The great news is that this form of learning is much more **empowering for the individual**, creates ownership, and has better longer-lasting performance results. There is something almost magical about it. It just works.



Coaching vs. Mentoring

It is important to understand the difference between coaching and mentoring as they are two distinct things. However, these terms are often used interchangeably.

In mentoring, the mentor *advises* and shares their own experiences and is usually more experienced and qualified than the learner (or 'mentee'). Furthermore, mentoring is a more long-term, ongoing relationship that takes a broader view of the person, with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare the learner for possible future roles. So, mentoring revolves more around developing the person *professionally*.

In coaching, the coach doesn't advise and all the 'content' is the coachees. For this reason, the coach does not need to have direct experience of the coachee's role. Furthermore, the coaching is usually focused on specific development areas or issues. Finally, the agenda is very much focused on achieving *goals*.

There are, of course, other learning methods in addition to coaching and mentoring. The table below shows the difference in ethos between the various methods that help people learn and develop:

Different Learning and Development Methods

Teacher	 <p>"I have knowledge I can give you"</p>
Trainer	 <p>"I know something you can learn"</p>
Mentor	 <p>"I can share my experiences from which you can benefit"</p>
Coach	 <p>"I can help you benefit from what you already know"</p>
Counsellor	 <p>"I can help you deal with your feelings"</p>

 **Making Business Matter**
Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry
80% of our Learners are still using their new skills 5 months later - we guarantee it!

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

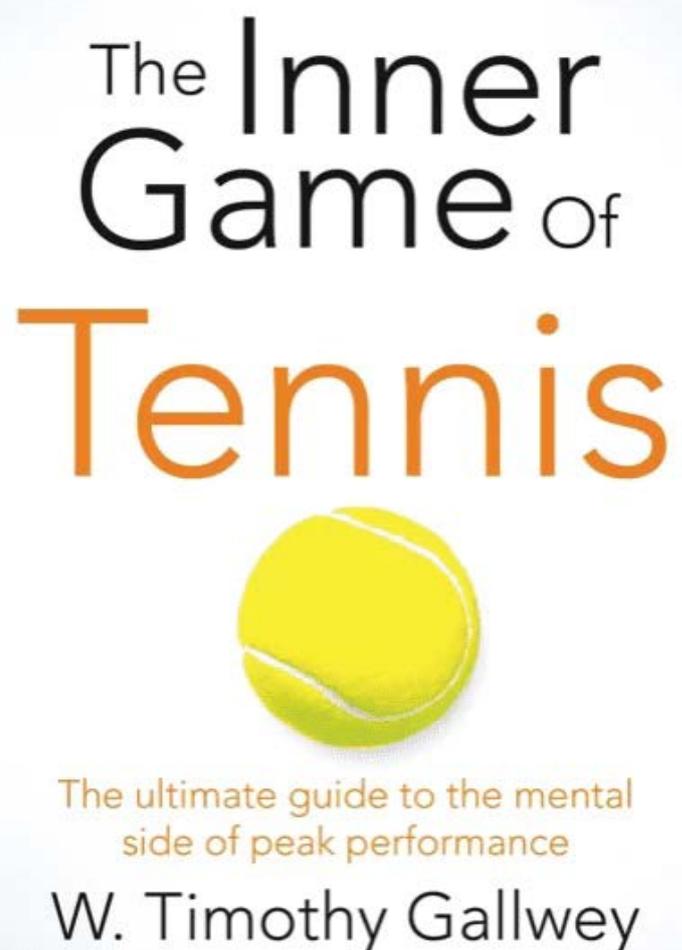
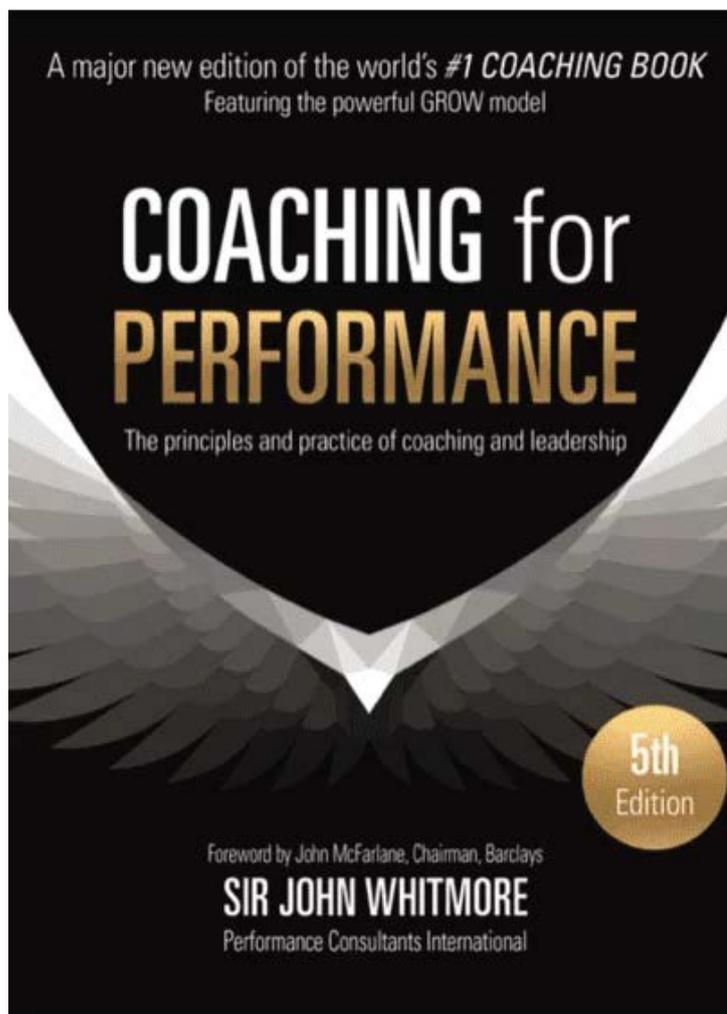
History of Coaching

Coaching has a long history dating right back to Socrates. **The Socratic method** took the premise that people learn best when they have some ownership of a situation and take some form of personal responsibility for the outcome. Consequently, the process favoured dialogue between individuals to promote critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presumptions.

In modern times, coaching has played a critical role in sports such as tennis, cycling and football. But it was **Tim Gallwey** and **Sir John Whitmore** who took the movement of coaching from the sporting arena into the business world.

In the early 1970s, Tim Gallwey, who was coaching tennis students, began to notice that what was going on in the mind of his students was hindering learning. He started experimenting with ways of helping players learn by developing their awareness – and not by specific instruction. He gave it the term '**The Inner Game**' and published his initial findings in **The Inner Game of Tennis** in 1974.

Later that decade, Sir John Whitmore, an ex-racing driver who had become interested in the field of psychology, trained with Gallwey and realised that these principles could be applied to business. He continued his research, and in 1992 published the book *Coaching for Performance*. The principles of his book are still used extensively in businesses today.



Why Coaching Works: The Science Bit of Coaching Skills

There has been much research in recent decades into how the human brain works. Consequently, we are better able to understand the science behind **why coaching in the workplace really works** and helps **learning stick!**

Brain Maps, Learning and Habits

Our brains basically function by making connections and associations. Brains like to link what is happening now with what has happened in the past; we create a kind of mental 'map' of connections. We actually make over 1 million new connections every second!

When we first come across something, it takes us a while to get to grips with it. So if we are learning a new skill, it might take minutes, days or even months, depending on the complexity of what we are learning. Our brains gradually create a 'map' and this takes a lot of energy. But once the map is created, our brains can focus on other things. We call this process **forming a habit. Habits are run by the more energy-efficient parts of our brain.** Quite simply, our brains operate by forming habits.

Your Amazing Brain

The other thing we need to understand when we are talking about coaching and how brains learn is the concept of **'neuroplasticity'**. In the book **'The Brain that Changes Itself'**, Norman Doidge points out that there is real evidence that we can 'rewire our brains with our thoughts'. Supporting this is **Hebbian theory**, developed by **Donald Hebb** back in the late 1940s. Hebb's theory of neuroscience can be summarised as: 'neurons that fire together wire together'. It posits that when we learn new things, the nerve cells within the brain begin to change to fit the required processes. Therefore, the more you focus on something, the more you analyse a problem, the deeper the connection you create in your brain.

This occurs through a physical process in the brain called **'myelination'**: the more a pathway is used, the stronger it becomes. When we repeat an action, myelin, a fatty covering, coats the neural pathway, making connections stronger and more secure.

This explains why it is hard to change habits but easier to create **new ways of working**. Very simply, it's because our brains prefer to go with the neural pathways that are already developed.

Coaching vs. Telling

The above theory explains why coaching works much better than telling in the world of learning. When we are told something, we don't create a new mental map. When we gain insight from thinking about something in-depth, we do. It's as simple as that. Consequently, providing insight through coaching (**i.e. asking questions**) is much more brain-friendly than telling someone the answer. To take any kind of action, we have to work things out for ourselves.

Furthermore, an additional issue with telling is that it is more likely to set up a 'threat response', as the individual's predictions and connections are different to what was expected. This difference creates an 'error message' and a sense of pain in the brain. This, in turn, moves people away from the new information and increases the likelihood of resistance.

Therefore, if we tell rather than coach, we could be wasting our own energy and actually making it more difficult for our coachee to get to grips with a new idea. The coach's job is to create insight, not to give advice. However, from **testimonies** from most trainee coaches, in practice, this is easier said than done!

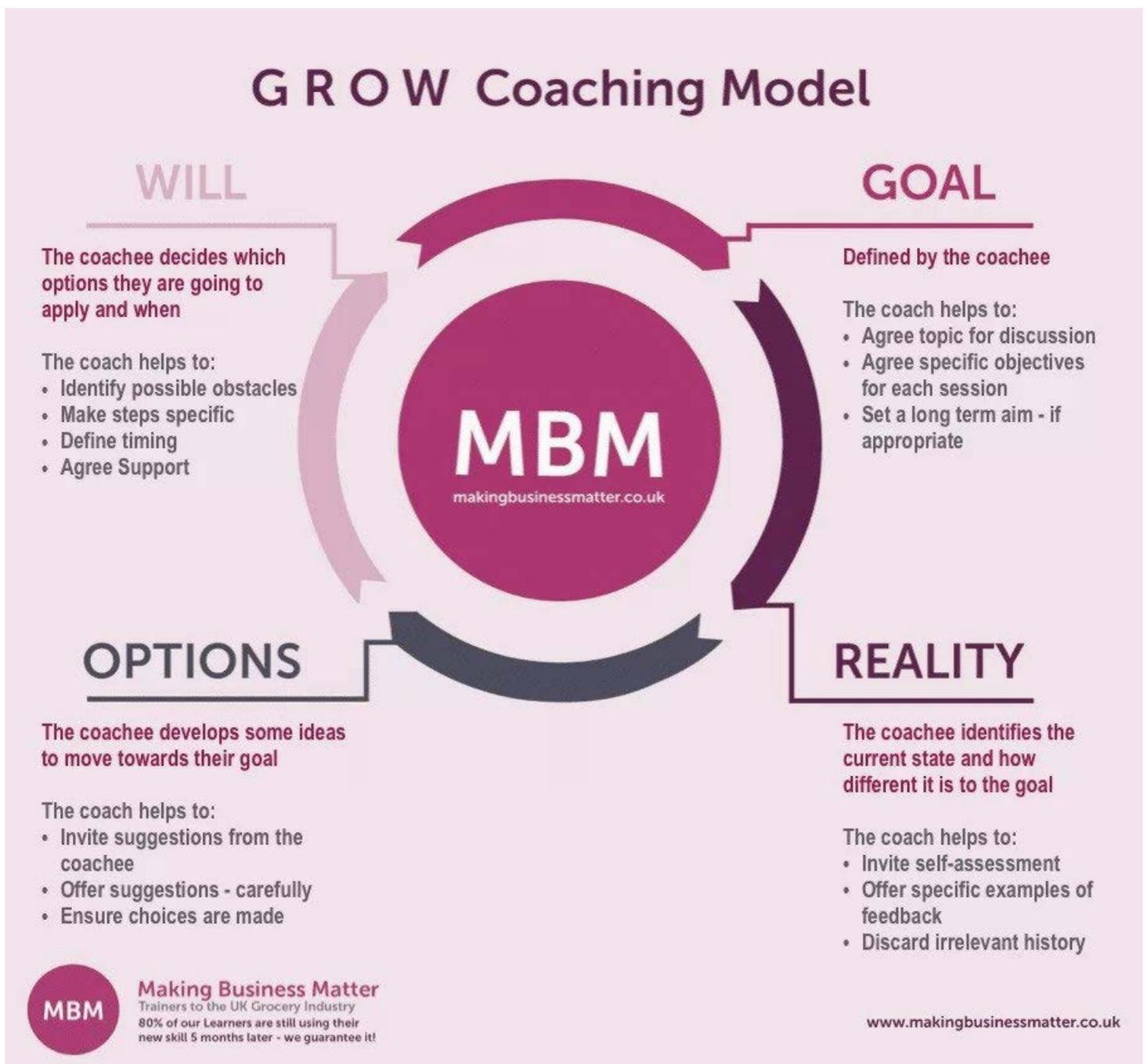
[Return to the top](#)

▀ A Model for Coaching

▀ The GROW Model for Improving Coaching Skills

Any article on coaching would not be complete without reference to the most famous coaching model, the GROW model. The model was originally developed in the 1980s by business coaches **Graham Alexander**, **Alan Fine**, and **Sir John Whitmore**. It quickly became the go-to tool for leadership coaching, upon the publication of *Coaching for Performance* by Sir John Whitmore in 1992.

It consists of four stages, based on each letter of the word, GROW:



The idea is to move through the model, from G-R-O-W, asking the coachee different types of questions at each stage in order to help the individual move closer toward their goal.

How Does it Work?

The coachee starts at ‘**Goal**’ (**G**), where they define their initial outcome(s) and goals with the aid of coach questioning. The next stage ‘**Reality**’ (**R**), requires the coachee to explore and describe their current state. The coach helps by asking questions that encourage self-assessment and evaluation. The following stage ‘**Options**’ (**O**), explores how the coachee can reach their goal, examining all possible options. The coach invites suggestions, and use supporting tools such as **mind maps** to make sure all options (regardless of how abstract) are fully explored. The coach may offer suggestions, however carefully and sparingly, and only once the coachee has explored their own options/suggestions first. In the last stage ‘**Will**’ (**W**), sometimes called ‘*Way Forward*’ or ‘*Wrap Up*’, the coachee is encouraged to commit to an option or specific action with the coach helping to support and motivate.

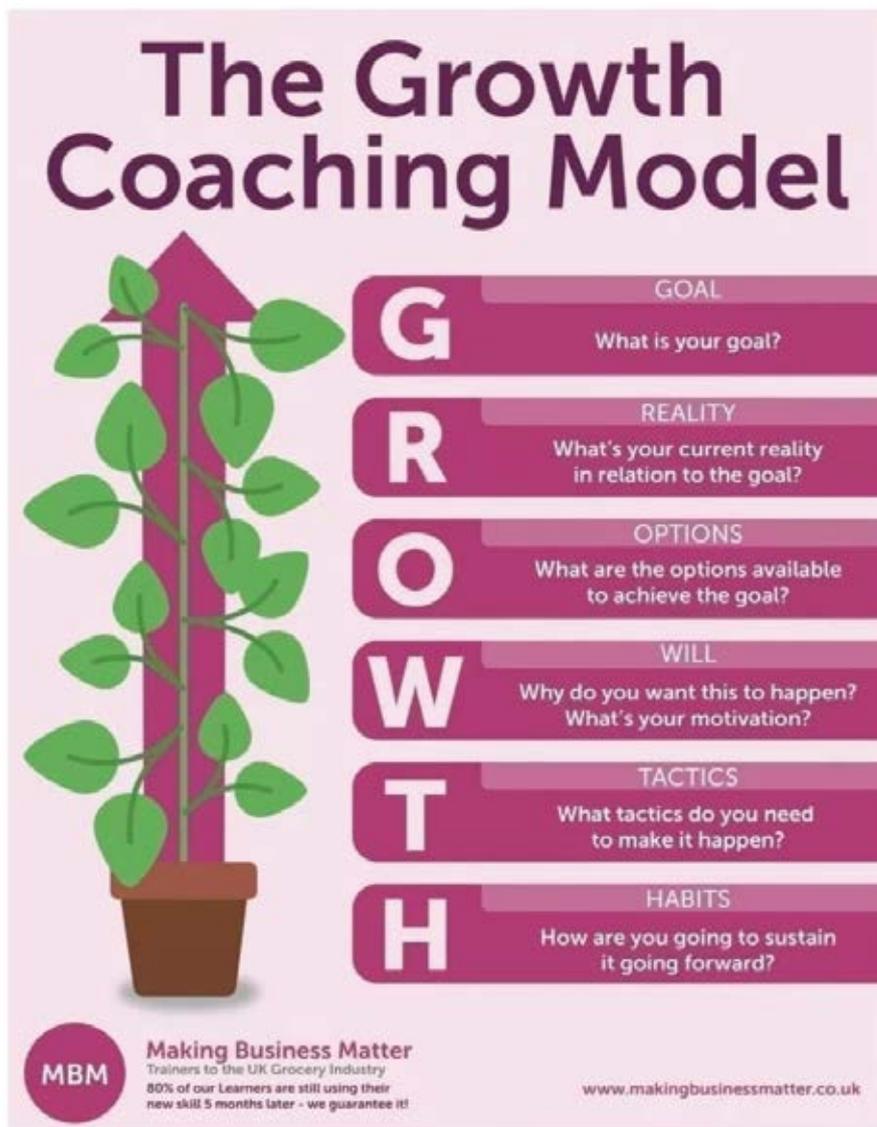
Awareness and Responsibility

Sir John Whitmore advocated that coaching was all about developing or raising two things in the coachee, their level of awareness and their level of responsibility.

‘If I give you my advice and it fails, you will blame me. I have traded my advice for your responsibility and that is seldom a good deal.’ – Sir John Whitmore.

A Different Perspective: The Growth Model

The image, below, provides a different way to think about the GROW model, by extending it to include tactics and habits:



► GROW Model Questions to Enhance Your Coaching Skills

In the image below, we have provided some examples of effective questions to use at each stage of the GROW model:

GROW Coaching Model: 33 Powerful Questions

Useful Questions for Goal Setting

What would you like to get out of this session?
 What would be the best outcome for you from this session?
 What is the topic or issue on which you would like to work?
 In the long term, what is your goal (related to the issue/
 topic)?
 What would be useful intermediate steps to identify?

Useful Questions for Reality

What is the present situation, in more detail?
 What is your concern about it? How great is your concern?
 How much control do you have over the outcome?
 Does this affect anyone apart from you? Who?
 What actions have you taken so far?
 What were the effects of this?
 What stopped you from going further with this?
 What barriers will need to be overcome?
 What really is the issue here? What's the bottom line?

Useful Options Questions

What are the different ways you could approach this?
 What would you do if...?
 What would you do if you could start with a blank sheet of paper?
 What else?
 What are the advantages and disadvantages of...?
 Which of these solutions appeals to you most?
 Which would give you the best result?

Useful Will Questions

What are you going to do? (Not - what could you do? That is a
 different question).
 Which option(s) are you going to select?
 When are you going to do it?
 Will this option meet your goal?
 What are your success criteria for this option?
 What obstacles might you meet?
 Who needs to know about this?
 What support do you need? From whom?
 How and when will you get that support?
 What other considerations do you have?
 On a scale of 1-10, how certain are you that you will carry out the
 actions agreed?
 What would make it a 10?



Making Business Matter
Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry
 80% of our Learners are still using their
 new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

► Improve Your Coaching With Our Specially Adapted GROW Model Coaching Cards

Whether you are managing people, beginning your coaching journey at work, or are a qualified coach, these cards provide an easily accessible way of using the GROW coaching model as a framework to get results. **Only £5.**

Also, why don't you check out our [Online Free Tools for each of the Coaching Cards!](#)

Click the image below to learn more:





Making Business Matter
Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry
 80% of our Learners are still using their
 new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

Other Coaching Models to be Used with Your Coaching Skills

The following are examples of two models that have looked to extend and develop the GROW Model. Interestingly, they have particular relevance for managers looking to develop their skills as a coach.

OSCAR Coaching Model

An interesting alternative to GROW is the OSCAR Coaching Model, a further way to ensure you have solution based coaching. The OSCAR Coaching Model was developed by Andrew Gilbert & Karen Whittleworth in 2002. The model builds on the GROW model and is particularly useful for managers seeking to adopt a coaching style. It takes the following structure:

- **Outcome** – help coachee (or team member) to clarify their outcomes.
- **Situation** – establish where the coachee is now.
- **Choices and Consequences** – help the coachee generate as many choices as possible and highlight consequences of each potential choice.
- **Actions** – help the coachee establish their next steps, and encourage responsibility for their action plan.
- **Review** – create an ongoing dialogue of review and evaluation with coachee continuously checking that they are on course.

OSKAR Coaching Model

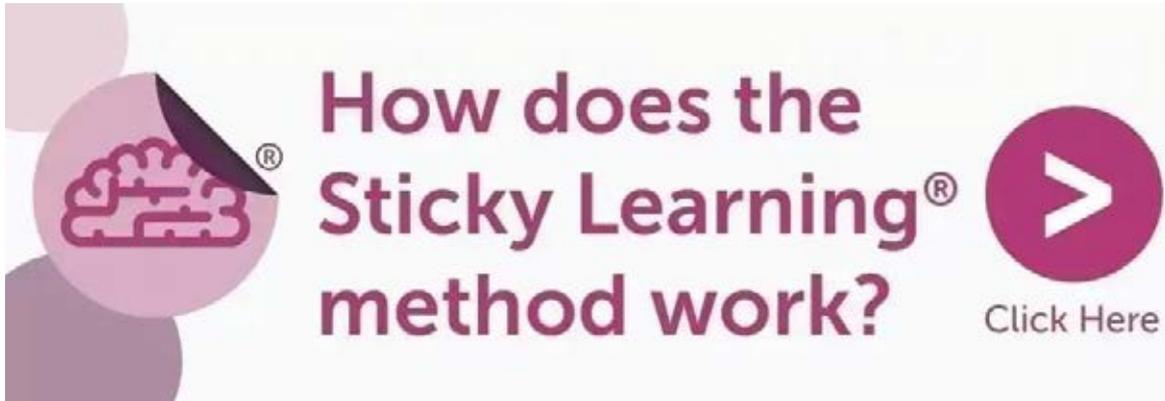
Similar to OSCAR, the OSKAR Coaching Model was developed by Mark McKergow and Paul Z Jackson in the early 2000s.

- **Outcome** – help coachee establish outcome(s) and objectives.
- **Scaling** – utilise a scale from 1-10 to establish and quantify how far the coachee is from where they want to be (desired outcome).
- **Know-how** – help the coachee explore what they need to achieve their desired outcome (and move along the scale), exploring the key skills, knowledge, **qualifications**, and attributes that are required.
- **Affirm + Action** – establish what is currently working well, and explore actions needed to improve the score.
- **Review** – discuss actions taken, decide what has improved and what the coachee needs to do next to continue the improvement.

You can find some examples of OSCAR/OSKAR Coaching Model questions in our **GROW Model Coaching Effective Questions** article.

Excuse the Interruption, but Here's a Little Bit About Us...

We are the soft skills training provider to the UK Grocery Industry, helping Suppliers to win more business. They choose us because of our money-back guarantee, our relevant experience, and because we make their learning stick.



Our unique training method, Sticky Learning®, ensures that your Learners are still using their new skill 5 months later and this is supported by a **money-back guarantee**.

[Return to the top](#)

7 Coaching Skills' Tools to Make the Learnings Stick

In the infographic below you can find seven useful tools and theories we draw upon in our **Executive Coaching** course:



Learning Styles

At MBM we know that everyone is different. As such, we all learn in different ways. By understanding the **different styles of learning** we can tailor our approach to the individual needs of the coachee. This, in turn, helps the coachee learn quicker and easier; thus, maximising the short and long-term benefits of the coaching course.

Personal Development Plan

Continuous personal development is best achieved with a plan of action detailing your aspirations across many areas. Personal Development Plans (PDPs), sometimes called Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are an important part of your personal and professional development. Having a visual plan of where you are now, where you see yourself in the future, and what steps you need to make it happen is an excellent starting place. You can find some **Personal Development Plan Examples** in our **blog** post. We've also compiled a list of some of the **best learning videos** and a useful **list of TED Talks** on the subject too.

GROW Model

GROW is the go-to model for coaching, **you can find our history and overview earlier in this article.**

Competency Frameworks

Competency Frameworks and Skills Scorecards comprise a set of attributes and behaviours written by an employer that broadly defines what the company expects from a person in any role or de-compartmentalisation of that role, thus benchmarking it. Frameworks are often used for development discussions, as a recruitment tool and as a performance management aid. To learn more, take a look at our blog post about **Competency Frameworks** and download a free example.

Drivers

Drivers are unconscious internal pressures that make us do things certain ways. They can sometimes (not always) be inappropriate or unhelpful in obtaining results, and tend to satisfy inner needs rather than actual events. Drivers are good for identifying external signs that reflect internal processes. We use a **Drivers Questionnaire** to help our coachees understand what drives them.

Drivers	
The "Do" Messages of How to Please Mum and Dad	
	<p>Be Perfect: "You're only OK if you get everything right."</p> <p>Allowers: "It's OK to be yourself."</p>
	<p>Please Others: "You're only OK if you please other people."</p> <p>Allowers: "It's OK to consider and please yourself."</p>
	<p>Be Strong: "You're only OK if you hide your feelings and wants from people."</p> <p>Allowers: "It's OK to be open and to take care of your own needs."</p>
	<p>Try Hard: "You're only OK if you keep trying hard to do things."</p> <p>Allowers: "It's OK to do it"</p>
	<p>Hurry Up: "You're only OK if you do everything right now."</p> <p>Allowers: "It's OK to take your time"</p>

Conflict Mode Instrument

Conflict is a natural part of how we interact with others. It is not as negative as the connotation suggests, in fact, it can be beneficial in the workplace. If managed correctly, it can improve workplace cohesion and lead to greater goal clarity. The **Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)** helps measure how a person behaves when presented with a conflict situation. It analyses the dimensions, assertiveness and cooperativeness. **Contact us** to receive a copy of the tool we use to help the coachee identify and assess their **conflict resolution skills**.

HBDI®

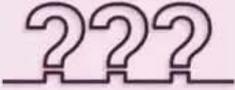
Founded by Willian 'Ned' Herrmann, HBDI® (Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument) is a psychometric assessment tool that identifies an individual's thought preferences. By understanding your thought preferences, you can consequently achieve a greater appreciation for how you learn, which in turn, helps decision making, problem-solving, and communication.

This excellent article by Ann Herrmann-Nehdi explores how essential understanding how you think can be to the coaching process, ensuring you 'set up your coaching with your brain in mind'.

See our **Ultimate Guide to HBDI®** to learn more.

[Return to the top](#)

The Top 10 Effective Coaching Skills

1.  Listening	2.  Questioning	3.  Building Rapport	4.  Empathising	5.  Summarising & Reflecting
6.  Unlocking Limiting Beliefs	7.  Staying Focused	8.  Being Non-Judgemental and Open-Minded	9.  Giving Constructive Feedback	10.  Resisting Temptation to Tell



Making Business Matter
Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry
80% of our Learners are still using their new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

The Top 10 Effective Coaching Skills

Coaching is about providing the right balance of two things to your coachee: **support** and **challenge**. There are several essential skills a good coach needs in order to do this:

1. Coaching Skills: Listening

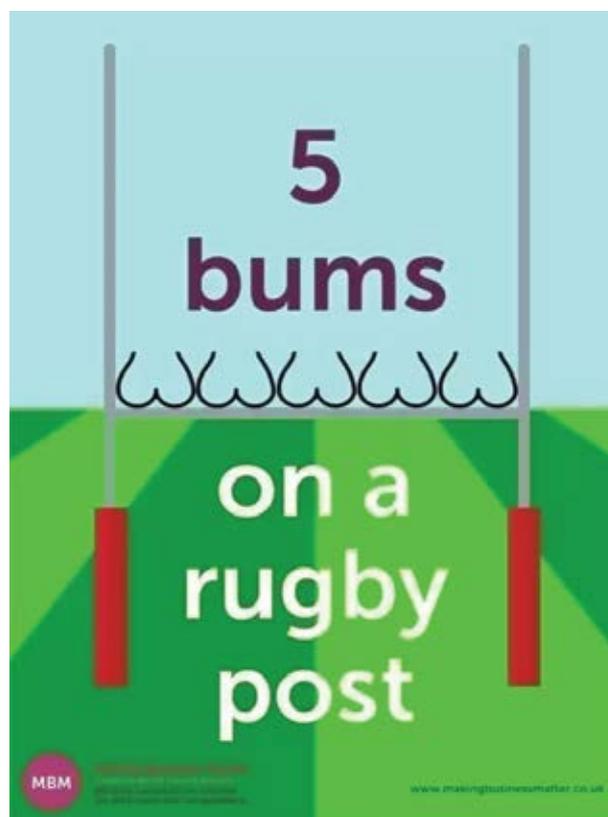
This is so important, we put it at the top of the list. You can't be a good coach unless you really, really listen. Note, it doesn't just mean listening to what is being *said*. It also means listening to what is *not* being said. This is where you can really help your coachee – by asking insightful questions about what you notice might be going on for them.

The **GROW model** identifies four levels of listening skills:

- **Attentive listening** – giving someone full attention.
- **Accurate listening** – understanding the issue at hand fully.
- **Emphatic listening** – showing appreciation of the other person's feelings on the issue at hand. Putting yourself in their shoes.
- **Generative listening** – fully understanding the issue at hand, which allows you to ask enlightening and insightful questions.

2. Coaching Skills: Questioning

Asking questions is at the heart of great coaching. They are the tools of your trade. There are so many different types of questions that can be used. Some are more helpful than others. The best questions are ones that give insight into the person you are coaching. The best way to remind yourself of open questions is '5 Bums on a Rugby Post'. This will help you to remember to use open questions by starting a question with either: **what, where, when, who, why, and also how (the 'H' is the Rugby post!)**.



In a 'pure' coaching scenario, only open questions are used, so that the agenda is fully under the control of the coachee. However, in practice, it's always good to use closed questions to clarify things or probing questions to dig a bit deeper.

Over time you will develop a set of great coaching questions that work for you. Here are a few of our favourites:

- What would the wisest person you know advise you to do right now?
- What would be a crazy/ radical/ brave thing to do?
- If you could wave a magic wand, what would be happening differently?
- What's stopping you?
- What's really going on for you?
- What else? (ask this several times over, you'll always get more ideas)
- What is the best question I could ask you now?
- Is there anything you believe about yourself that might be holding you back?
- What have you learnt/ are you learning about yourself through this process?
- What's the best/ worst thing that could happen?

Our best tip for asking great questions? Go with your own curiosity.

3. Coaching Skills: Building Rapport

This is chronologically the first skill you need to use as a coach as it is the gateway to **trust**. The coaching process will not work unless you create a good rapport from the beginning, and it should be maintained throughout the coaching relationship. Rapport is what allows coachees to feel relaxed with their coach and open up – so that personal barriers and fears can be identified. It also allows the coach to ask harder and more challenging questions.

Some of the key things that emerge when building rapport are: empathising (see below), the use of body language, the use of voice and language and the importance of being warm and personable. It's easier, for example, to create rapport with someone who provides eye contact and smiles. It's better to sit at right angles with your coachee than opposite them. You can also gently match and mirror their body language.

It's also worth noting that coaching is a bit like dating. There are just some people that you won't click with. If you feel like you can't develop a rapport together, it's better to acknowledge this early and find the coachee an alternative coach. Rather than try and keep the coaching relationship going when the coachee is unlikely to open up and trust you.

Successful coaching is a direct result of rapport. For effective coaching, you can make use of the **Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI®)** to accurately identify the true capacity of the people you coach.

4. Coaching Skills: Empathising

Empathy can be defined as our ability to put ourselves in others' shoes and appreciate how they are likely to be feeling or thinking in a given situation. What might it feel like to be them?

Daniel Goleman, who coined the concept of '**Emotional Intelligence**' stated that 'empathy is the most important people skill'. He says that empathy is an important **communication skill**, but it can be easily forgotten because we focus on what should be *done* in a situation, rather than on how the other person *feels*.

The effect of empathy is to help you to understand the other person's needs and to show an understanding of their views and feelings. This is really important when creating trust and rapport in the coaching relationship.

It's also worth remembering that empathy is different from sympathy. When we empathise we become one with that person's distress. You put yourself in their shoes and imagine what they are going through. You don't necessarily share their feelings, however, but you understand it from their perspective. In contrast, sympathy is feeling compassion or sorrow for the hardships that another person is experiencing.

5. Coaching Skills: Summarising and Reflecting

The advanced listening skills of summarising and reflecting help you guide your coachee to allow them to make sense of what they are grappling with.

Summarising means repeating what the coachee has said, taking the main points of the received message and reiterating them. Done in a logical and clear way, it gives the coachee a chance to correct something if necessary. Summarising is useful as it keeps the coachee focussed on the issue and their thinking progress so far.

Reflecting means closely repeating or paraphrasing what the coachee has said to show comprehension. Reflection is a powerful skill that can reinforce the thoughts of the coachee. It allows the coachee to step back and look at an issue objectively.

For further research and information on executive coaching, we suggest taking a look at Diane Coutu and Carol Kauffman's excellent article for Harvard Business Review: '**What Can Coaches Do for You?**'.

6. Coaching Skills: Unlocking Limiting Beliefs

This one is about using your intuition and then asking challenging questions. Underneath the initial symptom or issue, there is usually something deeper.

Beliefs are '*a principle accepted as true or real without proof*'. Beliefs are strange things. We all have them and often don't ever question them. We hold them as true even if we have no evidence to support them

Our beliefs have a major impact on our behaviour. Some beliefs can help us become successful; others can hold us back, these are known as 'limiting beliefs'. Limiting beliefs can get people stuck.

Helping your coachee identify and challenge underlying limiting beliefs can, consequently, be one of the most powerful parts of the coaching process and can be an enlightening and even emotional process for the coachee. The role of a coach is to get people to question their inner beliefs. In order for a coach to do this, there has to be a foundation of **trust and rapport**.

7. Coaching Skills: Staying Focused

It's really important as a coach to make sure that the coaching session stays on track and does not degenerate into a general discussion or chat. It's also important to ensure the coachee doesn't digress too much or get caught up in too much detail.

Staying focused can involve summarising and guiding the flow of the conversation back to a framework such as the **GROW model**, using further questioning. It can also mean interjecting from time to time to pull things back on track.

8. Coaching Skills: Being Non-Judgemental and Open-Minded

This is a critical skill which is the foundation of good coaching. As a coach, it's simple: we don't get to judge another human being. Being a great coach is about being curious and having an open and inquisitive mind. This will allow you to focus on doing the best for your coachee by reflecting, providing feedback and asking great questions.

Being open-minded means understanding that other **people have different points of view**, and that in their view of the world, they may be right.

9. Coaching Skills: Giving Constructive Feedback

One of the most useful things for your coachee can be you pointing out to them things you are noticing about them, for instance, their behaviour, their reactions to questions, and their facial expressions. Sometimes people don't see stuff about themselves and often others won't be brave enough to tell them. As a coach, you have a privileged position of trust where you can point these things out to them, so it is well received and helps them with their issues. The picture below highlights some of the important areas to cover when giving great feedback:



There is an art to giving supportive feedback so that it lands well. Not being judgemental (see Skill 8 above) is key. Furthermore, make sure your feedback is constructive, specific and observed, 'here's something I'm noticing' is a good way to start.

10. Coaching Skills: Resisting Temptation to Tell

Not telling your coachee what you think the answers are or giving advice. **We have talked about this a lot in this article**, but it's so important we thought we'd mention it again! It is hard to master so we've classed it as a skill.

[Return to the top](#)

Business Coaching

When individuals improve, **the entire team performs better**, and that makes coaching a vital component in organisations. This has become especially relevant in the competitive, high-speed world we live in today. Coaching is now recognised as one of the most powerful interventions for **accelerating learning** and driving organisational performance, as such many organisations are investing in it.

Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is where an employee (usually a leader, manager or someone identified as having potential) receives one-to-one coaching sessions to support their **leadership skills training** and to further develop and deal with any individual challenges.

Many companies choose to have external coaches run these sessions. Having an impartial coach can help leaders to open up and deal with difficult situations faster. Some companies, however, use internal coaches. These are often people in an existing line role who add coaching as an extra discipline to their role; other organisations have a dedicated internal coaching team.

Personal **coaching plans** for people receiving coaching sessions in organisations will typically run for up to 6-12 months. They will encompass the setting of, and achievement of, **a set goal or goals**. It might help, such as, to perceive those you coach as athletes who want to become better in their game. In the workplace scenario, the goal is to help employees refine their skills, based on the institution's **competency framework**. Without a doubt, the greatest reason companies use coaches is to increase **emotional intelligence** in senior leaders and high potential staff. To learn more about *this*, see our *Leadership Coaching* section in our **Ultimate Guide to Leadership Skills**.

For further research and information on executive coaching, we suggest taking a look at Diane Coutu and Carol Kauffman's excellent article for Harvard Business Review: **'What Can Coaches Do for You?'**.

Manager as Coach

It has been recognised in recent decades that managers can get the best out of people by using a coaching, rather than the 'telling' approach.

Google's Project Oxygen proved categorically the positive impact that a coaching approach can make to staff motivation and performance. In a multiyear research project, they used rigorous data analytics to demonstrate the link between management behaviour and positive people results, proving to its staff once and for all that **'management mattered'**.

In fact not only did they prove that management mattered; **Google went on to identify eight key behaviours** demonstrated by the company's most effective managers. Moreover, being a **good coach** was cited as the very first attribute:

What Google's Best Managers Do...

A good manager:

1. Is a good coach.
2. Empowers the team and does not micromanage.
3. Expresses interest in and concern for team members' success and personal well-being
4. Is productive and results-oriented.
5. Is a good communicator - listens and shares information.
6. Helps with career development.
7. Has a clear vision and strategy for the team.
8. Has key technical skills that help them advise the team.

MBM Making Business Matter
Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry
80% of our Learners are still using their new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

This recognition of the power of managers as coaches has led to many companies evolving their management skills development strategies and equip their managers with the skills to coach.

Coaching Skills for Managers and Supervisors

So, if you're a manager looking to coach your team, where do you start building your skills?

Well, let's look at a typical conversation between a manager and someone in their team:

Individual: *'I've got a problem'*

Manager Response 1: *'Yes and what are you going to do about it?'*

Now let's look at a different approach:

Individual: *'I've got a problem'*

Manager Response 2: *'What have you tried so far?'*

The second response is much better because it assumes the manager believes they have the capacity to solve the problem. It assumes that the individual has done something already and encourages them in the future to get into the habit of doing something before they bring it to their manager. Consequently, this is a far more positive and empowering approach.

This coaching approach moves away from a culture where the expectation is that managers have 'all the answers' – and instead moves towards one where managers *coach* the answers out of their teams.

► Moving Away from the Manager with All the Answers

As a manager, adapting to a coaching style of management allows you to step up and focus on the things you want to focus on. Consequently, it prevents you from being dragged into solving problems that your team members are likely capable of solving for themselves. With a coaching approach, you are empowering and stretching your people, helping them to learn and to solve their own problems. The great news is that, like any **habit**, once you build this culture **it sticks**, and it's contagious.

Of course, telling people is quicker – and in today's fast-paced environment, it's hard to resist the temptation to tell someone the answer and get the issue off your desk when you're busy. It's worth remembering when this temptation arises that the advantages always outweigh the disadvantages in the **longer term**.

If you tell your team what to do, they won't buy-in to your decision, they won't learn, and they'll be less committed, take less responsibility and be less creative. Inevitably, they'll be back, and you will need to tell them an answer again. Yes, coaching takes time, but the *long-term* benefits are vast. People take responsibility, they learn, they create solutions that stick and commit to those solutions. They get used to coming up with ideas for themselves. Furthermore, coaching ignites creativity and innovation.

Ultimately, in the long-term, coaching **saves time**.

[Return to the top](#)

► 10 Top Tips for Being a Really Great Coach

► 1. Never Skimp on Building Rapport

The more you can invest in it early on, the better it will serve you.

► 2. Establish Goals

If your coachee hasn't got goals, you're not coaching them. Don't move forward with any more questions until the goal is clear. Sometimes coachees begin with clear goals. For others, however, the biggest challenge for them is to define what they want in the first place. You may need to spend some time helping them do just that!

► 3. Use Open Questions

Try to stick to **open questions instead of closed questions**. Open questions get people thinking. Closed questions stop people from having to think. Try to ask a few closed questions as possible.

► 4. Be Content Free

Remember that the best coaching questions bring insight to the *other person*, not to you! Try to focus on being 'content free' when you are coaching; you don't need to be clear about all the details – only they do.

► 5. Trust Your Intuition

All coaches worry about what questions to ask next. Just use your intuition and go with your curiosity. Trust yourself to come up with the questions and develop your own questioning style.

6. Don't Ask 'Why?'

Avoid using the question 'Why?'. It flips us back to our childhood. You can, however, replace it with 'What?' which opens up people's intuition.

7. Highlight Interesting Behaviour(s) or Language

If you are noticing something that you find interesting in your coachee's behaviour or language, maybe something that stands out or raises questions for you, call it out. This kind of feedback can be very powerful.

8. Stay on Track

Remember, in a coaching session, the 'meter is running'. Coaching is not having a chat. Stay focused and make every moment count!

9. Dig Deeper

The issue that first presents is never the real issue. When you can dig deep and help your coachee figure out what the real issue is (usually an unchallenged **limiting belief**), you have reached the real gold dust of coaching.

10. Invest in Continuous Development

Becoming a great coach is a journey, not a destination. You can always keep developing your skills.

Final Thoughts

Understanding what coaching really is (and what it isn't), and how and why it works in the first place is critical to developing your effective coaching skills. Being a coach is about being a facilitator of someone else's learning; it's not about telling them, advising them or doing it for them. When done well, it's one of the most empowering and **powerful learning methodologies** open to businesses and organisations.

One-half of your job as a coach is listening and understanding the **driving force** behind those you coach – what's really going on for them. The other half is working with the individual to help them identify ways to improve their own performance so that they can unleash their full potential.

The hardest bit about coaching? Not telling the coachee what you think they should do or giving them advice. It sounds easier than it is. It's a lot harder than you think. Those of you who have already started your coaching journey will already know this.

Good luck with developing your skills as a coach, and if you need any help, we're here (and, of course, we're really listening).

Coaching Skills Training

Click here to learn more about our classroom-based Coaching Skills Training or **contact us** or fill out the form below for further information.

To discuss how one of our UK Grocery Executive Coaches can help you to achieve more, please **contact us**. Our coaches are **from your industry** and can provide coaching on **any one of our products**, from **Negotiation Skills** to **Category Management** to **Time Management** and **Presentation Skills**, using the **GROW Model**. Find out how we can help you be the very best version of yourself with **Executive Coaching**.



MBM Masterclasses

Take that first confident step towards a better team.

Each Masterclass is a 1/2 day, for up to 12 people and only costs

£750+vat
(£62.50 per person).

To achieve this cost we require an hour with a decision maker to discuss training.

Find out more
click here.



Making Business Matter
Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry
80% of our Learners are still using their
new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

[Return to the top](#)

Further Reading and Resources

You can find further insight, detailed definitions and clarification of all the key Coaching terms mentioned in this guide in our [Glossary of Terms](#).

Quotes

*‘Coaching is centred on unlocking a person’s potential to maximise his or her own performance...improving the individual with regard to performance and the development of skills.’ – **Timothy Gallwey***

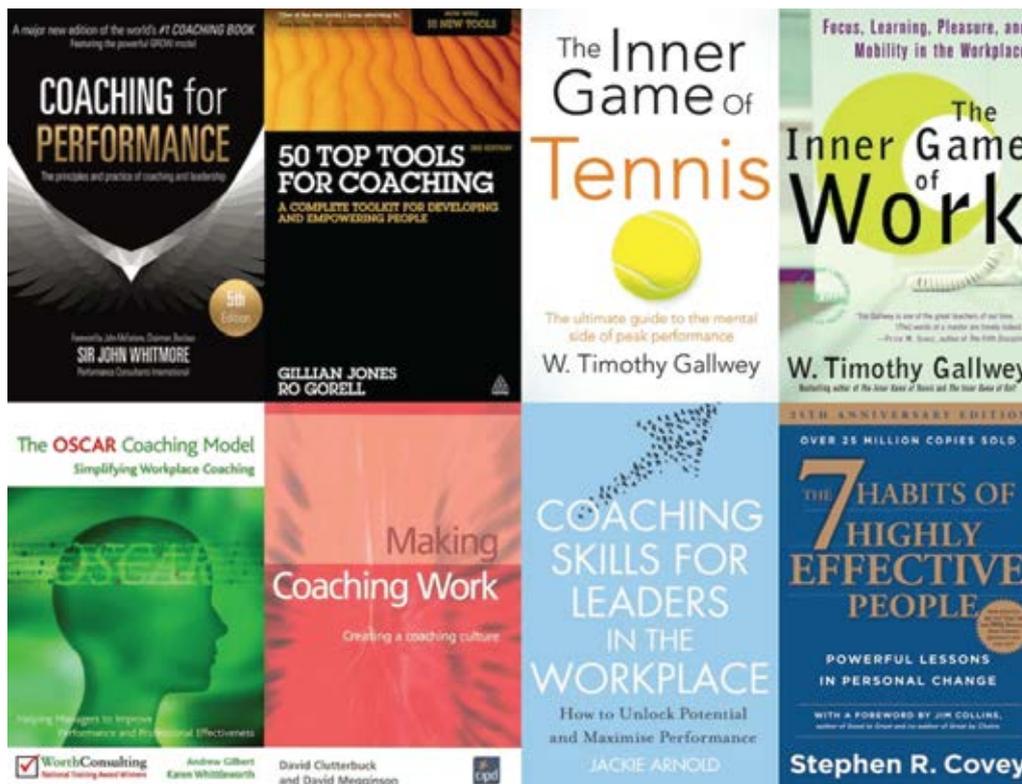
*‘Many discussions are unclear when the intention is vague or hidden. People speak around and around an issue instead of coming to the point and stating their intention.’ – **Jackie Arnold***

*‘Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve.’ – **Eric Parsloe***

*‘For the teacher or coach, the question has to be how to give instructions in such a way as to help the natural learning process of the student and not interfere with it.’ – **Timothy Gallwey***

*‘I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think.’ – **Socrates***

Books



The following books are some of our favourites on coaching. They will help you further your knowledge and understanding of coaching and are full of lots of useful tools, tips and ideas that you can put into practice. Additionally, you can find more of our recommended reading for self-improvement in our **Best Self Help Books** post on our **blog**.

1. **Coaching for Performance: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership** by Sir John Whitmore. This is where business coaching really took off and is as good and relevant today as it was when it was first written.
2. **50 Top Tools for Coaching: A Complete Toolkit for Developing and Empowering People** by Gillian Jones & RO Gorell. A very practical book of coaching tools suitable various different coaching scenarios.
3. **The Inner Game of Tennis: The Ultimate Guide to the Mental Side of Peak Performance** by Timothy Gallwey.
4. **The Inner Game of Work: Focus, Learning, Pleasure, and Mobility in the Workplace** by Timothy Gallwey.
5. **OSCAR Coaching Model** by Andrew Gilbert and Karen Whittleworth.
6. **Making Coaching Work: Creating a Coaching Culture** by David Clutterbuck and David Megginson.
7. **Coaching Skills for Leaders in the Workplace: How to Unlock Potential and Maximise Performance** by Jackie Arnold
8. **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** by Stephen Covey. There are some great coaching tools in here and some great ideas about listening.

Also, take a look at our award-winning blog and it's content on **Coaching Tips**.

Videos

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel, you can get a preview by starting with our playlist on Coaching Techniques (below):



Watch this excellent TED Talk by Atul Gawande highlighting the benefits of coaching for continuous self-development:



Case Studies

Executive Coaching

Return on Investment

Coachee: Adam Birchall
Client: Hilton Foods

Coach: Kate Burrows
End Date: 5/6/19

The purpose of this form is to demonstrate to your sponsor that they spent money and it was a good investment. e.g. they spent x and got y. They will want to know that behaviours have changed, and that those behaviours are here to stay.

Level 1 - Reaction

Describe your reaction to the coaching. How has it been for you?

I was very, very sceptical about coaching at the start – I almost wanted a 'get out clause' but I gave it a go and was very, very surprised with how good it was. We had a good coach/ coachee fit – it was great that the coaching was not "fluffy"! I ended up telling things to my coach that I would not even tell to certain members of my own family - I just seemed to find myself talking... which was a big surprise to me. The coaching has helped me as much in my personal life as in my work life! Now, I would say to any of my team members offered coaching "go with an open mind, you will enjoy it".

Level 2 - What did you learn?

Please write one paragraph for each area of focus:

Area of Focus	What You Learned
Inner Chimp	I learnt about how our brains are wired and why I can sometimes react like I do.
Different styles and types	I have learnt about different characters who have different needs and that I can adjust my own behaviour, rather than expecting people to adjust to me. This has been a huge learning from this coaching for me. I used to think all people that needed lots of positive feedback and affirmation were 'needy' but I now appreciate that some people need different things to motivate them.
Myers Briggs	I have learnt the difference between Paul and myself with regards to how we manage our time – in Myers Briggs terms, I am a 'P' and he is a 'J'. This means that I like to flex, adapt and respond to the demands of the moment and prefer not to plan; Paul likes a detailed plan. The joint coaching session using MBTI helped us both understand this and work with it.

Level 3 - Behaviour: How you've used the learning to make changes in the way you do things

Describe your original behaviour on each area of focus - what you used to do - and then your behaviour after the coaching. Include examples.

My behaviour Before Coaching (With Examples)	My Behaviour After Coaching (With Examples)
Inner Chimp	When people push my buttons, I stay calmer.
Different styles and types	Rather than disliking people who were different to me, I am now getting on with them better. In meetings, I used to expect a "quick answer"... and get frustrated when it was not forthcoming. And then they would get anxious as a result of my behaviour. Now, I allow people who need it the time and space to think before answering. I give praise more often.
Myers Briggs	Paul and I now together ensure that there is a balance between planning and flexing with regards to the work of the Engineering team – it's now a case of "bullet-pointed chaos theory" (rather than just chaos)!!

Level 4 - The results of your behaviour change on the business

Area of Focus	Business Results Achieved	Examples	Financial Impact
All three above	Adam's conservative estimate is that he is at least 5% more effective as a result of his coaching. He says it is probably more than that.	As detailed above	Assuming an average Engineering manager salary of £50-70k, this makes a conservative ROI of £2500-3500 per annum.

Please indicate which, if any, parts of the above you would be happy for us to share within MBM, your own organisation or even use as a case study on our website to help promote coaching to others

Adam is happy for his comments to be shared with anyone.



www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

Take a look at how some of our previous clients have benefited from Executive Coaching. You can click the image below for a higher resolution:

The links below will take you to a further selection of case-studies and evaluations made by our **Executive Coaching** clients highlighting its benefits:

Ben Capper MBM Executive Coaching Case Study 1

Richard McGrath MBM Executive Coaching Case Study 2

Patrick Crease MBM Executive Coaching Case Study 3

Contact Us

Feel free to get in touch to find out about how our **Coaching Skills Courses** can help you. Simply **visit here** to contact us or email us at **helpme@makingbusinessmatter.co.uk**, and we will be happy to get back to you.

We love hearing the thoughts of our readers so feel free to get in touch and tell us what you think. What is your opinion on coaching in business today? Have you experienced in-house or external coaching? What is your preference? Do you think enough time and resources are currently allocated to executive development? Or ask me a question about something you want to know more about.



About Kate Burrows

Kate has worked in the training & development functions of a variety of blue-chip companies and fell in love with the grocery industry when she began working for The Tetley Group in 2002. She is passionate about developing people and teams in an engaging and practical way. Her expertise lies in soft skills training, management skills development, coaching and facilitation. Clients describe Kate as passionate, pragmatic and engaging – focused on delivering bespoke learning solutions that help their people to make a difference.



Making Business Matter
Trainers to the UK Grocery Industry
80% of our Learners are still using their
new skill 5 months later - we guarantee it!

We are the soft skills training provider to the UK Grocery Industry, helping Suppliers to win more business. They choose us because of our money back guarantee, our relevant experience, and because we make their learning stick.

www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk

