People Management & Interpersonal Skills

People Skills for Managers

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The People Skills for Managers series of books are aimed at managers who want to acquire the vital people skills needed for success in a management career. This book covers the skills of team management and coaching. Each chapter starts with questions to prime the mind for learning and includes a summary and ends with five practical things you can do to improve your skills in the specific areas covered. Acronyms, inspirational quotations, illustrations and diagrams are sprinkled through the text to further enhance the learning process.

Managers need team-building skills as most employees in organisations now work in teams. It's critical that a manager knows how to build teams. Team development goes through five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. People adopt different roles within teams to make them more efficient and effective. In modern business the manager is moving from a directive to a facilitative style of management. Facilitation skills are needed to get teams to accept responsibility, communicate effectively, develop team spirit, and encourage collaboration. Team members need good interpersonal relationship skills and have expertise in problem-solving, decision-making and creativity techniques such as brainstorming. To build an effective team, foster morale and develop trust, confidence, loyalty and respect. Teams should be congruent with the culture of the company, meaning they should be collaborative rather than competitive. Group leaders should be aware of the possible impact of group think on the effectiveness of teams.

A good manager will coach their employees to reach their full potential. There are similarities and differences between coaching, mentoring, training and counselling. All of these approaches can be used to improve the productivity of managers and staff. Coaching is just-in-time and is skills and performance related. Mentoring is usually by an internal manager other than the line manager and is development and growth oriented. Training is usually generic, and just-in-case, and more long-term. Counselling is an interactive process that facilitates meaningful understanding of self and results in the establishment and clarification of personal goals and values.

After reading this book you will be able to:

- Identify the stages of team development
- Build and lead teams including facilitation skills to encourage dialogue, discussion and cooperation
- Coach employees to work more effectively and efficiently
- Know the difference between coaching, mentoring, training and counselling

Samuel A Malone   August 2018

1   TEAM MANAGEMENT

What are the stages of team development?
What are the roles needed in a team?
How can the line manager act as facilitator?
What are the traits of effective teams?
What are the principles of team building?

DEFINITION

A team is two or more people, and ideally not more than eight, with complementary skills who work together and are committed to a common purpose. Use clear performance goals and monitoring of performance to help a team keep track of progress and hold itself responsible and accountable. The goal might be improved customer service, increased sales, better collaboration, improved systems and procedures, higher productivity or cost reduction. The team members are individually and collectively accountable for the work of the team. Teamwork implies co-operative and co-ordinated effort by individuals working together to achieve a common purpose. A **TEAM** has been defined as "**Together Everyone Achieves More**." This acknowledges the synergy effect of teams. Teams are developed through training, togetherness and experience. Skills needed for effective performance are a combination of the technical, organisational, and interpersonal elements.
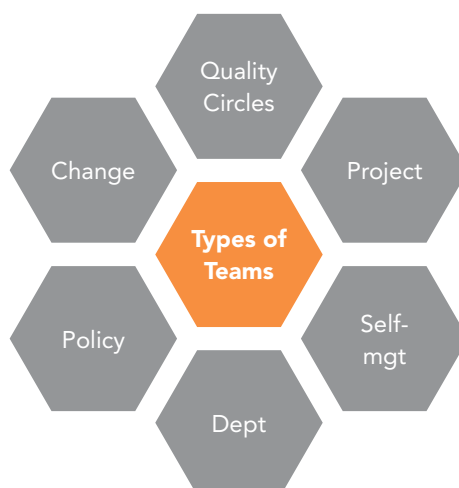
Fig. 1.1. Types of teams

There are different types of teams. The best known are quality circles, project, self-management, departmental, policy-making and change teams. Quality circles are set up to improve quality and reduce costs. Project teams are drawn from different departments, set up to complete a project, and are disbanded when it's accomplished. Self-management teams are responsible for the work of their team and are empowered with the authority, expertise, resources, information and accountability to do the job. Departmental teams operate within a department to solve a particular problem. Policy-making teams are brought together to develop company policies and corporate philosophy. Their members are drawn from all departments. Change teams are set up to efficiently and effectively manage the change process in a company. Change may happen through expansion by merger or acquisition or contraction by disinvestment. Team members have various psycho-social and personal needs and help and support each other. Their need for friendship, responsibility, challenge, self-esteem and recognition are met by being members of a team.

"Teamwork is the ability to work together towards a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organisational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."

– Andrew Carnegie

1.1   DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Fig. 1.2. Team Development Stages

The development of teams happens over five stages. Tuckman (1965) identified these stages as forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning.

1. *Forming.* This is the stage of coming together and building the team. There is concern about structure, direction, support, timetables, resources and goals. People want to know the terms of reference for the team, their roles within it and how it is going to function. They are trying to get used to each other by finding out about backgrounds, interests, concerns and competencies. They want to know who the leader is going to be, and what are the expectations for team members. They are trying to get to grips with the task they have been given to do, and how they are going to do it. Rules regarding process have not been established at this stage resulting in uncertainty about what is going on. They will want to know where team meetings will be held and how they will be conducted. At the forming stage there is suspicion, uncertainty and anxiety and a certain amount of testing the waters to ascertain each other's tolerance limits and personalities. Investing time in this stage helps teams cohere, establish clear roles and process and move forward.

2. *Storming.* This stage is often characterised by confusion, argumentation, dispute and aggression and is sometimes called the infighting stage. Team relationships are still uncertain. Debate, dissent, disagreement, personality clashes, and competition for power, position and influence fuel the conflict. There is open and hidden hostility and resentment between members of the team. The storming stage can be an unsettling and traumatic period for members with a need for facilitation skills and conflict resolution skills to calm things down. Teams that avoid managing conflict constructively may drive it underground and build up resentments and problems for the future. This stage is quite normal, and most teams will work their way through this unsettling stage before proceeding to the next stage.

3. *Norming*. At this stage standards or norms of behaviour are being established and it is often called the getting organised stage. Norms are rules to be drawn up to resolve contentious issues, make decisions and complete tasks. Plans are formulated and agreed work standards and norms put down. People are settling in and roles for each member are being identified having regard to unique personalities, abilities, skills and the needs of the team. Trust is established between the members of the team with co-operation, collaboration, cohesiveness and commitment between team members. The norming stage is a stage of productivity and optimisation of team functions with norms made explicit, so that they can be reviewed, revised and renewed as needed. Failure to do so may result in negative norms being established frustrating the goals and functioning of the team.

4. *Performing*. Interpersonal relationship problems have been resolved with roles, rules and behaviour norms agreed and structures in place. There is synergy between members as their unique competencies are blended together. Rapport has been built up and members now get down to getting the work done and achieving the goals. People are used to each other's personalities and are highly motivated to achieve things. The leader knows the strengths and weaknesses of team members, empowers them, and then lets them get on with the job. Consequently, there is a high level of morale, satisfaction, friendship, cohesion, and productivity in the team.

5. *Adjourning*. This stage is often added to the conventional model shown above. The task has been successfully completed and the team celebrates their accomplishments. The team should reflect on what it has learned from the project. At the same time there is a sense of grieving and loneliness for lost friendships or letting go as the members contemplate going back to their old jobs or to the next team.

A team may move back briefly to the forming stage when a new member has been accepted. However, the process of breaking in a new member should be faster and they will quickly move on to the performing stage.

> *"The is no 'I' in TEAMWORK."*
>
> – Source unknown

1.2   TEAM ROLES

In a successful team, members adopt specific roles. Successful teams have clear diverse roles and responsibilities to enable them to achieve their goals. The roles should be uniquely suitable to the particular context in which they will be used. Belbin's team roles are based on observed behaviour and interpersonal styles. Knowledge of Belbin's team roles will help you understand and exploit the strengths and weaknesses of team members and the contribution they make to the group. The acronym **SPECIFICS** based on the work of Dr Meredith Belbin (1981) will help you recall the various roles essential for the successful performance of teams:

S	• Shaper
P	• People Oriented
E	• Evaluator
C	• Chairman
I	• Innovator
F	• Finisher
I	• Investigator
C	• Co-worker
S	• Specialist
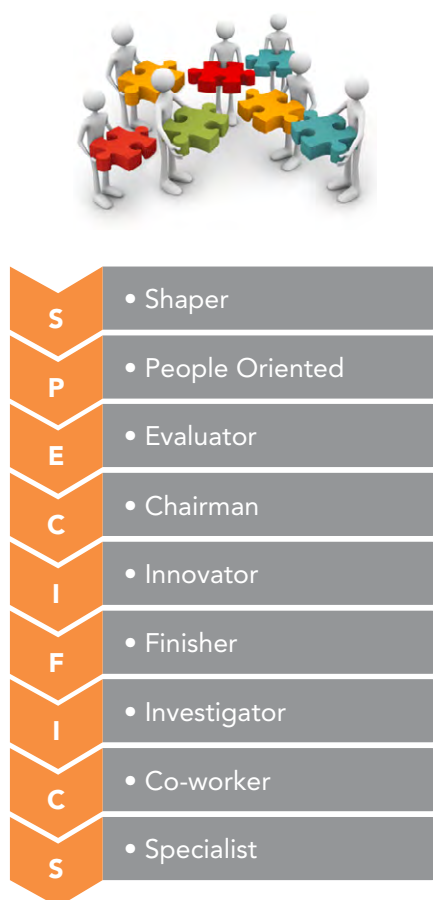
Fig. 1.3. Team Roles Model (SPECIFICS)

♦ **S**haper. The shaper is dynamic, action oriented, extroverted and thrives on pressure and challenge and shapes decisions in an optimum way. The shaper shakes things up and ensures that the team considers all the alternatives and does not become complacent. He provides challenge, stimulation, momentum and drive for the team members and encourages them to overcome obstacles and maintain momentum. He sees problems as exciting opportunities to be overcome. However, in the pursuit of getting things done he may be argumentative, insensitive to the feelings and perceptions of others, prone to provocation and cause offence.

◆ **P**eople person. The popular people person has excellent social skills, maintains interpersonal relationships within the team and therefore helps the team to gel. He promotes unity by cooperation, diplomacy; empathy, attentive listening, facilitating, and resolving conflicts through excellent negotiating skills. He recognises the interests, attitudes, concerns and achievements of others, but may be indecisive in critical situations, unwilling to take sides and avoids confrontation.

◆ **E**valuator. The evaluator is a shrewd, dispassionate, objective rational critical thinker. He analyses ideas, evaluates options in a dispassionate way and solves arguments. He spots potential problems and tests the feasibility of solutions that other people come up with. He teases out issues by acting as the devil's advocate, and so helps the team avoid ill-judged projects. However, he may lack the drive and ability to motivate and inspire others. Sometimes he may be seen as overly critical and reacting to events rather than instigating them.

◆ **C**hairman. The chairman keeps the team on course, exercising discipline, coordination and control, as necessary. He exercises a democratic leadership style with good listening skills but may need to be assertive at times to show who's in charge of proceedings. He clarifies goals, delegates, and controls and co-ordinates the activities of the team to achieve those goals. He justifies decisions so that everybody knows exactly what's going on. He recognises the unique abilities and expertise that each team member brings to the team. He delegates effectively and wisely by matching activities with the unique abilities of the team members but may be perceived as manipulative if thought to be offloading personal work. This is particularly so if the chairman has little work to do and offloads their own share of the work.

◆ **I**nnovator. He is the unorthodox, creative, free-thinking or ideas person with unique insights and approaches to problems. The team needs a thoughtful original thinker who can help it brainstorm alternative ways of looking at problems and generating feasible solutions to solve problems in unconventional ways. He thrives on praise. However, he is often too preoccupied to communicate effectively, being a little bit like the caricature of the forgetful, absentminded professor thoughtful and obsessed with ideas. Their ideas might be considered too novel, lacking substance and impractical at times while tending to ignore given parameters and constraints.

◆ **F**inisher. The finisher is the disciplined person who motivates and inspires the team to implement things and get things done to the highest standards with no errors or omissions. He creates a sense of urgency, is good at time management, and prods the team forward to complete tasks on time. He is concerned with organisation, quality, schedules, standards, details and deadlines, and the consequences if things go wrong. He is often described as an extreme

perfectionist because of his conscientiousness, attention to detail and painstaking approach to problems. He is inclined to worry unduly about minor details and is reluctant to delegate tasks that he doesn't trust anybody else to perform as good as he can.

♦ **I**nvestigator of resources. This person is enthusiastic, extroverted, innovative and curious and good at research and networks with people outside the team to see what resources are available for the team to do the job. The team will need information, expertise, equipment, and material resources to get the job done. He explores opportunities and develops contacts. He keeps the team in touch with the wider world and is often inspired by ideas he picks up from outside contacts. However, he may be over-optimistic and may lose interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.

♦ **C**o-worker. This person is very good at administration and converts plans into actions. He organises, follows up, listens and keeps ongoing records of work-in-progress, and completed tasks. He advocates clear objectives and procedures, so that the team knows exactly what to do. He may become perfectionist in his pursuit of keeping the paperwork in order.

♦ **S**pecialist. The specialist is the technical expert with the unique expertise, skills and knowledge to guide the team forward when confronted with particular problems. He has a great depth of knowledge in a particular area and enjoys sharing it with others. If he does not know the answer to something he will gladly find out. The team may need dedicated specialists who can contribute engineering, accounting, information technology, management or marketing skills. He is likely to be a member of a profession with a pool of specialists to call on if necessary. However, the specialist is inclined to concentrate on technicalities and tends to have a focused and narrow viewpoint at the expense of the bigger picture. They may overload you with information which because of its specialist nature you find hard to understand.

"Strength lies in difference, not in similarities."

– Vincent Lombardi

1.3 FUNCTIONS

Team functions can be considered under two headings task and maintenance.

TASK

This is the behaviour of team members affecting the way the work gets done. Part of the task function is deciding how the team will arrive at decisions: by consensus or by majority rule. Will leadership be rotated? Will a systematic approach to solving problems be used? The team leader (facilitator) might suggest suitable problem-solving models be used such as decision trees, the cause and effect diagram, cost-benefits analysis, pareto analysis, the fishbone technique or brainstorming. The acronym **SLICE** will help you recall the task functions of a team. This stands for summarising, look for ideas, initiative, consensus testing and elaborating.
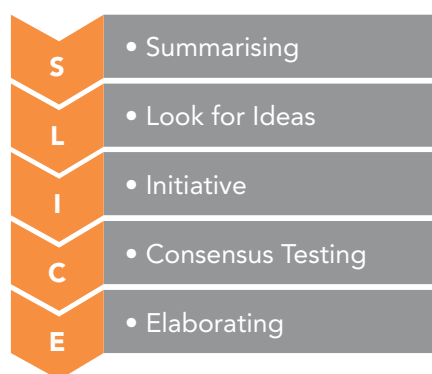
Fig. 1.4. Functions of a Team

♦ **S**ummarising. This is the task of clarifying and co-ordinating ideas, summarising and arriving at conclusions for team acceptance. This is often the function of the chairman to steer and coordinate proceedings and help team members get an overview of the issue.

♦ **L**ooking for or giving information. This is the task of seeking and providing ideas, facts and suggestions. Dialogue and debate should be encouraged between members. Without appropriate factual information the team may arrive at unsuitable decisions.

♦ **I**nitiating. This is proposing activities and goals and defining problems and suggesting solutions. Without implementation nothing gets done and nothing gets achieved. Talk without action is useless. There is a huge difference between talking about something and doing it.

♦ **C**onsensus testing. This is checking with team members on how much agreement has been reached before decisions are made. If you want ideas to be supported, ideally, they should be arrived at on a harmonious and consensus basis.

♦ **E**laborating. This is providing options and illustrative examples and clearing up issues so members understand and know exactly what is going on and how it contributes to the success of the organisation. Commitment is only achieved when everybody in the team knows what is happening and supports it totally.

"Work and self-worth are the two factors in pride that interact with each other and that tend to increase the strong sense of pride found in superior work teams. When people do something of obvious worth, they feel a strong sense of personnel worth."

– Dennis Kinlaw

MAINTENANCE

This is the behaviour norms of team members that builds and maintains group cohesiveness and morale. The facilitator should draw up terms of reference to act as ground rules for the functioning of the team and ensure that members are aware of them and follow them. An important aspect is conflict resolution and maintaining good interpersonal relationships. The acronym **SCHEME** will help you recall the maintenance or building functions of a team. This stands for standards, compromising, harmonising, encouraging, maintaining dialogue, and expressing feelings.
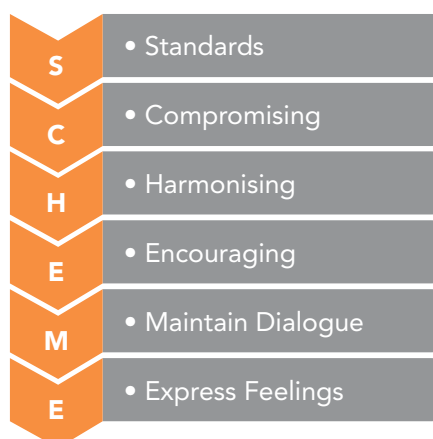

S • Standards
C • Compromising
H • Harmonising
E • Encouraging
M • Maintain Dialogue
E • Express Feelings

Fig. 1.4. Maintenance Functions of a Team

♦ **S**etting standards. Standards are needed as targets for members to achieve. Targets act as motivators. The leader should encourage the team to stay focused on the task and develop norms of behaviour to build team cohesiveness and morale.

♦ **C**ompromising. Sometimes members must compromise on their own position to move things forward and to maintain the cohesion of the team. It is not feasible if team members pursue their own selfish interests irrespective of the wishes of the group or the interests of the organisation. It is important that the overall wishes of the group and the organisation are kept constantly in mind.

♦ **H**armonising. Collaboration is needed to achieve the goals of the team. Differences must be reconciled and tensions reduced and minimised by resolving interpersonal relationship problems that are inevitable in any group of people. The leader acting as a facilitator should reflect on the process of handling conflict and direct it in a positive and constructive way.

♦ **E**ncouraging. Members encourage collaboration and cooperation by being open, transparent, warm and friendly and by accepting and recognising each other's limitations and unique contributions. People in the group should support rather than undermine each other. This will help maintain morale within the group.

♦ **M**aintaining dialogue. Communication skills are needed to encourage and maintain dialogue between members. Each member of the group should be given an adequate opportunity to express their views in a supportive, non-threatening and welcoming atmosphere.

♦ **E**xpressing feelings. Interpersonal relationships are built and maintained by sharing and exploring feelings, emotions and concerns. If these are not expressed openly and honestly then the harmony of the team may be undermined.

1.4 LINE MANAGER AS FACILITATOR

Facilitation comes from the Latin word "Facilis" which means to make easy. Facilitation is the provision of opportunities, resources, encouragement and support to achieve objectives, identify and solve problems and make worthwhile decisions. It is mostly standing back, adopting an observer role and letting the team get on with the job. It helps people to work together effectively, improve the process for doing this, and empowers people to take control and responsibility for their own efforts. Facilitation depends on context and the type of personalities within the team being often a case of "different strokes for different folks." Generally, experts can be facilitated while novices need direction and control.

A facilitator will help a team work together smoothly, and is trained to ensure that relationships, beliefs and values are taken into account, helping it perform more effectively.

A facilitator may be required to lead, mediate, coach, act as a peacemaker, observe, take notes, or simply be there if team members need expertise, knowledge, encouragement, advice and guidance. Personality conflicts between members can hinder performance. Unless such conflicts are addressed and brought to the surface they will fester and impact negatively on the performance of the team. A good facilitator will be aware of these issues bringing them out into the open to debate and resolve them. The approach adopted depends on the context and the type of people dealt with.

"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant."

– Max Dupree

1.5 TRAITS FOR FACILITATION

The line manager becomes a facilitator by practising the following behaviours.

Friendliness

Agility of Mind

Integrity

Tact

Unassuming

Learning Ability

Emotional Stability

Sensitivity

Fig. 1.4. Traits of facilitation

♦ **Friendliness.** He should adopt an open, honest, even-handed, pleasant, and approachable manner. He should know when to use humour to manage and relieve tensions and defuse situations. Humour should be used with great tact and sensitivity as it is open to misunderstanding.

♦ **Agility of mind.** He should have the flexibility of mind to generate alternative and innovative ways of doing things. He should be able to assess a situation, identify problems, suggest options and make decisions, and guide the process along by keeping the discussion moving.

♦ **Integrity.** He must be a person with a high standard of ethics. He should be honest, fair, trustworthy and impartial, respect and treat people as equals. Anything he hears during the course of facilitation should be treated with the strictest confidence. The boundaries of confidentiality should be agreed, recognised, and respected with the team and within the team.

♦ **Tact.** He should have the sensitivity to be aware of peoples expressed and unexpressed feelings and attitudes, and not to upset them in any way. He should have the acumen to be able to steer conflict in a positive constructive way without antagonising anybody.

♦ **Unassuming.** He should have no airs and graces and have the humanity and flexibility to deal with people at their own level. He should be natural and humane and be able to congratulate people and praise them in a genuine, heartfelt way. He should be sincerely interested in the welfare of the group and be prepared to work with them to help them achieve their goals and reach their potential.

♦ **Learning ability.** He should be interested in lifelong learning so that he can train and develop throughout his life. Likewise, he should assist others to reach their true potential. He should create a non-threatening environment where people feel safe to learn and can trust each other to maintain confidentiality and provide the resources and opportunities for others to learn. This means a complete acceptance that problems should be viewed as challenges, and mistakes are learning opportunities that will inevitably lead to enlightenment and success.

♦ **Emotional stability.** He should understand himself and empathise with others. This creates a willingness to make and accept constructive feedback. He needs good interpersonal relationship and communication skills with the self-control not to over-react negative feedback, to challenging situations, or to other people's tantrums or emotional outbursts. Having a high emotional IQ is one of the most important traits for a successful and fulfilling life.

♦ **Sensitivity.** He should be sensitive to the company culture, know the political pitfalls to avoid and guide the team away from them. Corporate political acumen is considered an important skill in manoeuvring ones' way through the pitfalls of corporate life.

> *"The wise facilitator's ability does not rest on techniques or gimmicks or set exercises. Become aware of process – and when you see this clearly, you can shed light on the process of others."*
>
> – From the Tao

1.6 FACILITATION PROCESS

Facilitation is an activity or process and can also include non-action such as silence. The outcome of facilitation should be to help the team arrive at its own conclusions, solve its own problems, make its own decisions, and take responsibility for its own actions. The process can be recalled by the acronym **COASTER.** This stands for challenge, observation, asking questions, speaking powerfully, total focus, ears to the ground and respect. Fig. 1.6. below illustrates the facilitation process.

C	• Challenge
O	• Observation
A	• Ask Qs
S	• Speak Powerfully
T	• Total Focus
E	• Ears to Ground
R	• Respect

Fig. 1.6. Facilitation Process Model (COASTER)

♦ **C**hallenge. Challenge people directly to think for themselves by asking incisive open questions or through constructive feedback. In corporate life it is so important to be able to think for oneself and defend one's viewpoints in a logical and forthright manner. Convincing others means you need to be supremely positive and confident about the case you make.

♦ **O**bserve the behaviour of people by being aware of what's happening in the group, and the needs of individuals. The facilitator must have good judgement and be able to accurately assess human situations and make sound decisions. Where he sees a member of the team not pulling their weight or doing their fair share of work, then he should intervene to ensure an equal even-handed contribution from all members. Likewise, if some members are not observing the ground rules he can intervene to bring this to their attention.

♦ **A**sk penetrating questions. The facilitator should know how to open up discussion and explore and clarify issues where people are confused. He should not control situations and force his own wishes or needs on the team, but instead should explore situations by asking open questions and convincing others through debate. The information he gets will help him understand the situation. He should use questions to challenge and clarify expectations and show alternative ways of achieving things. He should encourage individual contributions especially from shy people and acknowledge them in an appreciative way.

♦ **S**peak powerfully and forcefully but infrequently. The facilitator should persuade, encourage, support, inspire, confront and motivate. He should listen more than he speaks – a twenty/eighty ratio is sometimes suggested by communications experts. The wise facilitator speaks clearly, rarely and briefly. He should act as a catalyst to bring forth the untapped creative energy, expertise and knowledge of the team.

♦ **T**otal focus. The facilitator should keep the topic on track and stick to the agenda. He should make sure that a co-operative stance is adopted by encouraging team members to focus on the same objectives. The facilitator should not tolerate garrulous people who waste and monopolise time at the expense of other's meaningful contributions.

♦ **E**ars to ground. The facilitator should listen for what is said and for what is not said. Unexpressed feelings can be gauged through body language. He should be aware of the feelings and emotions that underlie what is said by listening carefully for intent, commitment and purpose. He should give accurate feedback at appropriate stages by summarising what has been said.

♦ **R**espect. The facilitator should value people by recognising and respecting differences, so that they are acknowledged personally and not afraid to speak out. He should treat people as equals, and show consideration for their feelings by being fair, unbiased and considerate to all viewpoints. He should win trust by creating a non-threatening environment, and address people's concerns and fears. He should be seen to be genuinely interested in the team rather than in advancing his own position. He should follow the **TOUCH** acronym to win the respect of the team: **T**rust, **O**penness, **U**nderstanding, **C**onsideration and **H**onesty.
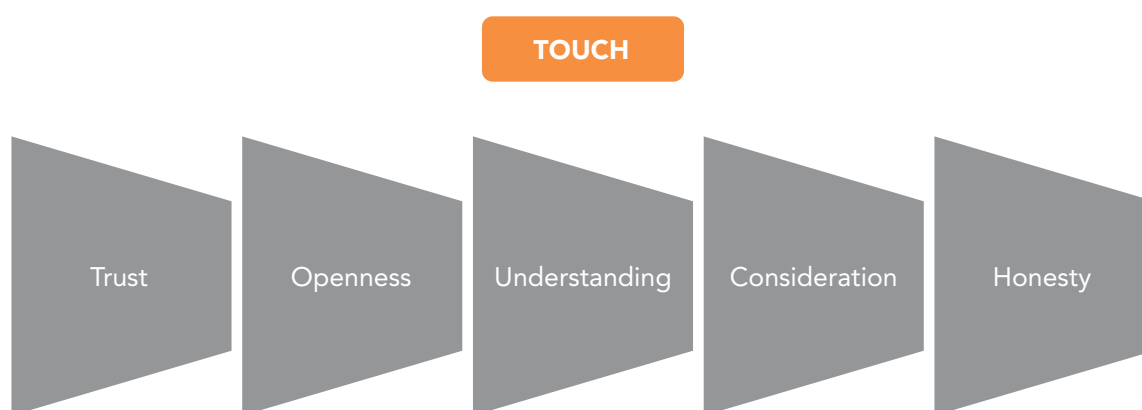

Fig. 1.7. Winning the respect of the team

"Run an honest, open group. The fewer rules the better. Every law creates an outlaw. Good facilitation means doing less and being more."

– From the Tao

1.7   INTERVENTION

Interventions may be needed to help a team improve the way it identifies and solves problems, works together, and makes decisions. Facilitators help teams keep focused on their tasks, achieve their goals, and increase the productivity of members. They help it harmoniously bond together by creating team spirit.

> *"When I give up trying to impress the group, I become very impressive. Let go in order to achieve. The wise facilitator speaks rarely and briefly, teaching more through being than doing."*
>
> – From the Tao

TECHNIQUES

The techniques of facilitation can be a judicial mixture of supportive, persuasive and directive approaches:

Fig. 1.8. Techniques of facilitation

♦ **Supportive.** Sometimes doing nothing is the best approach and just sit back and let the team get on with the task. The facilitator should use silence as appropriate to encourage dialogue between members. Use clarifying questions when needed to make issues clear to everyone present.

♦ **Persuasive.** The facilitator may use questions to move the team along smoothly such as where to go next, suggest choices, paths to follow, and actions to take. He should encourage the exchange of information, and the sharing of ideas between members to persuade them to take the best course of action.

♦ **Directive.** This approach is adopted infrequently. Sometimes the facilitator needs to provide some guidance or direction to the team on what should be done next especially where he has the special expertise to do so, particularly if he has expertise in a relevant area where he knows the team hasn't.

HANDLING CONFLICT

Conflict should be managed firmly, decisively and positively. The facilitator should be competent in managing conflict and when no conflict exists they should be able to create constructive conflict to elicit debate and enhance team performance. Conflict can help the members look at a situation from different perspectives. This will help the team become more creative and make more effective decisions. The ultimate objective should be to encourage the development of win-win solutions.

1.8   GROUP THINK

This is where a team becomes arrogant, feels invulnerable and looks on outsiders as the enemy with suspicion, hostility and disdain. The team develops blind spots and becomes insulated from outside expert opinion and fails to exercise critical thinking when solving problems or making decisions. The group fails to get into the mindset of the opposite side and therefore doesn't understand the way they are thinking. Irving Janis, the psychologist who identified the phenomenon of group think, gives several examples of group think such as the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, the decision to ignore the Japanese threat of an air attack on Pearl Harbour, the decision to invade North Korea and the decision to bomb

North Vietnam. "How could we have been so stupid?" President John F. Kennedy asked after he and a close group of advisors had blundered into the Bay of Pigs invasion. In addition to governments the problem may arise in groups such as a board of directors, or project teams with a strong charismatic leader.

Handy notes that "ultra-cohesive groups can be dangerous because in the organisational context the group must serve the organisation, not itself." Hence institutions, contrary to declared values, vision and mission statements, show more concern to protect their corrupt members than to serve the interests of their customers. Groups can start pursuing their own interests rather than the interests of their varied stakeholders. The group think process can be checked by appointing a "devil's advocate" whose role is to challenger ideas, question facts and logic, and provide constructive evidence. The elements of group think can be recalled by the acronym **STORMING:**

Fig. 1.9. Characteristics of Group Think

◆ **S**elf- censorship. Members of the group want to maintain consensus and so put pressure on dissidents not to "rock the boat," or deviate from what they consider to be group consensus. The "club" mentality prevails. They stay silent about their misgivings and even minimise to themselves the importance of their doubts. Schlesinger who was one of the advisors to President Kennedy, despite his sincere doubts and concerns about the Cuban Bay of Pigs fiasco failed to raise his opposition in a strong and consistent way.

◆ **T**endency to stereotype. The group are over-confident and stereotype outsiders as evil, treacherous, stupid and inferior to them. It closes rank to outside influences and ideas, so that personal doubts are not brought into the open and suppressed rather than debated in a logical manner. Outsiders and opponents are seen as the "enemy" – a "them" and "us" perception. For example, competitors may be viewed as evil, weak and incompetent. The crudest of all stereotypes was used by US President Johnson's inner circle to justify their policies in the Vietnamese war and was known as the domino theory. This suggested that the war was to stop the communists from taking over the world. The group so firmly accepted this stereotype that it became almost impossible for any advisor to introduce a more rational and sophisticated viewpoint. In the Iraq war of 2002 the British and American governments believed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Those who disagreed were isolated and discredited. The rationale to justify the invasion of Iraq proved to be pure propaganda with no basis in fact.

◆ **O**ppression to prevent dissent. There is strong group pressure put on members who disagree to prevent them from dissenting. This reinforces the concurrence-seeking norm that loyal members are expected to maintain. Subtle social pressure is often used to bring dissenting minority members of the group into line with the majority view.

◆ **R**ationalising. Inconsistent facts are rationalised away to quash doubts or remorse. The group discount or dismiss negative feedback and justify the soundness of their position without the benefit of critical objective analysis and expertise and factual information from independent sources. James C. Thompson Jr., a Harvard historian, who spent five years as an observing participant in the US government, tells us that the policymakers avoided critical discussion of their prior decisions and continually invented new rationalisations so that they could sincerely recommit themselves to defeating the North Vietnamese.

◆ **M**oral blindness. They are self-righteous and ignore the ethical or moral dimension of issues that may prove to be inimical to their goals. There is a belief in the supreme morality of the group – "might is right." There is nobody willing to shout 'stop' and say that what they are doing is wrong, stupid, immoral and unethical.

♦ **I**nvulnerability. The team shares an illusion of invulnerability and becomes excessively optimistic about the group's strengths. As a result, immune to obvious dangers, they pursue excessively risky activities, and progressively lose touch with reality and common sense. As a consequence, group think decisions rarely have a successful outcome. A most poignant example of invulnerability involves the ingroup around US Admiral H. E. Kimmel, which failed to prepare for the possibility of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour despite repeated warnings. The attack triggered the entry of the USA into the second world war.

♦ **N**ullify divergent views. This is an erroneous perception of unanimity and divergent views are filtered out and ignored. There is a false sense of unity with silence wrongly interpreted as consent as people are just afraid to speak out and give their views. Group norms are exercised to keep people in line by imposing sanctions or ostracising those who disagree. Consequently, members are afraid to express different viewpoints and doubts so that unpopular ideas are suppressed, and an artificial sense of harmony created. Team members mutually support their own beliefs. Consequently, contrary viewpoints are not entertained.

♦ **G**uard the decision by mutual support. The solidarity of the group is maintained at all costs. Janis called these mindguards. Victims of group think sometimes appoint themselves as mindguards to protect the leader and fellow members from adverse information that might break the complacency they shared about the effectiveness and morality of past decisions. Sycophantic behaviour on the part of some group members adds to the problem. Powerful social pressures are brought to bear on members of the group whenever a dissident begins to voice his objections to a group consensus.

The consequences of group think according to Janis include:

1. The group only considers a few alternatives course of action rather than many that might be worthy of consideration.
2. The group fails to re-examine the course of action initially preferred by the majority after they learn of risks and drawbacks that had been considered originally.
3. The group fails to get expert opinion within the organisation and outside the organisation that might develop and clarify the relevant issues further.
4. Setting up outside evaluation groups might increase the risk of security leakage and a break of confidentiality.
5. The group prefers its own facts and opinions supporting its own point of view rather than contrary facts and opinions that do not.
6. The group spend little time considering opposing points of view and so fail to draw up contingency plans to cope with possible setbacks that could sabotage its plans.

The following recommendations are suggested by Janis to deal with group think:

1. The role of critical evaluator should be assigned to each member of the group. The leader of the group should be willing to consider and accept criticism and discourage sycophantic behaviour.

2. Impartiality within the group should be fostered. This will encourage open inquiry and impartial probing on a wide range of alternative.

3. Other groups should be set up within the organisation with a similar mission as the main group. This can provide different viewpoints and prevent the insulation of the main group from its own ego.

4. People within the organisation should be invited to discuss the groups findings and feedback the results to the main group.

5. Outside experts should occasionally be invited to the meetings of the main group to challenge and debate viewpoints.

6. If the decision involves an opponent or competition then the group should consider all warning signals from the rivals and should write alternative scenarios on the rival's intentions. This is an attempt to get inside the head of competition and understand their mindset.

7. The main group should divide into two sub-groups to consider issues and then come back to discuss their findings. This will give the main group an opportunity to consider alternative viewpoints.

8. After reaching a preliminary consensus the group should have a second chance meeting to reconsider residual doubts and rethink the entire issues before making a final decision.

In addition to group think, other disadvantages of teams include:

♦ Members might feel their individual creativity is stifled and lost within the team. They may resent that their unique contribution, experience and expertise is not sufficiently recognised.

♦ Group members may not have the behavioural and management science expertise that could inform and benefit the decision making of the group.

♦ The prolonged nature of group decision making may not be suitable for a rapidly growing crises requiring a quick decision. Opportunities may come and go to the detriment of the organisation.

♦ There is a great cost in time and effort of building an effective team. They are not created overnight but take a long time to evolve and bond together over many stages.

♦ Decisions may be compromised on the basis of keeping members happy rather than reaching the best possible decision. There is the danger that members may be influenced by group pressure to conform and maintain harmony at all costs.

"The more amiability and esprit de corps there is among the members of policy-making ingroups, the greater the danger that independent critical thinking will be replaced by groupthink, which is likely to result in irrational and dehumanising actions directed against outgroups."

– Irving L. Janis

1.9   TEAM SKILLS

LEADERS

The following are the skills needed by leaders and members to work effectively in a team:
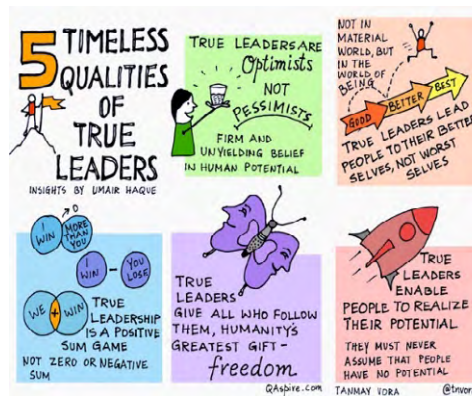
This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND

Fig. 1.10. Leadership Skills

♦ They are visible and available when needed by other members. They practise the process of management by walking about and watching for sources of disharmony. They know that team building is critical to success, and that it's a continuous process requiring constant attention. They have a participative style of leadership and thus create a team spirit. They have a positive outlook on life.

◆ They are trained facilitators. They lead people to greater things. They unconditionally praise exceptional performance and provide support and feedback to the team. Without feedback the same mistakes and weaknesses are likely to continue. With feedback misunderstandings are identified, and points of agreement and disagreement are clarified and put right. They encourage members to discuss problems and encourage creativity by responding constructively to ideas.

◆ They define roles and relationships so that members know exactly what to do and will work together effectively and harmoniously to arrive at win-win outcomes. They know the values, beliefs, attitudes and interests of the members and exploit them to their advantage and the advantage of the company.

◆ They create a shared vision that energises, motivates and commits the team to the achievement of goals. They set high expectations and recognise the successes and achievements of the team through praise and reward. They provide members with freedom and opportunities for responsibility, enterprise, autonomy and achievement. They make every member accountable for their contribution to the team.

◆ Their sense of integrity and high ethical values wins the respect and trust of members. They behave in an exemplary manner and realise that they are a role model to other members. They exhibit self-belief and confidence that creates and sustains the self-belief and confidence of members. They help staff to become self-actualised by becoming the people they are capable of becoming.

◆ They promote team norms so members respect and support each other and are demanding but realistic in their expectations for each other. They foster trust, loyalty, confidence, commitment and hard work among members ensuring optimum performance.

"Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly, and they will show themselves great."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

MEMBERS

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┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐
│  Member Skills  │   │  Member Skills  │
└─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘
   ┌─────────────┐       ┌─────────────┐
   │  Problem    │       │  Decision   │
   │  Solvers    │       │  Making     │
   └─────────────┘       └─────────────┘
   ┌─────────────┐       ┌─────────────┐
   │  Time Mgt   │       │    IPR      │
   └─────────────┘       └─────────────┘
   ┌─────────────┐       ┌─────────────┐
   │    EQ       │       │ Leadership  │
   │             │       │  Skills     │
   └─────────────┘       └─────────────┘
   ┌─────────────┐       ┌─────────────┐
   │ Flexibility │       │  Results    │
   │             │       │  Oriented   │
   └─────────────┘       └─────────────┘
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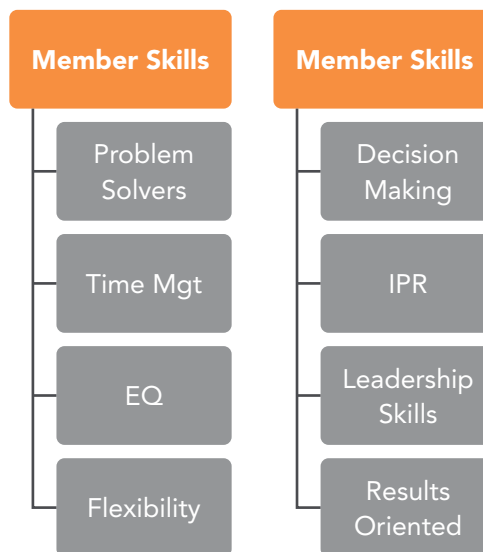
Fig. 1.11. Member Skills

◆ **They need to be trained in problem-solving and decision-making techniques.** They need to be familiar with analytical problem-solving techniques such as decision trees, break-even analysis, the fish bone technique, cause and effect diagrams, critical path analysis, cost benefit analysis, Pareto analysis, and flow-charting. They also need to be familiar with creativity techniques such as brainstorming, value analysis, force-field analysis, swot analysis and mind mapping.

◆ **Time management.** They need to cultivate time management skills so that they are aware of adopting the best methods and prioritise tasks and be conscious of time wasting activities. This enables them to be efficient and effective when dealing with tasks.

◆ **Results oriented.** Members should be goal directed and all actions should be determined by the need to achieve objectives within budget and on time. Variances from budget targets should be carefully investigated and action taken to put expenditures back on target again.

◆ **They need interpersonal-relationships skills** to be assertive, co-operate with others, resolve conflicts and encourage shy members to contribute without hesitation. They need to create a team atmosphere that is informal, relaxed, comfortable, open, transparent and non-judgemental. Communication skills are needed to listen, encourage dialogue, and to give and accept constructive feedback.

◆ **Emotional IQ.** This is needed to be sensitive and helpful to the needs of other members while being in control of their emotions to avoid friction. Emotional IQ is considered one of the most important traits to possess for a successful life.

♦ **Flexibility.** They need to be flexible to consider other viewpoints, generate alternatives, and consider possibilities from all angles. They need adaptive behaviours to be able to work effectively with other members.

♦ **Leadership skills.** They should be able to take turns at chairing meetings and be capable of alternating roles as initiator and follower. They should be able to exercise task and maintenance functions within the group as appropriate.

"Team player: One who unites others towards a shared destiny through sharing information and ideas, empowering others and developing trust."

– Dennis Kinlaw
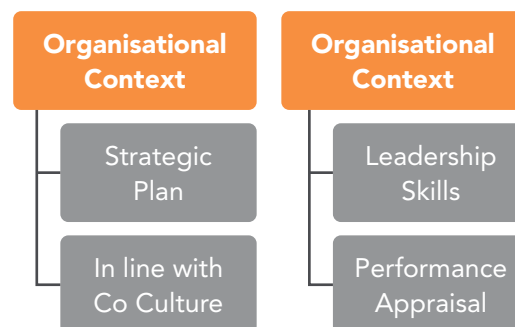
1.10 TEAM BUILDING

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Fig. 1.12. Team Building – Organisational Context

◆ Teams should be supported by the strategic plan, and by the top management and the unions. Managers should provide clear goals and parameters within which the team can successfully operate. They should also provide it with the necessary resources including expertise to get the job done. Managers should have realistic expectations regarding how long it will take the team to form and be effective, and the training necessary for team building and maintenance.

◆ Teams should be congruent with the company culture. This means a culture of collaboration rather than competition. Good communication channels should be provided and the skills of communication imparted so that the team can converse with other teams and senior management within the company.

◆ Members should be trained in leadership, team building skills, continuous improvement, lifelong learning and problem solving. The composition of the team should ensure that members have diverse and complementary skills to optimise performance.

◆ A performance appraisal scheme should be designed acceptable to members. Appraisals should be done periodically during the year rather than on a once off basis each year. Members should not be kept in the dark but instead should know how they are performing on an ongoing basis in order to learn and improve.

"A group becomes a team when each member is sure enough of himself and his contribution to praise the skills of others."

– Norman Shidle

MOTIVATING YOUR TEAM

The factors involved for a leader to motivate a team can be recalled by the acronym **AGAINST:**

A	• Accountability
G	• Goal
A	• Acquaint
I	• Incentivise
N	• Need to be Tough
S	• Sincere
T	• T&D

Fig. 1.3. Motivating Your Team Model (**AGAINST**)

♦ **A**ccountability. Make the members accountable, and then let them get on with the job. Overcome obstacles to performance by providing the necessary training, resources and supports for the team. Provide opportunities for participation and consensus decision-making and recognise the contribution of all members by praising and rewarding exceptional performance.

♦ **G**oal. Clarify your own goal as a manager and agree the goals for the members, so that everybody knows exactly what is expected and has to be achieved. Team members will be working in the dark and unmotivated if they do not know what their goals are.

♦ **A**cquaint yourself with the strengths and weaknesses and personalities of the members. Exploit and build on their strengths while trying to eliminate their weaknesses. Create an atmosphere that is informal, relaxed, non-threatening and non-judgemental.

♦ **I**ncentivise members through praise, reward and recognition. Foster morale, trust, confidence and respect among the members. Team members love to be respected and appreciated. Tangible rewards should be part of the process.

♦ **N**eed to be tough but fair when necessary. Members trust and are loyal to leaders who act as role models and are firm but fair in their dealing with members, and who respect confidentiality and the rights and feelings of team members.

♦ **S**incere emphatic listening to members. Attentive listening is the most important communication skill. Foster esprit de corps or a team spirit by providing constructive feedback by focusing on the behaviour rather than the person, and by creating a sense of collective ownership and partnership.

♦ **T**raining and development. Encourage the training and development of members through coaching, on-the-job training and attending course programmes

internally and externally. This is a tangible way of showing you have a high regard for team members when you invest in their further education and training.

> *"Teamwork represents a set of values that encourage behaviours such as listening and constructively responding to points of view expressed by others, giving others the benefit of the doubt, providing support to those who need it, and recognising the interests and achievements of others."*
>
> – Katzenback & Smith

1.11 SUMMARY

A team is two or more people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose. Team development goes through five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The roles of teams are shaper, people person, evaluator, chairman, innovator, finisher, resource allocator, co-worker and specialist. The functions involved in keeping a team going can be grouped under task and maintenance. Task functions include summarising, initiating, consensus testing, and elaborating. Maintenance functions include setting standards, compromising, harmonising, encouraging and maintaining dialogue.

Facilitation means to make things easy for team members to achieve their objectives. The manager needs to move from a directive to a facilitative style of management to manage teams effectively and encourage the sharing of information among members. The facilitative manager should observe human behaviour, listen, and ask probing questions to clarify issues as necessary. He should be fair, friendly and unassuming, and practise empathy to listen to the concerns of others.

Group think can prevent a team from functioning effectively. Group think occurs when teams become arrogant and feel invulnerable to outside threats. The traits of effective teams include collaboration, enthusiasm and rapport. To run an effective team, leaders need to inspire loyalty and commitment and be supportive, visible and available when needed by members. Members need good interpersonal relationship skills and have training in problem-solving and creativity techniques. An effective team needs to foster morale and develop trust, confidence and respect between members. Teams should be congruent with corporate culture, being collaborative rather than competitive.

1.12 FIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR TEAM BUILDING SKILLS

1. Be aware of the stages that teams go through so that you can anticipate problems, and plan for dealing with them when they arise. Realise that it takes a long time for a group to evolve into a well-functioning team.

2. Complementary roles are essential for the successful running of teams. Learn the **SPECIFICS** acronym so that you become aware of the roles required in effective and efficient teams. Pick members with these roles in mind. Some of the roles may be combined in the one person.

3. As a manager you should move from a directive to a facilitative style by taking a back seat, observing rather than interfering. This means you should empower members by encouraging them to accept responsibility, share information, generate ideas, and see mistakes as learning opportunities.

4. Memorise the acronym **COASTER** to intuitively practise the process of facilitation. Challenge people to think by asking questions, clarifying issues, and giving constructive feedback. Speak powerfully but infrequently but keep the discussion on track and stick to the agenda. A good facilitator will be able to bring conflict to the surface to defuse it and deal with it effectively before it becomes an issue. Remember constructive conflict can enhance team performance.

5. Make sure that team members have problem-solving, decision-making, social and time management skills. They should have a philosophy of lifelong learning and continuous improvement.

2   COACHING

What is the difference between coaching, mentoring, training and counselling?
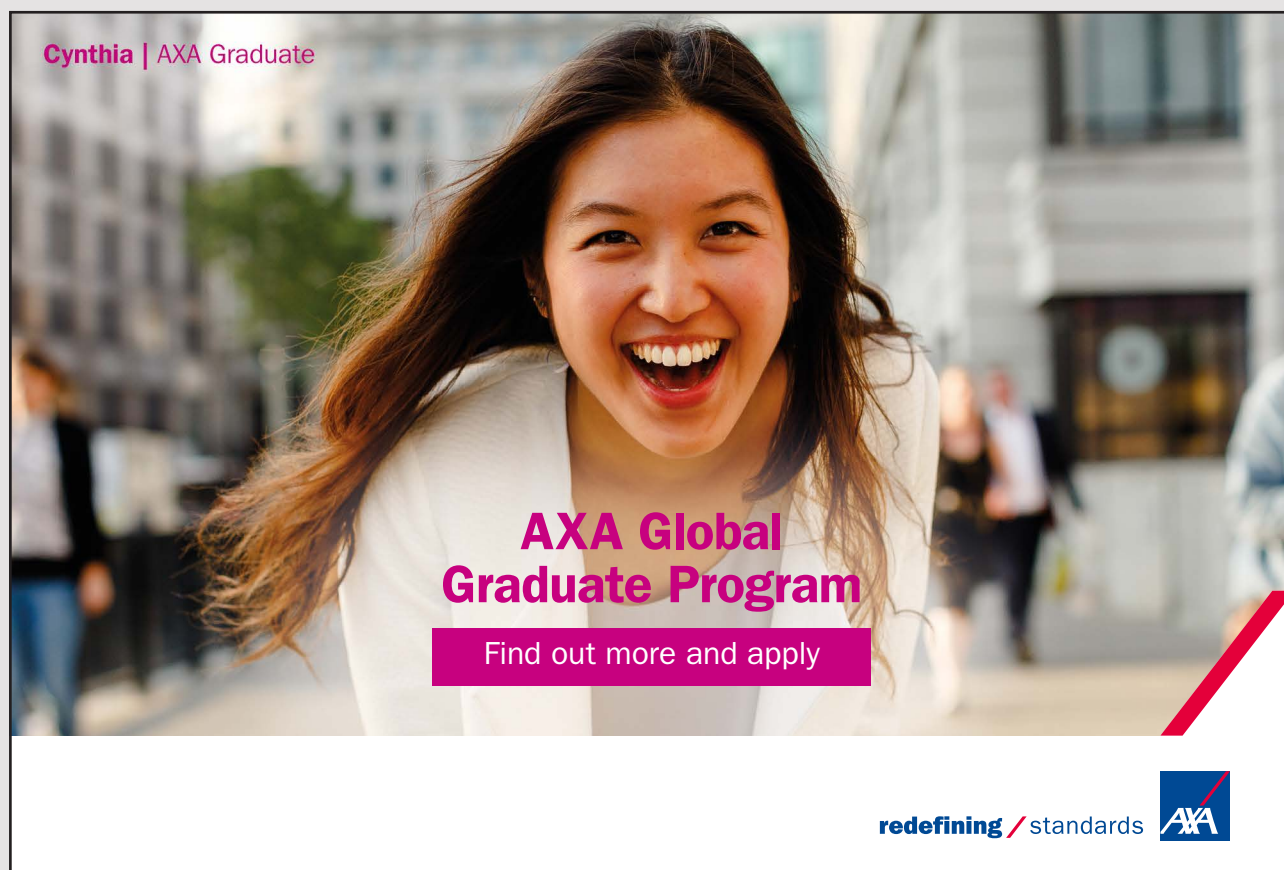
Why coach?

What is the coaching process?

How should managers coach?

What are the skills required for coaching?

2.1   DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COACHING, MENTORING, TRAINING & COUNSELLING

All of these approaches have three things in common: communication, interpersonal relationships and learning.

The differences between coaching, mentoring, training and counselling are worth knowing.

Coaching	Mentoring	Training	Counselling
• JIT	• Internal Mgr	• Generic	Self-acceptance
• Specific	• LT T&D	• JIC	and Self-understanding

Fig. 2.1. Coaching v Mentoring v Training v Counselling

Coaching

Coaching has been defined as a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. It takes people from where they are currently to where they want to be.

- ♦ **Just-in-time.** Coaching is done when the learner needs it. Managers and employees need knowledge and skills to cope with situations as they arise in the workplace. The learner receives the expertise of the coach who is knowledgeable in the area concerned. The coachee may wish to be better organised, more productive, or more effective at managing their time or making presentations.

- ♦ **Specific objectives.** Focuses on achieving specific objectives usually within a defined time period. It's skills and performance related and directed at work issues and should be tailored to the learner's learning style, unique wants and particular needs.

- ♦ **One-to-one relationship.** The coach adapts to the needs, aspirations and preferences of the learner. He gets to know the coachee very well and therefore can respond quickly to his needs. This means that there's a real mutually agreed identification of training needs.

- ♦ **May be done by the line manager or an external coach.** Executive coaches are usually hired in consultants from outside the organisation and are likely to have wider experience than an internal coach and thus be more objective. This is because they have expertise and experience acquired outside the company probably in many industries.

- ♦ **Learner goes to the manager for coaching** or to a mutually agreed place that's free from the interruptions and distractions of every day work. This means an environment free from distractions and conducive to learning. Learning takes place through asking pertinent questions.

- **Evaluation is relatively easy as results are seen quickly.** The skills acquired or desired behaviour adopted can be implemented on-the-job immediately. There is therefore little possibility that they will be forgotten through disuse.
- **The coaching term** is usually over six months or longer and focuses on the future. However, it can take as long as is required and may be prolonged by email or telephone contacts if necessary.

Mentoring

Mentoring has been defined as a working relationship through which one person empowers and enables another by sharing their wisdom, knowledge, expertise and resources. The process is thus one to one.

- Generally done by an internal manager other than the line manager. The mentor shares his experience and knowledge and acts as a sounding board for the concerns of the mentee.
- Development and growth oriented and usually over the long-term. Mentoring is about the professional and personal development of the individual. May have the management succession needs of the organisation in mind.
- Follows an open and evolving agenda, dealing with a range of issues. Mentoring has a broader focus than coaching but similar to coaching learning happens through questions and the needs of the learner.

Training

Training is structured activity aimed at teaching or imparting knowledge and skills to a person or a group of people to improve their performance to a certain testable level.

- Generic. The content is aimed generally and is not tailored to the needs of the individual participants. The content of the training is what the trainer knows or feels the participants need rather than what they actually need. Learning takes place through lecturing, case studies, role-play, on-the-job-instruction, giving feedback on assignments, and in some cases offering evaluative feedback. Training may occur in classes of 10 to 15 people or even more.
- Usually there's no proper identification of training needs. The training needs are generic and assumed rather than individually verified. Generally, training is about the acquisition and mastery of certain types of generic knowledge and skills.

- The usual training course is between one and three days although it can be much longer. Training professionals usually do the training and have the skills of training and know how adults learn. Trainers can be drawn from within the company or outside or a combination of both. Coaching and mentoring are over much longer periods and managers do the training. They may or may not be skilled in the art of instruction and in how adults learn.

- Is just in case rather than just in time. Coaching and mentoring are provided as needed on an ongoing basis and tend to be more specific. Training is provided on a just in case basis which means that it may or may not be ever used in the workplace and by the time it becomes relevant the knowledge and skills imparted may have been forgotten.

- Difficult to tailor to different learning styles and the different needs of individual learners. This is because training is for groups of individuals who may have different styles of learning while coaching and mentoring is for single individuals.

- Evaluation is difficult and there's a low transfer of training to the workplace. Training is quickly forgotten unless it is applied soon after the training. Coaching and mentoring are more specifically targeted to the needs of the learner and the benefits are felt immediately.

Counselling

Counselling is an interactive process that facilitates meaningful understanding of self and environment and results in the establishment and clarification of personal goals and values. Counselling endeavours to explore the underlying dynamics of relationships. Counsellors and coaches both use questions but tend not to address tasks and work performance. These are the remit of the coach, mentor and trainer. Counselling is more concerned to explore and promote self-understanding and self-acceptance. These are the skills needed to solve conflict, discipline, psychological issues and grievance problems which are likely to be outside the remit of the coach, mentor and trainer.

- Involves two people; one seeking help and the other is a professionally qualified person offering the help. There should be a mutual respect and harmony between the two individuals.

- Counselling has the objective of bringing about desired change in the individual (counselee) for self-realisation and helps the counselee solve personal problems. The counsellor identifies the problems and helps the counselee to make a choice or find a direction to take.

- The counselee is encouraged to think for themselves rather than passively accepting the suggestions of the counsellor. It has the aim of providing help to the counselee to change their lives and deal with difficulties in a productive, meaningful and independent way.

- It is a purposeful learning experience for the counselee. The counselling process is structured around the felt needs of the counselee. It should provide the counselee with self-direction and self-acceptance.

- Counselling may focus on the past whereas coaching, mentoring and training focuses on the future.

2.2   WHY COACH?

Coaching may be done to help people reach their potential, develop management skills, meet succession needs, or provide a confidant or sounding board to senior managers.
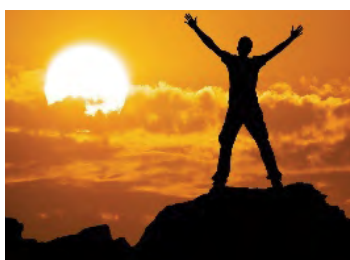

Reach Potential   Mgt Development   Mgt Sounding Board

Fig. 2.2. Why Coach?

HELP PEOPLE REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

- Coaching is no longer seen as the preserve of senior management. It's now recognised as a way of helping all staff irrespective of rank to achieve their potential. It helps people see blind spots. This could be in terms of us not being aware of our shortcomings and personality idiosyncrasies to not being aware of the tremendous aptitudes or untapped potential we may possess. Shortcomings and idiosyncrasies may be visible to others but not to us. The higher someone

goes up in an organisation, the less feedback they get, the more distorted and self-serving it is, and the more they get removed from reality. Many senior executives never receive honest feedback on how they are really perceived by others. They are often surrounded by yes-men and sycophants. Feedback from the coach gives the learner an opportunity to identify these shortcomings and to take corrective action to put them right.

♦ People often don't realise and undervalue the knowledge, resources and talents that they possess. The coach should look at the total person and try to unleash previously untapped abilities. For example, people in their own lives outside work may be leaders in their local community in charitable, religious or voluntary work. They may have run in marathons and raised money for charity and brought up children with disabilities against insurmountable odds. They may have acquired all kinds of educational and vocational qualifications as well as unique life experiences. They may have acquired valuable expertise in pastimes that they pursue. People leave these resources and talents behind them when they come to work. One of the goals of the coach should be to help people use their talents by tapping into their hobbies, interests, experiences, qualifications, and past achievements and transferring them to the workplace as appropriate.

♦ Helps people deal with problem behaviour such as workaholism, perfectionism and the inability to meet deadlines. Managers with an overbearing manner or an abrasive personality can be taught empathy skills. A lack of sensitivity when dealing with staff can cause problems not only in morale, but also in productivity. Coaching can impart assertiveness skills to managers who are unassertive and shy and thus avoid confrontation or speaking in public.

♦ Act as a sounding board. Instil company loyalty. Develop better goal setting and personal planning skills. Become more self-aware by getting to know your feelings, attitudes and values. It also means being aware of the effect you have on others, and the effect they have on you. Lead a more balanced life to reduce stress and lead to less burnout. Develop better confidence, self-esteem, self-acceptance and self-belief.

♦ Shorten learning curve for new roles. Coaching will help the learner adapt more quickly to a new position or to a changing environment. The learner doesn't have to re-invent the wheel but can draw on the experience of the coach to help them settle into their new role quickly and minimise the number of mistakes that they're likely to make.

♦ Raises the job performance of staff and increase productivity and quality of output. Improves morale because employees feel valued and connected and this increases job satisfaction. Consequently, motivation and morale improves and labour turnover is reduced.

♦ Develop employees by enhancing their skills and knowledge and positively change the behaviour of employees. Create a pool of talent from within the company by developing skills and competencies to help people advance as well as changing behaviours that are holding people back. Encourages continuous improvement and lifelong learning. Empower employees to deliver results and accept responsibility for their actions.

DEVELOP MANAGEMENT SKILLS

♦ Managers who are unable to delegate and have poor time management skills can be coached to become more personally and professionally effective. Coach those who have difficulty with handling change to accept it. Managers from a technical background with poor oral and written communication skills may need coaching to communicate more effectively.

♦ Coaching can give line managers who have been promoted to senior management positions leadership, strategic and visionary skills. The coach should pick a behaviour that is easiest to change, and then move successively to tackle more entrenched behaviours. Small successes will motivate the learner to go from strength to strength.

♦ The move away from hierarchy to team-based organisations means that many managers lack team-building and entrepreneurial skills. Coaching can help managers acquire these skills and become more team oriented with its emphasis on decision-making and collaboration rather than competition.

♦ Shows managers how to navigate office politics. A lack of political skills is often one of the areas some managers are deficient in and this hampers their promotion and even survival prospects in the company. Coaching provides fresh and invaluable insights into how organisations work and challenges facing the learner in the workplace.

♦ Succession planning. The manager grooms hi-performance employees for advancement and promotion by planning their on-the-job training in a systematic and purposeful way. Hi intensity training both on and off the job, special projects and job rotations may be part of the process.

♦ Bring under-performing executives up to an acceptable standard. Coaching is a just-in-time training rather than a just-in-case training, and thus meets real identified training needs. It targets precise problems such as communication, time management and interpersonal relationship skills. It can be used to enhance strengths and address weaknesses of managers.

♦ Improve abilities such as team building, change management, problem solving and decision making, strategy and politics, determining priorities, leadership style, rethinking of the future, developing key relationships and personal issues.

"We all know technical and functional wizards whose determination to succeed has pushed them rapidly up the ladder but whose leadership, team-building, change management, collaborative, or interpersonal skills are, to put it mildly, lacking."

– MacRae

ACT AS CONFIDANT FOR SENIOR MANAGERS

♦ The life of a chief executive can be lonely and stressful because of the long hours worked. They usually have a poor work-life balance, and consequently they have little time to develop personal friendships, but like anybody else they need to talk to someone. However, there are few people they can totally trust and confide in. The chairman sits on judgement on them, and the other directors are probably competing after their job, compromising their impartiality as potential confidants.

◆ Coaches provide a safe environment in which the chief executive can explore ideas and discuss decisions with a trusted, highly qualified, independent and impartial facilitator. An external coach will often provide objective independent feedback and provide different perspectives on problems. They will help the chief executive consider and systematically work through alternatives to business challenges and opportunities.

◆ Senior managers prefer to work with external coaches because of the need for confidentiality and impartiality when dealing with sensitive issues and when a wide range of business experience is needed. External coaches are more independent and less afraid and more likely to confront issues and to say difficult things that need to be said. However, there is the danger that an external coach will give wrong advice because of unfamiliarity with the intricacies of the business resulting in disastrous consequences for the manager and the company.

◆ An internal coach is preferred where specific detailed knowledge of the company's business, culture, products and politics is critical. An inside coach is also more available and accessible when needed. However, an inside coach from the Human Resource Department might be seen as having a conflict of interest and therefore lack impartiality.

> *"If you treat an individual as he is, he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought and could be."*
>
> – Goethe

DISADVANTAGES OF COACHING

Coaching - disadvantages			
Unsuitable values Time pressures	Lack of integration between coaching and training Not qualified as coach	Divided loyalties Misdiagnose problem	May make coachee unhappy Learner unwilling to change

Fig. 2.3. Disadvantages of coaching

◆ Managers may have values that are the antithesis of the coaching philosophy – "You make your own bed and you lie on it." They may have the attitude that people are responsible for their own behaviours, and also responsible for doing

something about them. The learner develops traits of dependency instead of self-sufficiency. Managers may believe that employees should be self-sufficient and figure things out for themselves. The coach will want to foster self-reliance and expand the learner's capacity to stretch and grow.

♦ Time pressure on managers. Coaching can take a lot of time; the process is a bit esoteric; and the results are uncertain. In addition, there may be lack of buy-in and support on the part of the manager when the coaching programme is implemented in the company often without adequate consultation or notice. If the manager doesn't want to be coached then you have an up-hill battle.

♦ There may be a lack of integration between coaching, training and development, career planning, succession planning and performance appraisal. The performance shortfall may be solved by one or a combination of the previous mentioned approaches. These approaches should be integrated and coordinated so that no duplication or overlap happens.

♦ Managers may be poorly qualified to coach. They may lack coaching, teaching, and interpersonal relationship skills. Indeed, they may lack the interest or desire to coach. The traditional manager is competitive, likes solving problems, and likes to be in control. These are not the sort of desirable qualities for a coach. A mismatch between the learning styles of coach and the learner may be an issue and has the capacity to derail the process. In addition, there may be a relationship failure or the values and beliefs of the coach and the learner are out of alignment.

♦ Personal agenda of coach. Staff may feel that the line manager as coach may have divided loyalties between their role as manager and role as coach. Consequently, they find it difficult to really open up to their line manager as they feel it might compromise future promotion. In addition, the line manager may just be going through the motions of coaching as it is seen to be currently in fashion in the company.

♦ The coach gives wrong advice because he misdiagnoses the problem. He may be treating symptoms as the disease, and this may damage rather than help the person being coached. The manager needs to have the judgement to know when the help of a professional clinical psychologist or counsellor is needed. For example, problem behaviour might be due to personal problems in the learner's life. Adjusting to married life, divorce, illness or struggling with a financial problem can be just some of the personal issues in a learner's life. Chronic business behaviour like workaholism, perfectionism and procrastination are often caused by inherent underlying psychological problems needing the help of a psychologist rather than a coach.

♦ Coaching can send people on non-business voyages of self-discovery making them uneasy and unhappy with their present circumstances. The learner might become so self-aware and dissatisfied that they decide the job is not for them and decide to leave the company to pursue an alternative career. This may be good for the person but bad for the business because of the cost of replacement and retraining.

♦ The learner must be willing and able to change. If the person is unwilling or unable to change then the coach's task is impossible. Some people are inflexible and are not willing to undertake new challenges, change and grow. Some people are satisfied with their current position and have no desire or motivation to change.

"I know you've heard it a thousand times before. But it's true – hard work pays off. If you want to be good, you have to practise, practise, practise. If you don't love something, then don't do it."

– Roy Bradbury

2.3   COACH MODEL

The acronym **COACH** will help you understand the coaching process.

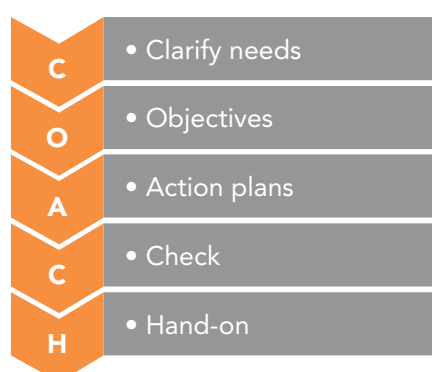| C | • Clarify needs |
O	• Objectives
A	• Action plans
C	• Check
H	• Hand-on

Fig. 2.4. COACH Model

◆ **C**larifying needs. It's often a balance between current performance level, organisational goals, and personal development needs and wishes. Find out what is important to the learner. What do they want versus business needs? Clarify the learner's needs before focusing on solutions. Create a positive focus by believing that people are willing and able to change. What behavioural patterns or inappropriate habits are hindering success? What are the benefits of solving this problem? How will you know when issues have been resolved? Ask the learner if they're aware about solutions applied elsewhere to similar problems.

◆ **O**bjectives. The goals must be meaningful to the learner. The prime objective is that the learner will acquire desired behaviours and eliminate undesirable ones. Set performance measures so that you know the standards to be achieved. Design a method for gauging progress towards the desired outcomes. This will be in the form of a time schedule with interim goals. Objectives should be realistic as unachievable ones will de-motivate learners.

◆ **A**ction plan. Jointly generate and evaluate options before firming up on an action plan. The coach who adopts a beginner's perspective of seeing every situation in a fresh light is free to explore novel possibilities. Major changes in behaviour are more achievable by small steps. The way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. If you try to make too many changes at once you are likely to become overwhelmed and fail. An action plan should be broken down into manageable measurable steps so that the learner is able to constantly assess progress. Small successes are motivational and when combined eventually will make a big difference. Dialogue is needed to gain commitment to the coaching plan. It's important that the plan is a collaborative effort between the coach and the learner. The plan will include objectives, actions and outcomes, skills to be improved or learned, behaviours to be acquired, levels of competency to be achieved, and a time frame in which all these are to take place. The coach's job is to gain the learner's commitment to action. It's about filling the gap between where the learner is and where they wish to be. Nothing is achieved until the learner takes the first step and is committed to complete the journey. The coach's job is to motivate the learner to stick to the task and stay on track.

◆ **C**heck and evaluate. What worked? What didn't work? What can we do better next time? What is a successful outcome? How will we feel when we achieve it? Learn from your successes, failures and near misses. Hold the learner accountable for achieving demonstrable outcomes in the workplace. Activities, skills, outcomes and behaviour will be evaluated against the agreed targets.

◆ **H**ands on approach. Coaching is all about on-the-job learning and practical issues. It focuses on solutions, practical outcomes, and desired behaviours and competencies in the workplace. Unlike training it's specific rather than generic and one-to-one rather than one-to-many. It solves immediate issues and has tangible results.

"A man can be as great as he wants to be. If you believe in yourself and have the courage, the determination, the dedication, the competitive drive and if you are willing to sacrifice the little things in life and pay the price for the things that are worthwhile, it can be done."

–Vince Lombardi

2.4   COACHING SKILLS

These can be considered under personal qualities and business skills.

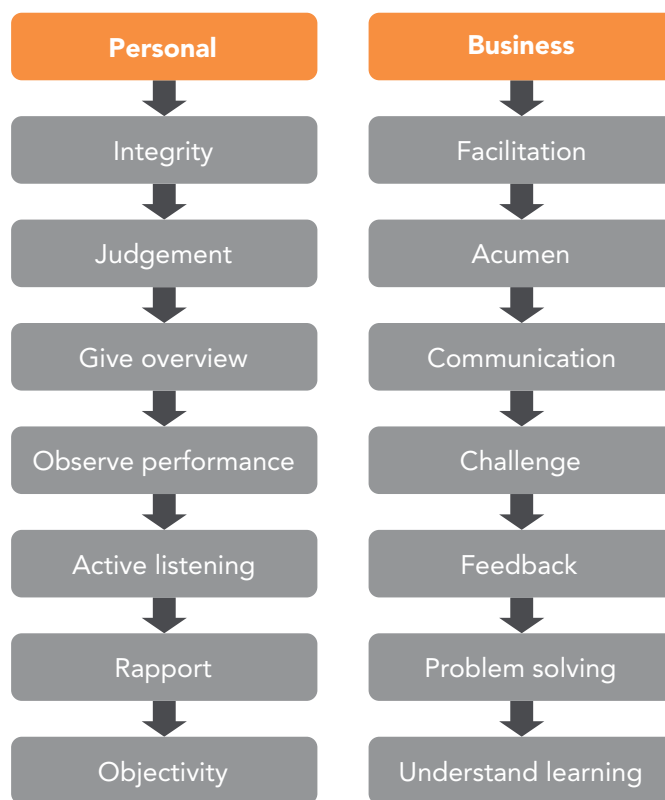| Personal	Business
Integrity	Facilitation
Judgement	Acumen
Give overview	Communication
Observe performance	Challenge
Active listening	Feedback
Rapport	Problem solving
Objectivity	Understand learning

Fig. 2.5. Coaching Skills

PERSONAL QUALITIES OF COACH

♦ **Integrity.** The coach must have a high standard of personal and professional ethics. The coach must be a trusted, honest, reliable, discreet and exude confidence. Trust enables the learner to say whatever they need to the coach and reflect openly on their mistakes and shortcomings without feeling threatened or that their confidences will be compromised. He should act in an authentic, transparent and genuine fashion by keeping his promises and telling the truth. Without mutual respect the relationship is unlikely to last. The coach should show regard, consideration and understanding for the learner's experience and opinions. Key interpersonal skills include questioning; listening; giving and receiving feedback; communicating and motivating.

♦ **Judgement.** The coach should know when to refer the learner to other specialists; e.g. psychologists if they feel that there are deeper psychological issues to be addressed and resolved. He should also understand the role of other specialists in the organisation such as trainers, counsellors and human resource specialists so that he can call on their expertise when he needs to do so.

♦ **The coach should be able to paint the big picture.** He must be able to take the strategic view or birds eye view of where the business is currently and where it wants to go. He should be able to ascertain the long-term development and promotional potential of the learner and must have the confidence to challenge, inspire and motivate learners to become self-actualised. Their job is to bring out the inherent greatness in the learners.

♦ **Observe performance.** The mental skills of the coach include observation and analysis, and the ability to plan and structure the coaching process for the learner in question. He should be able to help the learner identify their values and what activities give them the most satisfaction, passion and fulfilment in life. Work is play and so to be successful at work, the learner must find work that they really enjoy doing.

♦ **Practise active listening.** The coach should reflect back to the learner what he heard them say. Paraphrase in your own words so that the learner knows you understand them and to enable them to clarify any misunderstanding if you didn't. Listening is a rare skill and must be practised to become good at it.

♦ **Rapport.** Without empathy there can be little rapport. Being able to observe and manage moods, emotions and body language is a core workplace competence. The coach and learner must be on the same wavelength. Similar personalities and learning styles will help them get along better. They should understand themselves by being self-aware to enable them to understand others. The coach should be pleasant, courteous and tactful when dealing with the learner, and be able to interact, talk, ask questions and listen. They should act as a role model and "walk the talk" if they want to retain credibility by keeping

their promises and living up to their commitments. Coaching is a journey of self-discovery for both the coach and the learner. Each learns from the other. The coach needs the flexibility to customise his style to the learner's needs.

◆ **Objectivity.** The coach should remain objective, impartial, even-handed, non-judgemental, detached and operate within boundaries. For example, they should respect the personal wishes and boundaries of the learner, and not interfere in their personal lives.

BUSINESS SKILLS

◆ **Facilitation.** Get the learner to reflect on what they have learned. This means to facilitate rather than tell or advise. The coach should guide and support in a non-directive way. The learner should work out the solutions to problems themselves with the help of the coach. The coach should be optimistic and enthusiastic about the learner's ability to change. He should adopt the belief that the learner is naturally innovative, creative and resourceful and wants to improve but may occasionally offer advice, opinions or suggestions. However, both parties must understand that the learner is free to accept or reject what is offered and must always take the ultimate responsibility for actions taken. The coach should act as a sounding board, as sometimes all the learner wants is someone to listen non-judgementally to their ideas and concerns while at the same time availing of the coach's experience, expertise, encouragement, advice and guidance.

◆ **Business acumen** and experience. Learners expect their coach to have a good track record with considerable and varied business experience. Coaches must prove their worth as status alone no longer commands respect. They must have the necessary political skills of how to survive in a corporate culture to pass on to the learner, and business skills and knowledge of how complex organisational systems work. They must understand group dynamics, and human and organisational behaviour. They need a broad understanding of leadership if they want to pass on the knowledge and skills of leadership to learners.

◆ **Communication.** We listen at three levels called the 3-H's. At the head level we listen for thoughts. At the heart level for emotions and feelings. At the hands level for actions. What is the commitment of the learner to perform and actually do things to change? At the end of the day actions speak louder than words and are the ultimate sign that the learner has taken on board what we have said. A person who says one thing and does the opposite will not be trusted.

◆ The coach needs the ability to **ask challenging but non-threatening questions.** He should ask questions that prompt and motivate the learner to discover the answers for themselves. Where have I been? This helps you think of your journey

to the present. You are what you are because of your past. Where am I now? This takes stock of your present position. A strengths and weaknesses analysis might show that you're poor at time management or delegation. Where do I want to be? This should consider your learning goals. Visualise the situation you want to achieve. How can I get there? You can get there via an action programme. How will I know when I've arrived? This presupposes a mechanism for measurement and determining how much learning has taken place.

♦ **Provide feedback.** He should try to make feedback constructive. Some experts believe that sandwiching negative feedback between two positives softens the blow and makes it more palatable and acceptable to the coachee. Offer feedback in a safe setting. Feedback should be two-way so that as well as giving feedback the coach should also ask for feedback from the learner. Reframe situations to enable the learner to see it differently. The coach should suspend judgement about making assumptions about the learner.

♦ **Problem-solving and decision-making skills.** The coach should be able to offer new perspectives, insights to problems and alternative solutions. Their role is to be curious, to ask questions, to challenge ideas and assumptions, to uncover problems and explore ways of solving them. The learner is ultimately responsible for solving their problems.

♦ **Understanding learning.** He needs a good knowledge of coaching, teaching and training and development techniques and approaches. Coaches should understand how adults learn and be able to apply this knowledge to help them learn more efficiently and effectively. However, ultimately the coachee is responsible for managing their own learning to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to become.

♦ **Make learners more self-aware.** Assessment tools will help the manager identify behaviours in the learner that need to be eliminated or improved. The Johari Window, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) psychometric tests, emotional intelligence tests, and 360-degree feedback can be used for this purpose. These will improve the learner's perception of how they're perceived and impact on others. For example, the MBTI will indicate whether people are extroverted or introverted, whether they take an empirical or an intuitive approach to information, or whether they're more inclined to rigidity or spontaneity, logic or emotion. Knowing what your personality type is can be useful to both the coach and the learner to help then change for the better. The application and interpretation of this test requires professional expertise.

"I never cease to be amazed at the power of the coaching process to draw out the skills or talent that was previously hidden within an individual, and which invariably finds a way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable."

– John Russell, MD, Harley-Davidson Europe

2.5 RELATIONSHIP OF COACH TO LEARNER

Coach
- EQ
- Be there for Learner
- Respect
- Confidentiality
- Professionalism
- Communication
- Inspiration

Learner
- Honest
- Assertive
- Self-aware
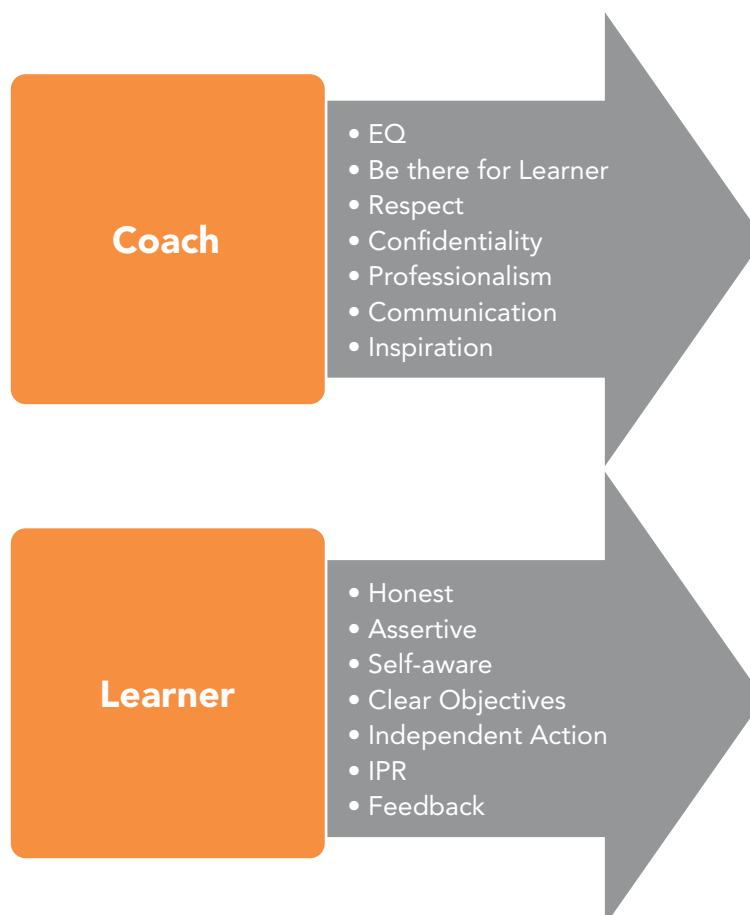- Clear Objectives
- Independent Action
- IPR
- Feedback

Fig. 2.6. Relationship of Coach to Learner

Coach

♦ Exercise emotional IQ. The coach and the learner need to develop their emotional IQ. This will help them understand and acknowledge the feelings and emotions of each other and others in a tactful way. Empathy is an important skill for the coach to develop. The coach should understand and see things from the learner's perspective.

♦ Being there for client. The coach should encourage the self-belief of the learner that they're capable of achieving goals. He should make them feel that he has their best interest at heart. The coach should awaken the enthusiasm of the learner to achieve results and engage in lifelong learning. He should act as a role model by leading by example and be there to support and guide the learner when needed.

♦ Respect. The coach should have a reputation for good leadership and business skills to win the respect of the learner. Without respect there can be little trust in a relationship. The coach should create an environment in which the learner receives unconditional positive regard irrespective of his personal feelings towards them. This means acceptance is never conditional; it is never withheld or withdrawn. It's just there. This creates an environment of mutual trust and respect where the learner's concerns are listened to in a non-judgemental way.

♦ Confidentiality. The coach is a trusted confidant and should exercise great discretion when dealing with the learner. It just takes a careless remark or outburst to undermine trust. The learner should feel safe to reflect openly on mistakes and weaknesses and to be honest with themselves and others. Confidential matters should never be discussed in front of others especially in front of colleagues. Therefore, it's important that the time and place to raise confidential matters is chosen with great care and consideration.

♦ Professionalism. The coach should be the epitome of professionalism. He should be organised with good time management and organisation skills and have high ethical standards and values. The coach should have integrity, honesty and a genuine concern for the welfare of the learner and always tell the truth and keep his promises.

♦ Communication. The coach should be non-judgemental, friendly, sensitive, supportive, collaborative and caring. There needs to be rapport or a personal chemistry or connection between the coach and the learner. He may occasionally be tough and confrontational, but in a helpful, challenging and supportive way.

♦ The coach should be able to inspire, motivate and get the learner's commitment to achieve the goals of the coaching plan. He should be able to draw out the innovation, creativity and enterprise of the learner to think of alternative ways to achieve goals.

LEARNER

♦ Should be open and honest. The learner should tell the coach if he has a specific reason for wanting or not wanting to do something. He should accept that the role of coach is to ask insightful questions, generate ideas and not necessarily provide answers. He must realise that he is totally responsible for his own learning and decisions and in particular for his training and development plans. Thus, the learner should maintain a learning log to record and control his learning experiences. You learn and remember better, when you record your experiences by writing them down and reviewing and reflecting on them.

♦ The learner needs to be assertive to ask questions, explore issues and make it clear what he wants. He should create information, expertise and supportive networks inside and outside the company to help further his career.

♦ The learner should be self-aware and know their strengths and weaknesses and thus know when to look for coaching in different situations. He should have the judgement to know when to accept advice and when to reject it.

♦ The learner should get the coach to clarify objectives in writing. The coach and learner should jointly create an action plan with deadlines so that progress towards goals can be measured and reviewed and corrective action taken as necessary to put the situation back on track again.

♦ The learner should be prepared to experiment through independent action. He should practise desired behaviours between sessions and prepare in advance for coaching sessions. The learner shouldn't be afraid to experiment and take calculated risks. People learn by making mistakes and reflecting on the lessons learned. He should be prepared to accept challenges, options and new behaviours on the journey towards reaching his goals.

♦ The learner should maintain positive interpersonal relationship with the coach to enhance the productivity of the arrangement. He should practise his interpersonal relationship skills with the coach and accept any feedback given. He should realise that the coach has his best interests at heart and wants the learner to improve in every area of his life to reach his true potential.

♦ The learner should expect to receive sound guidance and ongoing feedback both positive and negative from a competent dedicated coach to improve their skills and behaviour. The learner should be aware of their successes as well as their mistakes and should be prepared to accept the pain of constructive critical feedback.

♦ The learner should meet with the coach at least once a month for several sessions and after that as needed. They should take the initiative to see the coach as necessary as the coach may be unaware that they need help. The learner should have access to the coach for consultation between sessions by email and telephone. They should meet in the coach's office or other agreed place free from distractions, interference and disturbance.

◆ Before finally committing themselves to the coaching agreement they should make sure that their coach has the required business and technical skills to help them improve and reach their goals. They should pick a coach that they feel comfortable with. They will need to build up a good rapport with the coach if the relationship is to be productive, beneficial and successful. If there is a lack of chemistry between the coach and the learner then they should look for somebody else more compatible. If they are happy with their coach they should receive a formal written agreement and plan for the coaching sessions and should clarify with the coach the degree of confidentiality to be observed.

"Personal growth, unaided, can be slow and discouraging. With the help of a coach, people can tap into broader resources, faster. Moreover, they have the help of someone who brings experiences and perspectives that they might not access on their own."

– Richard Haasnoot, Coach

2.6   SUMMARY

There are similarities and differences between coaching, mentoring, training and counselling. All of these approaches can be used to improve the productivity of managers and staff. Coaching is just in time and is skills and performance related and like mentoring is usually one-to-one. It's done in the workplace. The coach may be a line manager or an external consultant. Mentoring is usually done by an internal manager other than the line manager and is development and growth oriented. It's also normally done in the workplace. Training is usually generic and just in case and more short-term. It's usually done with groups of people, off the job in a training centre. Coaching helps develop employees and improves job performance, productivity and morale. It may have problems such as a mismatch between the coach, and the learner or the coach may lack good coaching skills. Counselling is an interactive process that facilitates meaningful understanding of self and environment and results in the establishment and clarification of personal goals and values.

The **COACH** model may be used to understand the coaching process. It stands for:

◆ **C**larifying needs
◆ **O**bjectives for behaviour change
◆ **A**ction plan
◆ **C**heck and evaluate
◆ **H**ands on approach

There should be a good match between the coach and the person being coached, and ideally, they should have compatible personality and learning styles. The coach should have good facilitation skills and be available when the learner needs him. He needs great tact and empathy, and to be able to customise his approach to the needs of the learner. The learner should accept that the role of the coach is to ask questions, clarify issues, to give advice, and not necessarily to provide answers. The learner should be prepared to accept the pain of constructive negative feedback.

2.7   FIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR COACHING SKILLS

1. The manager as coach should develop facilitation skills. This means the coach should suggest rather than tell, act as a sounding board, get the learner to work out their own solutions, be non-directive by guiding and supporting the learner, and clarify issues and suggest alternatives for consideration rather than giving definitive answers.

2. The coach and learner should jointly agree a coaching action plan. The coach then needs to get commitment to this plan and set down the expected outcomes and the time schedule for their achievement. He should organise meetings to discuss progress towards the attainment of interim goals.

3. The coach should practise communication skills such as active and reflective listening, asking questions, clarifying issues, acting the devil's advocate, reframing situations, and giving and receiving feedback.

4. The coach should create rapport with the learner by establishing sound interpersonal relationships and building mutual respect and trust. The coaching relationship is confidential and must be strictly observed. Trust takes a considerable time to establish but can be destroyed quickly even with as little as a careless unintentional comment.

5. The coach should remind the learner of their responsibilities. These include to be open and honest; to ask questions and look for feedback; to take the initiative if necessary to see the coach; to develop the maturity necessary to accept the pain of negative constructive feedback; to maintain a learning log; and to accept responsibility for their own learning.

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The artwork in this text was produced by the author with the aid of Microsoft's 'SmartArt' creatively combined with the clipart facility in the word package. Some of the artwork was accessed through Google. Known copyright material accessed through Google has been acknowledged. I will gladly acknowledge any other copyright material brought to my attention in future editions.

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Samuel A Malone is a self-employed training consultant, lecturer and author. He has published numerous journal articles in the fields of learning, study skills, personal development, motivation and management. He is the author of 28 books published in Ireland, the UK and abroad on learning, personal development, study skills and business management. Some of his books have gone into foreign translations including Russian, Spanish, Danish and Norwegian, and second editions. Some of his books have been published in India. He has an M.Ed. with distinction (in training and development) from the University of Sheffield and is a qualified Chartered Management Accountant (ACMA), Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) and a Chartered Secretary (ACIS) and a Member of the Irish Institute of Industrial Engineers (MIIE). He is a fellow of the Irish Institute of Training and Development (FIITD).

Previous books published by the author include Awaken the Genius Within (2014). (*Glasnevin Publishing Dublin) Why Some People Succeed and Other Fail* (2011) *Glasnevin Publishing Dublin. Learning about Learning* (2003) (CIPD London), A *Practical Guide to Learning in the Workplace* (2005) (The Liffey Press Dublin), *Better Exam Results* (2005) (Elsevier/CIMA, London) and Mind Skills for Managers (1997) (Gower, Aldershot, UK) and *How To Set Up and Manage A Corporate Learning Centre* (2003) (Gower, Aldershot, UK). The last two books became best-sellers for Gower in their training and business categories. *Better Exam Results* proved to be a best-seller for Elsevier/CIMA and is still in print 30 years after its earliest incarnation (*Learning to Learn)*. Most of my published books are available on Amazon.co.uk. His latest books have been published online by bookboon.com in 2018 namely:

- *The Role of the Brain in Learning*
- *How Adults Learn*
- *Learning Models and Styles*
- *Experiential Learning*
- *Learning with Technology*
- *The Ultimate Success Formula*
- *A series of books on People Skills for Managers*

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