



EMPOWERING LEADERS AS COACHES

PLAYBOOK FOR LEADERS OF
TODAY & TOMORROW

Welcome!

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving world, leadership is no longer just about giving orders or adopting a top-down approach; it's about guiding teams towards success and transformation. Coaching leadership is a dynamic relationship that empowers leaders to become mentors, supporters, and facilitators of growth.



ABOUT ODE CONSULTING®

Established in 1996, ODE is founded on the vision to drive transformation and change, embedding culture.

With offices in Singapore and China, we have supported numerous clients across industries and business sectors in their learning journeys.

Leadership transformation and growth is a key area of focus, particularly in equipping leaders with coaching skills.

We have created this playbook especially to address the great need for leaders to play effective roles as coaches within their teams and organisations.

By blending coaching strategies and skills into their leadership style, leaders can inspire their teams to achieve remarkable results while fostering meaningful personal and professional transformation.

We hope you find the resource engaging and transformative!

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1

FOUNDATIONS OF COACHING LEADERSHIP



UNDERSTANDING COACHING LEADERSHIP

By definition, coaching is **“unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.”**

~ Sir John Whitmore

What is the difference between a good leader and a **GREAT** leader? It is the **ability and willingness to coach and develop people.**

This is a paradigm shift that involves stepping away from traditional top-down approaches. The leader coach honours team members as experts on their own lives. They believe that their team is creative and resourceful. The leader coach partners and collaborates with team members to discover, clarify and align each member's goals with that of the organisation's.



“Often it only takes small changes in the behaviour or viewpoint of a manager to create amazing changes in a team's performance.”

— Alan Sockwell



LEADER AS COACH - SKILL SETS AND STRATEGIES

In order to be an effective and inspiring leader coach, these fundamental skills and practices are needed to leverage the talents, strengths of the team. To elicit the best solutions and strategies from team members that contribute to the individual, team and organisations's overall goals and business outcomes, these skills are:

- A growth mindset
- Listening actively with empathy
- Positively influencing the mindset of the team through questioning rather than giving advice or directing
- Building a safe space where team members creatively derive their own conclusions and solutions
- Helping to set strategic SMART goals and objectives
- Providing constructive feedback to move forward
- Supporting and inspiring change
- Enabling team members to gain and develop greater self-awareness for constant upgrading and improvement

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ESSENTIAL COACHING SKILLS FOR LEADERS



THE POWER OF MINDSET



A **growth mindset** is at the heart of coaching leadership. Leaders with a growth mindset believe in their team's potential to learn, adapt, and excel. This mindset encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and continuous improvement. It enables higher engagement, increased productivity and adaptability.

"Picture your brain forming new connections as you meet the challenge and learn. Keep on going."

~ Carol Dweck

When leaders facilitate a growth mindset, they inspire their team members to embrace challenges, view failures as learning opportunities, spark inner innovation, constantly seeking ways to enhance their skills and performance.

Facilitating the reframing of limiting, false or fixed mindsets in team members through coaching leads to overcoming mental blocks, expanded self-awareness and new options - a confidence-building and transformative experience!

*When combined with the **mindset of abundance**, the leader becomes even more empowering, always believing there is more to go around - Resources, Recognition, Opportunities, Possibilities, Rewards. Inevitably this drives a positive ripple effect on team members, who operate in a safe space, where they learn from mistakes, are constantly curious, creative, agile and optimistic.*

"Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others"

~ Jack Welch

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ESSENTIAL COACHING SKILLS FOR LEADERS

» ACTIVE LISTENING AND EMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING

Effective communication is the cornerstone of coaching leadership. Leaders must practice active listening – not just hearing words, but understanding the underlying thoughts and emotions. Empathetic understanding creates the all important safe space for team members to share their ideas, concerns, and aspirations; it means connection at a deeper level. Through active listening and empathy, leaders build trust, strengthen relationships, influence others and foster open dialogues that lead to impactful solutions, insights and conflict resolution.

To listen well, you have to **be present in the moment**, be **fully engaged**, setting aside self opinions, judgement, biases, and interpretation, holding off the temptation to interrupt and advise.

“To be with another empathically means that for the time being, you lay aside your own views and values to enter another's world without prejudice.

In a sense you lay aside yourself; this can only be done by people that are secure in themselves.”

~ Carl Rogers

Great leaders take time, energy and effort to listen!

» USE OF POWERFUL QUESTIONS



“It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question.”

~ Eugene Ionesco

Asking the right questions is a practiced skill that drives critical thinking, problem-solving that re-focuses thought from problem to solution. Being genuinely curious, caring and authentic, the leader coach uses questions that:

- are **open-ended** to encourage exploration of options, ideas and reflection on experiences.
- **help uncover** root causes, dreams and aspirations.
- are **thought-provoking yet simple** to stimulate creativity, create new possibilities, challenge assumptions, reframing problems in more productive ways.
- are **purposeful** and **intentional** to discover their own solutions, inspire action and commitment.
- **clarify**, reducing or eliminating uncertainty, increase understanding of priorities and needs.
- are **non-judgemental, unbiased** and **non-directive**.

2

ESSENTIAL COACHING SKILLS FOR LEADERS

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

To lead with authenticity, it is imperative to consistently hold the highest standards of integrity and credibility.

It is also about putting team members' interests, well-being, development and success unselfishly ahead of personal glory, achievement and recognition. For the leader coach to cultivate a trusting and deep connection with team members where a coaching style is most effective, creating a psychologically safe environment is paramount.

Even when confronted with failure, by managing the challenges with humility and sensitivity, the leader encourages collective learning, perceptive self-reflection and continuous improvement.

"What does it mean to feel psychologically safe at work? ... when people know they can tell the truth without fear of repercussions, then indicators of quality, innovation, collaboration, and productivity all dramatically improve"

~ "Driving Fear Out of the Workplace" by Daniel Oestreich and Kathleen Ryan

GOAL SETTING AND ACTION PLANNING

Coaching leadership is goal-oriented, focusing on both individual and collective objectives. Leaders collaborate with their team members to set goals that are:

- S - Specific**
- M - Measurable**
- A - Achievable**
- R - Relevant**
- T - Time-bound**

"In the absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily acts of trivia"

~ Jim Stuart



These goals serve as a roadmap for success, and leaders guide their teams in creating actionable plans to achieve them. By involving team members in the goal-setting process, leaders enhance engagement, commitment and accountability.

COACHING STRATEGIES FOR TEAM SUCCESS

“It is critical to challenge paradigms in a safe environment because many false, limiting, or incomplete paradigms can stop us from achieving our full potential.

Feedback helps to educate and shift paradigms that limit one's progress”

~ Michael Simpson



FEEDBACK AND GROWTH CONVERSATIONS

Feedback is a powerful tool for growth, often resulting in the increase of self-awareness and development. Effective coaching leaders deliver feedback that is:

- timely
- focused on strengths
- objective and based on fact
- focused on highlighting specific behaviours
- beneficial and constructive
- given with positive intent



SUPPORTING AND INSPIRING CHANGE

Coaching leaders inevitably will encounter the need to manage transitions and change in the organisation. Acting as role models and change agents themselves, they will, in the process, empower and motivate their team members into taking action. Being able to identify and understand the future desired state, coach leaders mitigate resistance to change, encourage flexibility, and lead their teams towards successful adaptation.

Such conversations, when handled with humility, empathy and in a non-judgemental way, are purposeful and growth-oriented, emphasizing learning rather than criticizing. Feedback has the potential to fill in the blind spots, provide clarity on strengths and recognise areas of opportunities.

By fostering an environment where open feedback is welcomed and valued, leaders cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and personal development.

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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THROUGH COACHING



COACHING THE WHOLE PERSON

When coach leaders hold the belief that team members are resourceful and smart, they just need to facilitate the expansion of this awareness. By spotlighting the conversation on challenging and breaking habitual thought patterns, it will spark innovative thinking, new perspectives and behaviours.

It is about coaching the whole person instead of concentrating on solving the problem. This approach that enables new learning, discovery and unleashing potential means:

- challenging interpretations
- testing assumptions
- noticing emotional shifts

“The client always knows more than you do about what to do next.”

~ Marcia Reynolds



NAVIGATING DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS

The world today is highly inter-connected. Organisations operate across geographies, deal with diverse suppliers, stakeholders, customers. Even within the organisation, teams may be international or have to interact or manage employees across cultures. Being culturally fluent is paramount to business success.

Leaders who demonstrate cross-cultural intelligence and are equipped to coach their team to adopt a global mindset, will drive effective engagement amidst the diversity of values, behaviours and norms.



CULTIVATING OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Coaching leaders empower team members to take ownership of their work and outcomes. They encourage autonomy, responsibility, and accountability by trusting team members to make decisions and contribute meaningfully. This sense of ownership fosters a stronger commitment to the team's success and a heightened sense of responsibility for achieving goals.

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BUILDING AN INTERNAL COACHING CULTURE



BUILDING TRUST ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME

Leaders are trust-builders. When they role model and practice trust and integrity consistently, their team reciprocates with trust, respect and vulnerability.

Sharing decision-making, encouraging collaboration, empowering, recognising and celebrating achievements - are all ways to build a mutually trusting culture, driving collective belonging and shared values -The formula for a positive and authentic work environment.



LONG-TERM IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Coaching leadership isn't a short-term strategy; it's a continuous journey that yields lasting results. Leaders ensure the longevity of coaching practices by consistently reinforcing the principles of coaching, nurturing a culture of learning, while always being agile to adapt strategies according to evolving circumstances.

By a conscious decision to engage in coaching conversations, leaders create a legacy of positive culture within their teams and organizations.



INTERESTED TO LEARN MORE?

Embark on Your Journey to Success Through our Coaching Leadership Programme



**“Good leadership isn’t about advancing yourself.
It’s about advancing your team”**

~John Maxwell

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