Looking to take it to the next level?

High impact business coaches for high impact business leaders.
impact-coaches.com

COACHING FOR EFFECTIVE CAREER CONVERSATIONS

Toolkit and Resources

Impact-Coaches Inc.
131 Ridley Blvd
Toronto, ON M5M 3L8
416.488.0026
sandra@impact-coaches.com
www.impact-coaches.com
Career conversations between managers and employees are one of the most important factors in building, motivating and developing highly skilled and committed employees. Career planning is growing in importance for a variety of reasons. Millennials will make up 75% of the workforce by 2025, and it is clear they both want and need these kinds of discussions in order to remain engaged and committed to their work.

We have also seen many companies move away from traditional performance management to a model where employees are required to manage their own careers. In many cases, the same opportunities for advancement don’t exist as they did 20 years ago. It is up to the individual employee to take responsibility over their career plan. How can you as a people-manager help?

From our experience, a great coach/mentor/manager doesn’t do the work for someone, but rather, they get that individual to realize how important it is for them to do the work themselves. An individual’s career plan is their job, not your job, but we want to give you some resources that will allow you to best work with your staff to help them take ownership over a plan they are proud of. The goal of this toolkit is to provide you with tips and tools to partner with your staff to create career plans that are well suited to their strengths and goals.
WHAT MAKES A GOOD COACH?

Outlined here are a few key elements that make a great coach. Keep these tips in mind as you take a more coaching-based approach to working with your staff on their career plans.

Adapted from the International Coach Federation Core Competencies

Establishing Trust

Create a safe, honest, supportive environment that promotes ongoing mutual respect and trust.

✓ Build a strong foundation and partnership upfront
✓ Demonstrate integrity and sincerity; maintain confidentiality
✓ Hold your staff member in unconditional positive regard
✓ Provide ongoing support by encouraging new behaviours and actions, including those involving risk-taking and micro-experiments

Active Listening

Make every attempt to truly understand the essence behind your staff member’s communication so that you can help them gain clarity and perspective.

✓ Focus on what is being said and not said – distinguish between words, tone of voice, and body language
✓ Listen to your staff member’s concerns, goals, values, and beliefs about what is and is not possible
✓ Summarize, paraphrase, reiterate, and mirror back what you hear to ensure understanding
✓ Integrate and build on ideas and suggestions

Powerful Questioning

Ask the right questions to reveal the information needed to move your staff member forward. Keep questions focused on future thinking and planning.

✓ Ask questions that are clear and direct to help lead to new insights
✓ Questions should be open-ended using “What” and “How”
✓ Ask questions that put your staff member in the driver’s seat. For example, instead of asking “What development opportunities would you like?” ask “What steps can you take to accelerate your learning?”

Goal Setting and Accountability

Assist your staff member in developing and maintaining an effective career plan. Remind them that you are there to support them, but leave them with the responsibility to take action.

✓ Partner with your staff member to develop goals that are specific, measurable, and realistic
✓ Check in with your staff member often to assess their level of commitment to their goals
✓ Identify successes that are important to your staff member, and highlight areas for continued growth
ELEMENTS OF A CAREER PLAN

Below are the key elements of a well-developed career plan. Take some time to reflect on these questions to better understand how you can coach your staff to develop a plan that works for them.

Vision
- What kinds of work do you enjoy? Not enjoy?
- Where do you see yourself in 1 year, 3 years, 5 years?
- What are your career aspirations?
- Who do you look up to and why?
- What do you want your legacy to be?

Qualifications/Development Areas/Strengths
- What formal education/qualifications do you need to attain?
- Are there any courses or self-directed learning that you can take initiative to do?
- What strengths do you have that you will continue to leverage?
- What are your skill gaps?

Relationships
- What key relationships do you need to develop to help you advance?
- Who are the key influencers in your area?
- Who could act as a mentor for you?
- What can I do to help you?

Tactical steps
- What specific steps will you take to close your skill gaps? To leverage your strengths?
- How will you manage this with day-to-day responsibilities?
- What is one thing you can start doing right away?
- What concerns might you have about accomplishing these tactics and how can I help?
Developing and managing relationships is a huge component of successfully executing against a career plan. Here is a tool you can encourage your staff to use in order to aid them in their relationship development and networking efforts. It’s important to keep track not only of names and contact information, but notes on past contact (i.e. the date of your last email exchange or lunch meeting), and details of what you discussed. Have your staff think about their goals for each relationship and how they can proactively leverage others to help achieve their objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Person Notes (Style/ Strength)</th>
<th>Relationship Strength (Strong, Medium, Light)</th>
<th>Relationship Influencers (Others who could help you)</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Careers are no longer linear. As a manager, you will need to help your staff understand that. One way to do this is to get them to think outside the box when it comes to different opportunities they can take to stand out or go above and beyond their job requirements. For staff, gaining additional experience outside of their role will be invaluable. Encourage them to look for new opportunities to broaden their experience and to say yes when these types of opportunities are presented to them. Here are some examples you can recommend:

- Participate in special projects or join a workplace committee.
- Jump on an opportunity to train a new staff member or teach a colleague a specific skill.
- Take the lead on facilitating a team meeting or group brainstorming session.
- Identify where current gaps are in terms of talent or project work. Assess where you can play a larger role.
- Act as a mentor to a junior employee. Both mentee and mentor get big benefits out of this relationship.
- Expand your portfolio outside of work, whether that be charity work or community involvement.
Feedback is essential to helping your staff develop and execute against their career plan. Here is an example of a feedback model you can employ to give your staff the specific information they need to maximize their development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first step is to define the “where” and “when” of the situation to which you are referring. This puts the feedback into context and gives your staff member a specific setting as reference.</td>
<td>The second step is to describe the specific, observable behaviours that you want to address. Avoid making assumptions; only comment on observable behaviour (i.e. an observable behaviour is that the staff member made mistakes in his presentation, not that he hadn’t prepared thoroughly – the latter is an assumption).</td>
<td>The final step is where you describe the impact the behaviour had on you or others. This piece is important because the individual needs to know why what they are doing is great, or why what they are doing needs to be changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example: During yesterday morning’s team meeting… At the client meeting on Monday afternoon…</td>
<td>For example: During yesterday morning’s team meeting you appeared distracted and were not able to provide specific updates when asked about the project’s progress. At the client meeting on Monday afternoon you came prepared with multiple copies of print material, and ensured each of the client’s questions were answered.</td>
<td>For example: During yesterday morning’s team meeting you appeared distracted and were not able to provide specific updates when asked about the project’s progress. This has affected my confidence in your ability to complete this project, and caused uncertainty over the status of the project timeline. At the client meeting on Monday afternoon you came prepared with multiple copies of print material, and ensured each of the client’s questions were answered. I know the client was impressed with your level of preparation, and I feel confident we will get the account thanks to your hard work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Giving feedback doesn’t have to occur just at performance review time. Consider asking these questions during your next one-on-one conversation with a staff member. These questions will help facilitate a detailed feedback discussion while allowing staff to reflect on their own experiences.

**Performance Discussions:**
- What additional things could you be doing to exceed expectations in your current role?
- Are there significant performance gaps to be addressed?
- What individuals have you identified as strong leaders to aspire to? What qualities do they have that make them as such?
- What skills and abilities do you need to demonstrate to move ahead?
- What development opportunities have you looked into and how can I help you obtain those?

**Situational Feedback:**
- How do you think it went? How do you think you did?
- What is a key takeaway you learned from that experience?
- If you could do it over again, what would you do differently?
- Now that you know what you know, what additional support or resources would have been helpful?

_Ask rather than tell: You will see how powerful it is to get your staff member to reflect on the experience rather than telling them how you think it went._

_People who participate in two-way conversations are more than three times as likely to remember what was discussed compared to those who merely listen to another person speak. In fact, people remember about 20 percent of what they hear and 70 percent of what they say._

_-Association for Talent Development “Coaching and the Power of Positive Reinforcement”_
LET’S RECAP!

Manager:

- Support your staff member as they work towards their goals and sponsor them where appropriate
- Facilitate the development of a career plan by asking great questions such as the ones on page four of this toolkit
- Use coaching skills such as being curious and non-judgemental to promote great conversations

Staff member:

- Come prepared for meetings to discuss goals (progress towards them and challenges)
- Focus conversations around creating actions that will help you get to your goals
- Implement those actions, act on advice given to you, and report back with progress updates

1. Take more time to have “career talks” with your staff – 82% of employees want to discuss their career with their manager between 1-4 times per year. 40% of employees say these types of conversations never happen.

2. Employees need to feel like there is a plan in place that supports their development. Even if there are currently no opportunities for movement or promotion, work with staff to develop career plans that give them other types of goals to work towards.

3. Keep in mind the four career planning elements and ways you can encourage your staff to think outside of the box in terms of creating opportunity for themselves. There are many more factors to a career plan than simply “the next big promotion.”

4. Regular feedback is necessary to allow time for career planning discussions. Without regular feedback, what’s supposed to be career planning conversations turns into performance review discussions (where all the time is taken up with performance review and little time is spent on actual career planning).

5. Provide a mix of positive reinforcement and constructive feedback so staff can feel motivated and confident in their strengths, and set realistic goals. All feedback, positive or constructive, should be timely, specific, and detailed.
The following are resources used to develop this toolkit, as well as suggested further reading:

- Brandon Carter, Access Development, Employee Engagement and Loyalty Statistics: The Ultimate Collection
- Caela Farren, Mastery Works Inc., Five Surefire Tips for Great Career Conversations without Fear
- Dan Schawbel, The Importance of Positive Reinforcement in the Workplace
- Don Levonius, Association for Talent Development, Coaching and the Power of Positive Reinforcement
- Francine Hardaway, Fast Company, What Career Conversations Do Employees Want?
- Julie Winkle Giulioni, Seapoint Center for Collaborative Leadership, 3 Tips for Career Conversations that Energize and Engage Employees
- Monique Valcour, Harvard Business Review, If You’re Not Helping Your People Develop, You’re Not Management Material
- Robert Half Finance & Accounting, Many Employees Left In The Dark About Growth Prospects At Work
- Steven Ross, Penna, Why Great Career Conversations Matter
ABOUT US IMPACT.

High impact business coaches for high impact business leaders.
An executive coaching firm founded in 2003, Impact-Coaches Inc. (Impact) works with market-leading companies both in Canada and globally.

We provide you with individual coaching, team coaching, assessments and mentoring programs, and combine both face-to-face and virtual coaching.

This comprehensive suite of services is designed to help business leaders enhance performance and achieve goals through polishing leadership skills, honing communication strategies, fine-tuning business development, and managing time effectively.

We have a committed team of outstanding business coaches based across Canada.

Known for our exceptional professionalism, Impact provides white glove treatment and forms deep relationships with clients. Our clients appreciate our knowledge of their organizations, culture, strategy and relationships.

Impact’s list of blue chip clients, including professional services, pension funds, banks and mining companies, speaks to the level of credibility we have attained.
Thank you for reading our toolkit. We hope you like our material and we encourage you to share it. Please give us credit when you do.

Looking to take it to the next level?

IMPACT.
High impact business coaches for high impact business leaders.