



Building Organizations **Delivering Results**

Organizational Design + Effectiveness

Coaching Guide

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Nova Scotia Public Service Commission
Talent Management Unit
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This coaching guide has been designed to support the leadership, career planning and development of employees and is based on our values of *respect, integrity, diversity, accountability, and the public good.*

Nothing in this document should be interpreted as modifying or limiting the provisions of any collective agreement between the Province of Nova Scotia and its employees. In all cases, the terms of the collective agreement will take precedence over the contents of this document.

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What is Coaching

Coaching is about developing skills and improving performance and therefore is an integral part of the performance management cycle, career planning, talent management and training and development. It can be done by Managers as part of guiding and encouraging employee development. It can also be done by a professional coach who is working with you on a specific performance goal or competency development.

In absence of taking a formal coaching course or using a professional coach, this document serves as a guide to assist managers and employee to benefit from a coaching relationship. It includes successful coaching practices and working tools, gives tips on coaching that build on the skills you're using daily - inspiring, encouraging and challenging employees.

Coaching supports many of the goals in the Corporate HR Plan. Benefits of coaching include but are not limited to:

- Helps professional development and retention
- Recognizes and rewards good behavior
- Improves work performance
- Increases productivity

Coaching Is	Coaching Is Not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one on one conversations • done on an on going basis and should be linked to your personal development plan • focused on goal setting, improving performance and developing skills • focused on both individual and organizational goals • collaborative and supportive • probing and listening (The coach should look to talk 30% of the time while the employee talks 70% of the time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • random conversations with random results • judgmental • forced on an individual, it will only work if they trust the relationship • counseling • a one off event/meeting

Why is Coaching Important?

For Managers

- It enables managers to behave like leaders rather than supervisors
- It improves the manager-employee relationship
- Can free up time to do other types of development, since employees are growing and taking on additional tasks
- It engages both the employee and manager, realigns work and creates flexibility in the workplace

For Employees

- Empowers the employee to continuously learn and improve performance
- Ensures that employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to perform their tasks
- Provides opportunity to discuss career plans and how to get there
- Lets you receive recognition for a job/task well done



Want a Coach?

How to select a Coach

Consider the following when selecting your coach:

- Does the prospective coach have appropriate coaching experience?
- Is this person committed to the coaching role (think time, belief in the civil service values and interest in developing people)?
- Does this person work well with you and respect you?
- Do they provide clear direction?
- Is this person aware of the learning and development available to you within the organization?
- Do they have an understanding of the coaching role and the boundaries?
- Does this person set a good example; do they have a track record of success?

Are you ready to be coached?

Ask yourself the following questions before you embark on a coaching relationship:

- Are you committed to improving your performance?
- Have you picked a coach who will help you develop?
- Are you ready to accept feedback with a focus on improving?
- Are you willing to apply learning on the job?
- Are you willing to commit to the coaching relationship and put in the time to improve your skills and capabilities?

A key success factor in a coaching relationship is the willingness to receive and act on feedback. [Click](#)

(http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/pdf/InnovationGrowth/Mentor/Guide%20for%20Mentoring_Intro.pdf)
for a checklist to see how well you fare in receiving feedback.(see mentoring guide)

Tips for successful listening, see the mentoring guide

(http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/pdf/InnovationGrowth/Mentor/Guide%20for%20Mentoring_Intro.pdf)



Want to be a Coach?

Coaching Style Guide

There are many reasons for coaching. You may have a staff member who is very motivated and just needs direction or you may have someone you need to motivate and/or who needs to improve performance. To be effective the employee and reason for coaching should both dictate how the coaching should play out. The tips can help you when coaching for performance or for development purposes.

Coaching Best Practice	Think about
Set the standard	Practice what you preach/be a role model
Vary your coaching style	What is important to this employee? All employees are motivated by different things and therefore you need to use rewards and examples that will be meaningful.
Practice active listening – you should be tired at the end of the session	Have you ever been frustrated by someone who is not engaged or jumps in with a solution too soon? *see <i>Tips for successful listening</i>
Help your employee help themselves	Do your best to guide the employee to come up with their own solution.
Know why you are Coaching	There should be a coaching need or opportunity that is clearly defined. The need or needs may come out of the performance management process. Career development discussions should identify coaching opportunities.
Quick Coaching	Practicing your active listen and probing skills on a day to day basis, giving feedback and encouragement to your staff.
Stay focused	Ensure that you keep a performance related coaching session on track by not letting defense techniques sway you.



Leading a Coaching Session – best practice

Identify a coaching need/opportunity	<p>Coach or Employee identifies a performance or development need and initiates a meeting</p> <p>Coach prepares some open and closed questions to help guide them through the process</p> <p>If it's a follow-up meeting review notes from the last session</p> <p>Develop a coaching plan</p>
Coach	<p>Restate the reason for the session</p> <p>Agree roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Search for solution/action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather factual information • Active listening • Probing • Use open and closed questions to guide the conversation (The coach should look to talk 30% of the time while the employee talks 70%) <p>Use closed questions to bring the session to a close and clarify next steps/gain agreement</p> <p>Summarize</p> <p>Agree next steps</p>
Follow up	<p>Ensure actions are completed, help where needed</p> <p>Commit to actions and next steps</p> <p>Book next meeting</p> <p>Follow-up to ensure action</p>

For some practice on open vs. closed questions please click here
<http://wdev1.gov.ns.ca/psc/hrCentre/resources/ode/performanceManagement.asp>



Questioning Skills Funnel

Open Questions:

- Used to open conversation
- Used to gather information
- Usually begin with 'what, why or how'
- Asks for knowledge, opinion and feelings

What happened at the meeting?
How was the session?
What took place next?

Closed Questions:

- Used to check for understanding
- Used to gather specific facts
- Usually elicit short responses such as Yes or No
- Bring focus to conversation

What colour is the sky?
Are you right or left handed?
Is today your birthday?



Tips for successful listening

(http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/pdf/InnovationGrowth/Mentor/Guide%20for%20Mentoring_Intro.pdf)

Developing a coaching culture

Practicing these coaching best practice tips on a daily basis, both informally and in formal coaching sessions will help us develop our employees, and move towards a culture of coaching for employee development.

