Coaching Skills for Managers Guide

Designed for managers, team leads, consultants, and career professionals who want to move beyond directing — and start developing the people around them. This guidebook gives you the frameworks, language, and practical tools to coach with confidence, starting today.

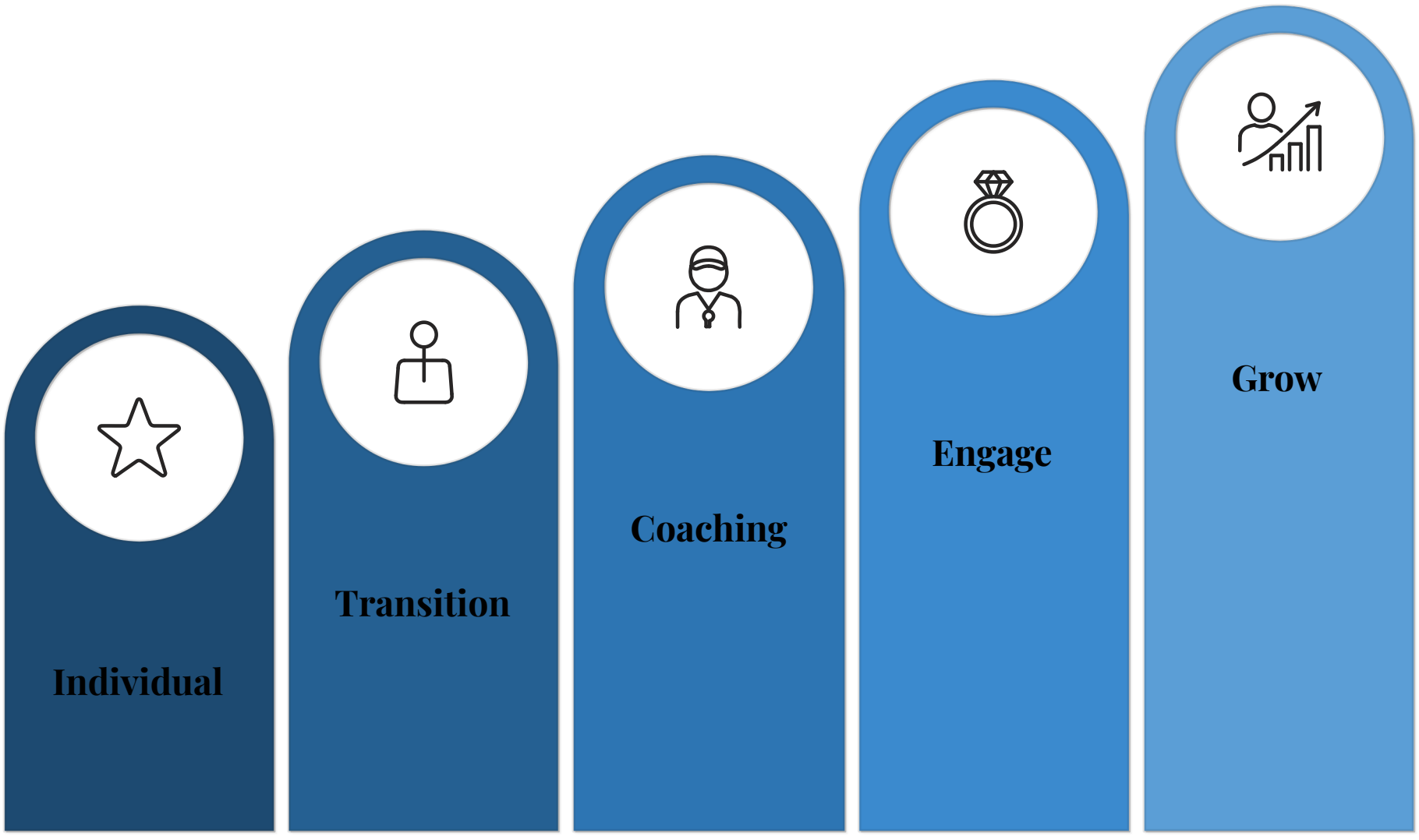


INTRODUCTION

Why Coaching Skills Are the #1 Manager Competency Right Now

Most managers are promoted because they were exceptional individual contributors — brilliant at their craft, reliable, results-driven. But here is the uncomfortable truth: the skills that made you a star performer are not the same skills that make you an exceptional leader. The shift from **doing** to **developing** is the hardest — and most important — transition a manager will ever make.

Today's workforce demands more than task delegation and performance reviews. Employees — especially millennials and Gen Z professionals — want to feel seen, challenged, and grown. They want managers who ask powerful questions, not just managers who give answers. Research consistently shows that employees under coaching-style managers report higher engagement, lower attrition, and stronger performance outcomes. The ROI of coaching is not a soft metric — it's a business imperative.



This guidebook was built for time-poor managers who need practical tools, not textbook theory. Whether you're a first-time manager finding your footing, a mid-career professional refining your leadership style, or a consultant looking to add coaching capability to your toolkit — this resource meets you where you are. Each section is modular: read it end-to-end the first time, then return to individual modules as reference cards when you need them in the field.

What This Guidebook Solves

- The "I just give answers" manager trap
- Feeling unsure how to handle underperformance without damaging trust
- Defaulting to telling instead of asking
- Struggling to motivate a disengaged team member
- Having feedback conversations that don't land

How to Use This Guide

- **First read:** Work through it end-to-end to build the full mental model
- **Reference mode:** Return to specific modules before important conversations
- **Worksheet mode:** Use the action elements to practise and reflect
- **Team mode:** Share with your team leads as a shared language resource

CORE SKILL

Building Trust

Trust is the bedrock of any effective coaching relationship. Without it, coachees may hesitate to share vulnerabilities, commit to challenging goals, or truly engage in the developmental process. For managers transitioning into a coaching role, actively cultivating trust moves the relationship from a transactional one focused on tasks to a transformational one focused on growth and development. It's about creating a safe space where honesty, transparency, and genuine collaboration can thrive.

Competence

Demonstrating skill, knowledge, and experience relevant to the coachee's challenges, assuring them that you can provide valuable guidance.

Reliability

Being consistent in your words and actions, following through on commitments, and showing up fully for coaching sessions.

Integrity

Upholding honesty, ethical behaviour, and confidentiality. This includes maintaining discretion about sensitive information shared during coaching.

Care & Empathy

Showing genuine concern for the coachee's well-being, growth, and success, rather than just focusing on performance metrics.

Establishing trust takes time and consistent effort. It's built through repeated positive interactions and a demonstration of genuine commitment to the coachee's journey. Managers who prioritise building trust find that their coaching conversations yield deeper insights and more sustainable results.

CORE SKILL

Team Accountability

Fostering team accountability is a cornerstone of effective management, yet it's often misunderstood as merely assigning tasks and ensuring completion. In a coaching paradigm, accountability transcends simple compliance; it's about cultivating a deep sense of ownership and commitment among team members. When managers shift from dictating responsibilities to coaching for accountability, they empower individuals to take initiative, solve problems proactively, and consistently deliver on commitments, thereby strengthening overall team performance and trust.

Coaching provides a powerful framework for instilling this self-driven accountability. Rather than imposing consequences, a coaching approach focuses on clarifying expectations, facilitating self-reflection on progress, and jointly developing solutions for challenges. This method not only enhances individual performance but also promotes a culture where team members feel a shared responsibility for collective success, understanding their impact on the broader objectives.

01

Co-create Clear Expectations

Engage team members in defining goals and performance metrics. When individuals contribute to setting their objectives, they develop a stronger sense of ownership and personal accountability.

02

Empower Ownership

Encourage team members to identify obstacles and propose solutions. Coach them to take responsibility for their contributions, fostering a mindset of proactive problem-solving rather than waiting for direction.

03

Provide Consistent Feedback

Offer timely, specific, and constructive feedback focusing on behaviours and impact, not just outcomes. This helps individuals understand where they stand and how to course-correct, driving continuous improvement.

04

Foster Collective Commitment

Highlight the interconnectedness of individual roles within the team's larger goals. Coach the team to support each other and hold one another accountable for shared responsibilities, reinforcing a culture of mutual reliance.

By adopting these coaching practices, managers can transform team accountability from a supervisory chore into a powerful driver of engagement, innovation, and sustained high performance. This approach not only achieves better results but also contributes significantly to the professional growth and development of each team member.

MODULE 1

The Coaching Mindset: Shifting from Manager to Coach

Before you learn a single coaching technique, you need to upgrade the operating system. The most common mistake new coaching managers make is trying to apply coaching tools with a manager's mindset — and it shows. Coaching is not a technique layered on top of your existing style. It is a fundamentally different **orientation** toward the people you lead.

A coaching mindset rests on one foundational belief: **the person in front of you already has more capacity, insight, and resourcefulness than they are currently using.** Your job is not to fill them with your wisdom — it is to create the conditions in which their own wisdom can surface. This single belief-shift changes everything: how you ask questions, how you listen, how you respond to struggle, and how you measure your own success as a leader.

Manager Mindset

- "I need to have the answer"
- Fixes problems quickly
- Gives instructions and direction
- Measures success by output
- Expertise is the currency

Coaching Mindset

- "They have the answer inside them"
- Explores problems together
- Asks questions and reflects back
- Measures success by growth
- Curiosity is the currency

The transition is not about abandoning your expertise — you will still need to give direction, make decisions, and provide subject-matter guidance. The art is knowing *when* to coach and when to manage. As a starting rule: default to coaching when the stakes allow it, and the person has the capability to find a path forward with support.

Mindset Checkpoint: Before your next 1:1, ask yourself — "Am I showing up to solve, or to explore?" That one question will tell you which mode you are in.

MODULE 2

The GROW Model: Your Core Coaching Framework

The GROW Model is the most widely used and practically tested coaching framework in the world. Developed by Sir John Whitmore and used by executive coaches across Fortune 500 companies, it gives you a structured conversation architecture that moves a person from a fuzzy challenge to a clear, committed action plan — in a single conversation.

GROW is not a rigid script. Think of it as a GPS for your coaching conversations: it tells you where you are and what kind of question to ask next, but the route always adapts to the person in front of you. Each phase unlocks a different kind of thinking in your team member — and together, they create momentum that a simple advice-giving conversation never could.

The magic of GROW lies in its sequencing. Jumping straight to Options (solutions) without first establishing Goal and Reality is the most common coaching error — it leads to solutions that don't fit the real problem. Work the model in order, especially when you're building the habit.

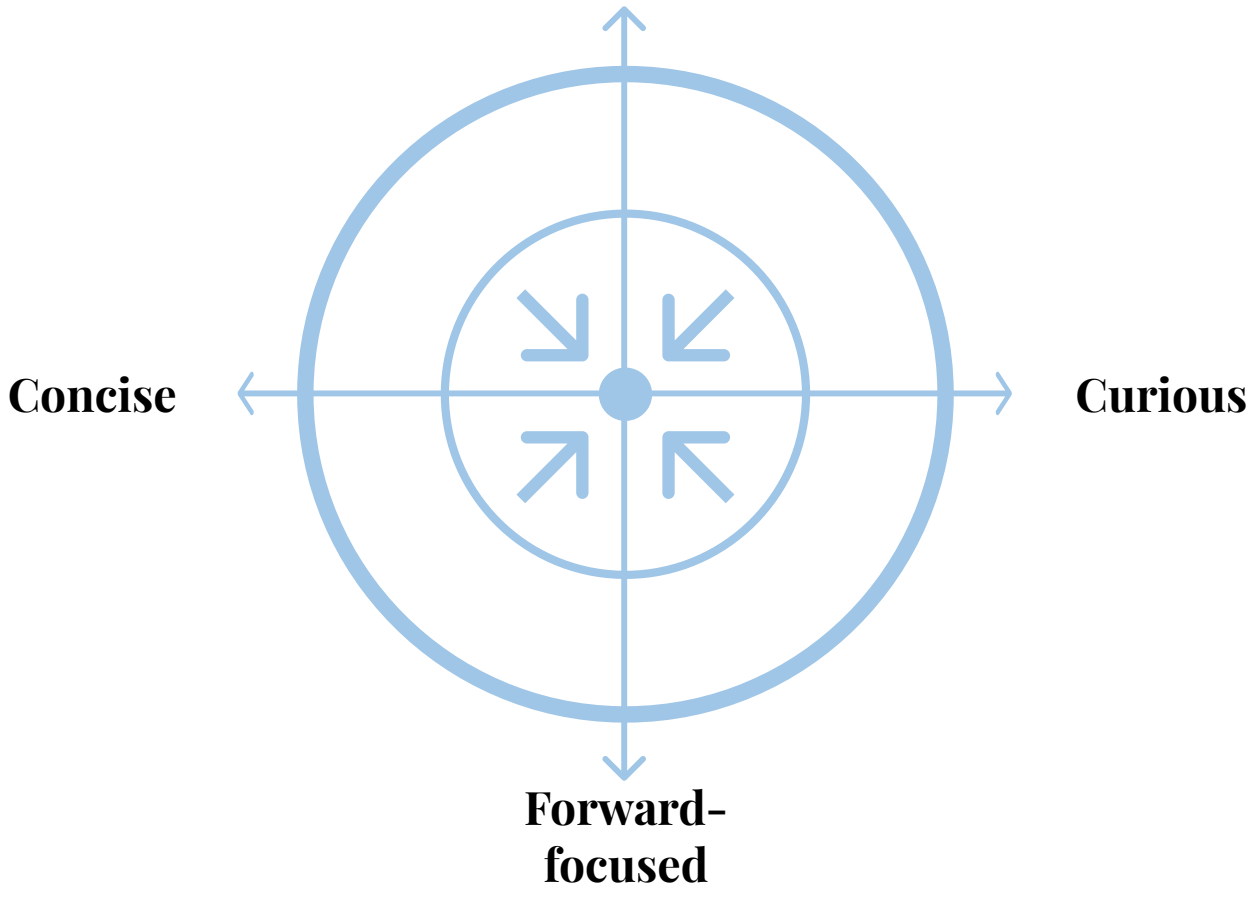
Phase	Purpose	Sample Questions
Goal	Clarify what success looks like	"What would you like to achieve from this conversation?" / "What does a good outcome look like for you?"
Reality	Map the current situation honestly	"Where are things right now?" / "What have you already tried?" / "What's getting in the way?"
Options	Generate possibilities without judgement	"What could you do?" / "What else?" / "If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you try?"
Will	Commit to a specific next step	"What will you do, and by when?" / "On a scale of 1–10, how committed are you to this?"

MODULE 3

The Art of Powerful Questions

If the GROW model is the architecture, powerful questions are the material. The quality of your coaching is determined almost entirely by the quality of your questions. Most managers default to closed questions ("Did you speak to them?"), leading questions ("Don't you think you should try X?"), or advice disguised as questions ("Have you considered just doing what I would do?"). These are dead ends in a coaching conversation.

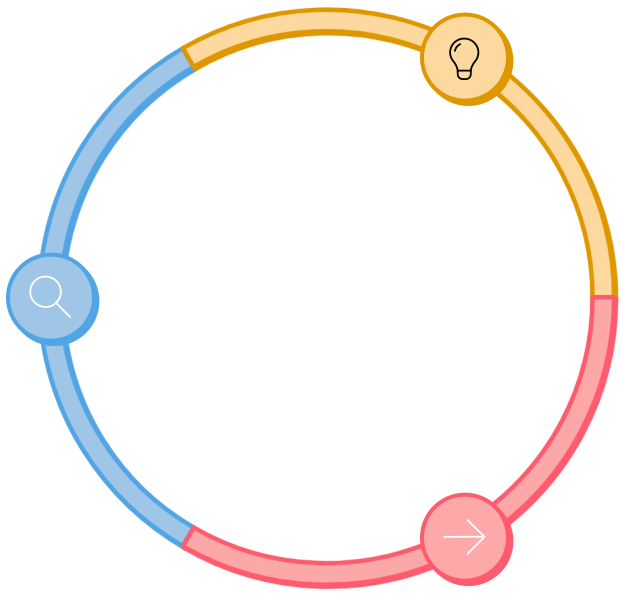
Powerful questions share four characteristics: they are **open** (require more than yes/no), **curious** (genuinely exploratory, not loaded), **forward-focused** (oriented toward possibility, not blame), and **concise** (the shorter the question, the more space it creates). The best coaching questions are often just five to seven words long. The extra words you add are usually your anxiety — not the coachee's need.



Awareness Questions

Surface what the coachee already knows but hasn't fully articulated yet.

- "What's really going on here?"
- "What are you not saying?"
- "What does this situation tell you about yourself?"



Possibility Questions

Unlock creative thinking and break through mental blocks.

- "What would be possible if this constraint didn't exist?"
- "What haven't you tried yet?"
- "What would the best version of you do?"

Accountability Questions

Shift from exploration to committed, measurable action.

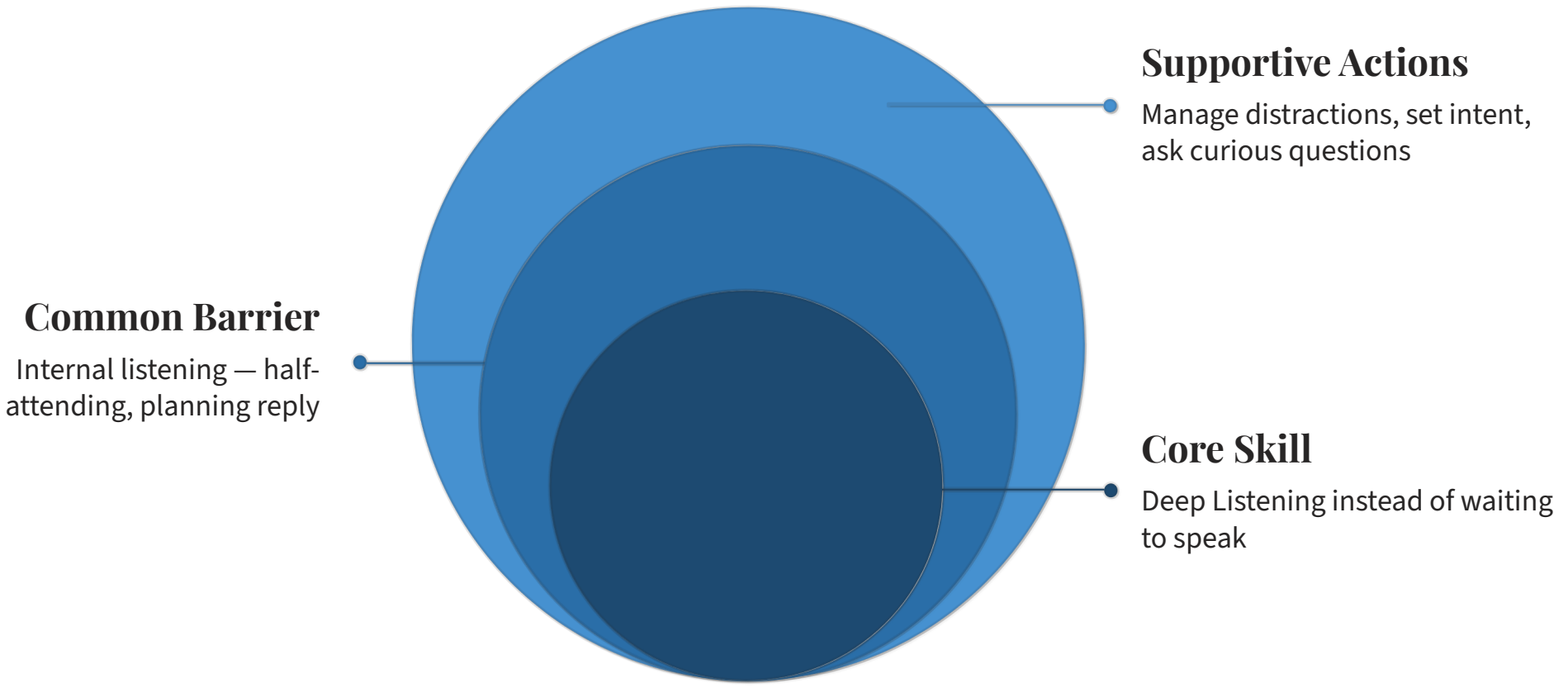
- "What specifically will you do, and when?"
- "What support do you need from me?"
- "How will I know you've done it?"

Practice Drill: In your next 1:1, write down every question you ask. Afterwards, review: How many were truly open? How many were advice in disguise? This simple audit will transform your coaching faster than any course.

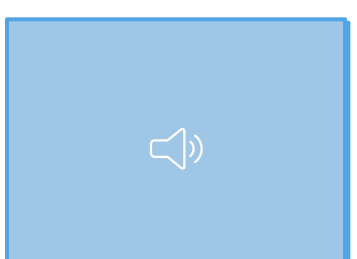
MODULE 4

Level 3 Listening: The Skill Most Managers Skip

Most people listen at Level 1 — internal listening — where they're half-attending to what the other person is saying and half-preparing their response. Managers are especially prone to this because their minds are full: deadlines, deliverables, the three other conversations they need to have today. Level 1 listening is not coaching. It is waiting to talk.



Level 2 listening is focused listening — where you are fully present to the words, tone, and content of what the other person is saying. This is where most coaching conversations need to operate. Level 3 listening — sometimes called environmental or global listening — is the highest form: you are attending to what is *not* being said, the energy in the room, the hesitation before a word, the disconnect between what someone says and how they say it. This is where transformational coaching happens.



Level 1: Internal Listening

Focused on your own thoughts, preparing responses while the other person speaks. Misses most of what's actually being communicated.



Level 2: Focused Listening

Fully present to the other person's words, content, and meaning. The foundation of effective coaching conversations.



Level 3: Global Listening

Attending to what is unsaid — tone, body language, energy, the hesitation, the emotion beneath the words. Where real insight lives.

To access Level 3 listening, you must first silence your own agenda. Before your next coaching conversation, take thirty seconds to set an intention: "I am here to listen, not to fix." Notice what shifts. The most powerful interventions often come not from a brilliant question, but from a simple observation: "I noticed that when you talked about that project, your energy dropped. What's that about?"

MODULE 5

Coaching Conversations: A Step-by-Step Playbook

Theory is essential — but what you really need is a conversation script you can actually use on Monday morning. This module gives you a practical, phase-by-phase playbook for running a coaching conversation from opening to close. Each phase has a clear purpose, suggested timing, and language you can borrow directly.

A well-structured coaching conversation does not need to be long. A focused 20–30 minute session using this playbook will consistently outperform a 60-minute meeting that wanders without structure. The key is discipline in the opening (setting the focus) and the close (anchoring the commitment).

1

Open the Space (2–3 mins)

Set the container. Ask: *"What would make this the most useful conversation for you today?"* Let them set the agenda — not you. This single step shifts ownership immediately.

2

Explore the Goal (3–5 mins)

Clarify what they want to achieve — from the conversation and from the situation. Distinguish between the presenting issue (what they say) and the real issue (what's underneath). Ask: *"What would success look like for you here?"*

3

Map the Reality (5–8 mins)

Help them see their situation clearly — without judgment. Surface assumptions, patterns, and blind spots. Reflect back what you're hearing: *"What I'm hearing is... does that land?"* Stay curious, not diagnostic.

4

Generate Options (5–8 mins)

Brainstorm possibilities without evaluating. Use: *"What else?"* repeatedly until the list is exhausted. Resist the urge to add your own ideas until they've generated at least three of their own — their solutions will always have more buy-in than yours.

5

Lock the Commitment (3–5 mins)

Translate insight into action. Get specific: what, how, and by when. Test commitment: *"On a scale of 1–10, how motivated are you to do this?"* If it's below 7, explore what's blocking them before you close.

Active Listening: The Foundation of Connection

Active listening is far more than just hearing words; it's a conscious, intentional effort to understand the complete message being communicated. It builds directly upon the principles of Level 2 and Level 3 listening, requiring you to fully engage with the speaker, both intellectually and emotionally. For managers, mastering active listening is crucial because it fosters trust, clarifies misunderstandings, and enables coachees to feel truly heard and valued, which in turn encourages deeper reflection and ownership.

In a coaching context, active listening means silencing your internal monologue and putting the coachee's perspective at the forefront. It involves not just processing their words but also observing their body language, vocal tone, and any hesitations, connecting these observations to the verbal message. This holistic approach allows you to identify underlying concerns or unstated needs, which are often the true catalysts for coaching.

Full Attention

Eliminate distractions and give the coachee your undivided presence. Make eye contact and orient your body towards them to signal engagement.

Non-Verbal Cues

Use subtle gestures like nodding, an open posture, and encouraging facial expressions to show you are following along without interrupting.

Paraphrase & Summarise

Reflect back what you've heard in your own words. This confirms understanding and gives the coachee an opportunity to clarify or elaborate.

Ask Clarifying Questions

Probe gently for more detail or deeper meaning. Use phrases like "Could you explain what you mean by...?" or "Tell me more about that."

Patience & Pauses

Resist the urge to fill silence. Allowing pauses gives the coachee space to think, process, and formulate their thoughts more completely.

Listening Trap: Managers often mistake "solving" for "listening." Your role as a coach is to create the space for the coachee to find their own solutions. Active listening is the tool that carves out that space.

ACTION ELEMENT 1

Pre-Conversation Coaching Checklist

Use this checklist before every coaching conversation to ensure you show up prepared, grounded, and in the right mindset. The most common reason coaching conversations fail is not skill — it is preparation. Managers who brief themselves before a session consistently produce better outcomes. Run through this list in the two minutes before you walk into the room or open the video call.

1

🧠 Mindset Prep

- ☐ I am approaching this as an explorer, not an expert
- ☐ I have set aside my own agenda for this conversation
- ☐ I believe this person has the answers they need inside them
- ☐ I am curious about their experience, not just their output

2

🗂️ Context Prep

- ☐ I know what we discussed in the last session
- ☐ I am aware of any commitments they made and their follow-through
- ☐ I have noted any patterns I've observed in their behaviour recently
- ☐ I have a clear sense of their development goals, not just their work goals

3

🛑 What to Leave at the Door

- ☐ My solution to their problem
- ☐ My judgement about the choices they've made
- ☐ My own stress about the team or project
- ☐ The assumption that I know what they need

Pro Tip: If you cannot check most boxes in the Mindset Prep section, consider rescheduling the conversation or taking five minutes to reset. A coaching conversation with a closed mind is worse than no coaching conversation at all.

ACTION ELEMENT 2

Reflection Worksheet: Discovering Your Coaching Style

Every manager brings a unique set of strengths and default patterns to coaching. Before you can coach effectively, you need to understand how you currently show up — what you default to under pressure, where your blind spots live, and which coaching behaviours come naturally to you versus which ones you need to consciously practise. This worksheet is designed to be completed honestly and privately. There are no right or wrong answers.

Reflection 1: Your Default Mode

When a team member brings you a problem, what is your typical first response?

☐ I give them my solution immediately ☐ I ask them what they think ☐ I help them think through it together ☐ I send them to someone with more expertise

What does this tell you about your default orientation — manager, advisor, or coach?

Your reflection:

_____

_

Reflection 2: Your Listening Gaps

Think of a recent conversation where you felt you missed something important. What were you focusing on instead of truly listening?

Your reflection: _____

What is one thing you could do differently to listen at a deeper level next time?

Your commitment:

_____

Reflection 3: Your Coaching Strengths

Which coaching behaviours come most naturally to you? (Circle all that apply)

Asking open questions | Holding space without fixing | Giving honest feedback | Building rapport quickly | Staying curious under pressure | Helping people see their blind spots

How can you lean into these strengths more intentionally in your next 1:1?

Your plan: _____

MODULE 6

Coaching for Performance: Having the Hard Conversations

One of the most common coaching scenarios managers face is also the most avoided: the underperformance conversation. Most managers handle it one of two ways — they either avoid it until it becomes a formal HR issue, or they swing to the opposite extreme and have a blunt, demoralising correction conversation that damages trust and increases defensiveness. Neither works. Coaching offers a third path.



The coaching approach to performance challenges starts from a fundamentally different premise: **underperformance is a symptom, not a diagnosis.** Before you can address it, you need to understand what is driving it. Is it a skill gap? A motivation issue? Unclear expectations? A personal situation bleeding into work? External blockers the person hasn't felt safe to raise? Coaching creates the space to find out — and in doing so, dramatically increases the chance of a real, lasting change.

The SBI Feedback Framework

Use the SBI (Situation–Behaviour–Impact) model to anchor your performance coaching conversation in observable facts, not judgement. This prevents defensiveness and opens the door for genuine reflection.

- **Situation:** "In last Tuesday's client call..."
- **Behaviour:** "...I noticed you interrupted the client three times..."
- **Impact:** "...which I observed made them withdraw from the conversation."

After stating SBI, shift to coaching mode: *"What was going on for you in that moment?"* You've named the observation — now let them explore the cause.

Before You Label It "Underperformance"

Ask yourself these five diagnostic questions:

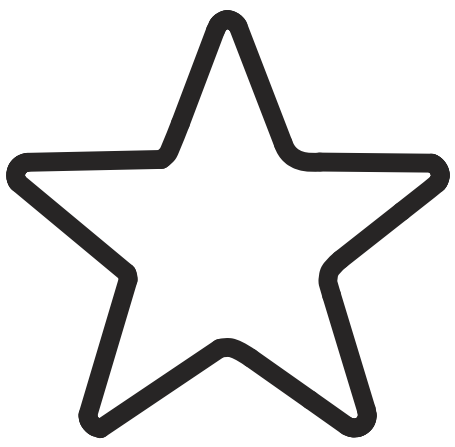
1. Do they know exactly what is expected?
2. Have they been shown how to do it correctly?
3. Do they have the resources and support they need?
4. Are there personal or environmental factors at play?
5. Is this a pattern or a one-time event?

MODULE 7

Coaching for Development: Growing Your High Performers

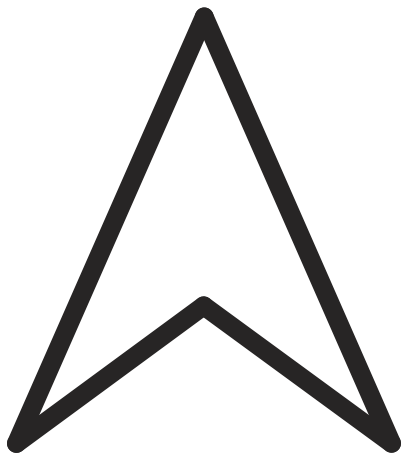
Coaching is not just for fixing problems — it is most powerful when applied to your strongest people. Yet most managers spend the majority of their coaching time on underperformers, leaving high performers on autopilot. This is a leadership mistake with serious consequences: high performers who feel unseen and unchallenged are the ones most likely to leave, and they're the hardest to replace.

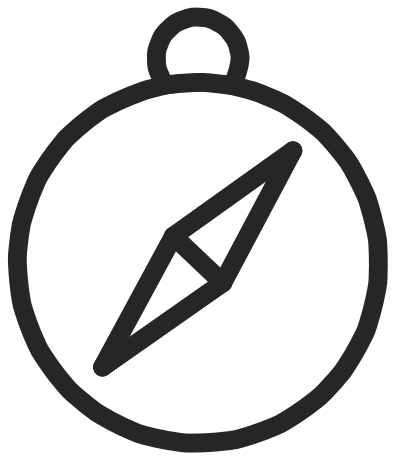
Coaching your high performers looks different from performance coaching. The conversations are less about removing blockers and more about **expanding horizons** — helping them see further, take on more complex challenges, build leadership identity, and connect their work to their long-term career story. These conversations require a shift from coach-as-supporter to coach-as-challenger.



Awareness

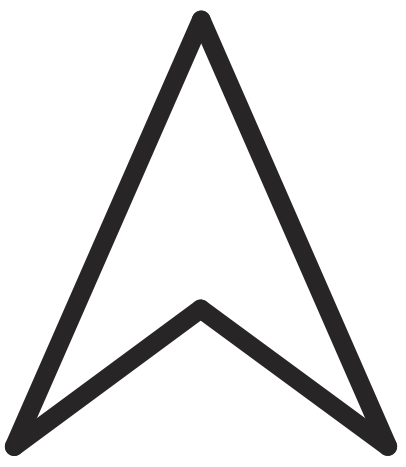
Help them see their impact clearly — what they do well, how others experience them, and where their unique strengths lie. Many high performers are blind to their own excellence.

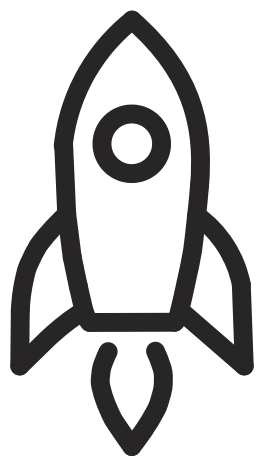


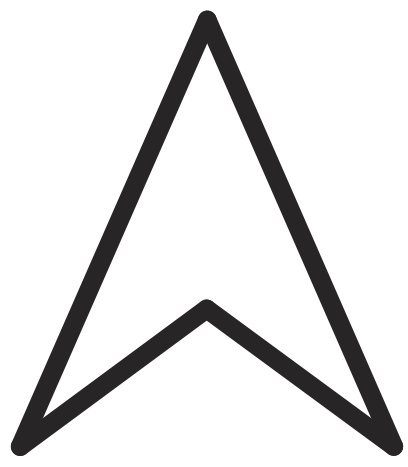


Aspiration

Explore what they genuinely want — not just the next promotion, but the kind of leader, professional, and person they want to become. Connect daily work to long-term identity.







Acceleration

Co-design stretch assignments, visibility opportunities, and skill-building challenges that move them faster toward their potential. Be their sponsor, not just their manager.

High Performer Coaching Cadence: Schedule a dedicated development-focused 1:1 at least once per quarter — separate from your regular check-ins. Label it explicitly as "your growth conversation." The signal that you're investing in their future is itself a retention tool.

REAL-WORLD APPLICATION

Case Study: Priya's Coaching Moment

Meet Priya — a senior manager at a mid-sized technology firm leading a team of eight. One of her direct reports, Arjun, is technically brilliant but consistently struggles to contribute in cross-functional meetings. He goes silent, defers to others, and misses opportunities to present his own ideas. His performance reviews are strong on technical delivery but consistently flag "executive presence" and "stakeholder influence" as development areas. Priya has tried telling him what to do differently — it hasn't worked.

❌ What Priya Was Doing (Manager Mode)

"Arjun, in meetings you need to speak up more. People can't see your expertise if you don't share it. Before the next cross-functional call, prepare two talking points and make sure you contribute at least twice."

Result: Arjun nodded, felt embarrassed, and became even more anxious about meetings. Nothing changed.

✅ What Priya Did (Coaching Mode)

"Arjun, I've noticed in cross-functional meetings you tend to hold back. I'm curious — what's going on for you in those moments?"

What followed: Arjun revealed he felt his ideas weren't "polished enough" for a senior audience and feared being wrong in front of directors. Priya explored this belief with him, helped him see the evidence against it, and together they designed a low-stakes experiment: sharing one idea in the next internal team meeting. Success there built confidence for the bigger room.

The outcome of the coaching approach: within three months, Arjun was regularly contributing in cross-functional meetings, had been asked to present to the leadership team, and had become one of Priya's most vocal advocates on the team. The change came not from better advice — but from better questions that unlocked his own understanding of what was holding him back.

> **Key Insight:** The real problem was never Arjun's behaviour. It was his underlying belief about whether his ideas were worth sharing. Only a coaching conversation could surface and shift that belief. Instruction never could.

ACTION ELEMENT 3

Common Coaching Mistakes — And How to Fix Them

Even well-intentioned managers fall into predictable traps when they start practising coaching. Recognising these patterns early saves you months of frustration and prevents you from accidentally reinforcing the behaviours you're trying to move away from. The good news: every mistake listed here has a simple, learnable fix.

❌ Mistake 1: Advice in Disguise

What it sounds like: "Have you thought about just... [your solution]?"

Why it happens: You genuinely know the answer and it feels faster to share it.

The fix: After you catch yourself, ask: "What options have you already considered?" Let their thinking come first. Your idea, if still valid, can be offered last — as one option among many, not the answer.

❌ Mistake 2: Rushing to Solutions

What it sounds like: Jumping from "what's the problem?" to "here's what to do" in under two minutes.

Why it happens: Manager brains are wired for efficiency and closure.

The fix: Spend at least 50% of your conversation in the Reality and Options phases before any action is discussed. Slow down to speed up.

❌ Mistake 3: Talking More Than Listening

What it sounds like: You've spoken for 70% of the "coaching" conversation.

Why it happens: Silence feels uncomfortable; filling it feels helpful.

The fix: Use the 70/30 rule — aim for your team member to speak 70% of the time. After asking a question, count to five silently before saying anything. Silence is not awkward; it's working.

❌ Mistake 4: No Accountability Anchor

What it sounds like: Great conversation, no specific commitment at the end.

Why it happens: The exploration feels productive and closing it down feels abrupt.

The fix: Always end with: "What specifically will you do, and by when?" Then follow up. The follow-up is the coaching — without it, insight stays insight and never becomes action.

SELF-EVALUATION

Your Coaching Skills Self-Assessment

This self-evaluation is designed to be completed honestly — it is for your eyes only. Rate yourself on each competency using the scale below, then use your lowest scores to prioritise which modules in this guidebook to revisit first. Re-take this assessment in 60 days to track your growth.

Rating Scale: 1 = Rarely do this | 2 = Sometimes do this | 3 = Often do this | 4 = Consistently do this | 5 = This is a natural strength

Coaching Competency	Score (1–5)	Evidence / Notes
I approach conversations with curiosity rather than judgment	___	
I ask open questions before offering my own perspective	___	
I listen at Level 2 or 3 in most coaching conversations	___	
I use the GROW framework (or similar structure) to organise coaching conversations	___	
I allow silence after questions rather than filling it immediately	___	
I separate feedback from coaching (I know when to use each)	___	
I end coaching conversations with a specific, committed action	___	
I follow up on commitments made in coaching sessions	___	
I invest coaching time in high performers, not just those with challenges	___	
I regularly reflect on my own coaching style and seek to improve it	___	

40–50

Coaching Pro

You're operating at a high level. Focus on depth and consistency — and consider mentoring other managers.

25–39

Developing Coach

Strong foundation with clear growth edges. Revisit your 2–3 lowest scoring areas and apply them deliberately in your next 5 sessions.

10–24

Building the Habit

You're at the beginning of a powerful journey. Start with Module 1 and Module 3 — mindset and questions will unlock everything else.

COACHING TECHNIQUES

Effective Questioning Methods Beyond the Basics

While mastering powerful, open-ended questions is fundamental, a coach's arsenal benefits greatly from a diverse range of questioning methods. These methods are designed to elicit specific types of information, challenge assumptions, and guide the coachee towards deeper insights and actionable steps. Understanding when and how to deploy each method enhances the quality and impact of your coaching conversations, ensuring you address the right issues and foster genuine self-discovery.

Clarifying Questions

These questions aim to ensure mutual understanding and add specificity. They help cut through ambiguity and assumptions, allowing both you and the coachee to be on the same page. *Examples: "What do you mean by 'challenging'?", "Can you give me a specific instance?", "Who else is involved in that process?"*

Probing Questions

Designed to delve deeper into a coachee's thoughts, feelings, or reasoning, probing questions help uncover underlying beliefs, motivations, or unspoken concerns. They move beyond superficial answers. *Examples: "What makes you say that?", "What's the real impact of that on you?", "What assumptions are you making here?"*

Hypothetical/Future-Oriented Questions

These questions encourage forward-thinking and exploration of possibilities without commitment. They are excellent for brainstorming, envisioning solutions, and exploring potential obstacles or successes. *Examples: "If you had unlimited resources, what would you do?", "What would success look like a year from now?", "How would you handle this if you were completely confident?"*

Scaling Questions

Useful for quantifying abstract concepts like motivation, confidence, or the severity of a problem, scaling questions help coachees articulate their internal state and track progress over time. They make feelings measurable. *Examples: "On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you in that plan?", "Where are you now on that scale, and where would you like to be?"*

Challenging Questions

Used judiciously, these questions can help coachees examine limiting beliefs, inconsistencies in their thinking, or overlooked perspectives. The intent is to gently disrupt status quo thinking, not to confront. *Examples: "What if the opposite were true?", "How does that belief serve you?", "Is there any evidence that contradicts your assumption?"*

By thoughtfully integrating these questioning methods, managers can guide coachees through complex challenges more effectively, fostering greater self-awareness and empowering them to find their own optimal solutions.

COACHING STRATEGIES

Peer Coaching: Leveraging Collective Wisdom for Managerial Growth

Peer coaching establishes a powerful, reciprocal learning environment where managers support each other in developing their coaching skills. Unlike formal coaching, which often involves a professional coach, peer coaching relies on the shared experiences and insights of colleagues at a similar organisational level. This approach creates a safe space for managers to practice new techniques, reflect on challenges, and receive constructive feedback in a low-stakes setting, significantly accelerating their development journey without external costs.



It's about creating a culture of mutual support and continuous improvement, recognising that every manager possesses valuable experience that can benefit others. Through structured conversations and commitment to growth, peer coaching helps reinforce the principles learned in this guide and cultivates a deeper understanding of coaching competencies.

Diverse Perspectives

Gain fresh insights and alternative approaches from colleagues facing similar challenges.

Safe Practice Ground

Experiment with new coaching questions and active listening techniques in a supportive environment.

Enhanced Self-Awareness

Receive honest feedback that illuminates blind spots and areas for personal growth.

Mutual Accountability

Stay committed to coaching goals through reciprocal support and regular check-ins.

COACHING TOOLS

Goal Setting Strategies

Effective goal setting is a cornerstone of impactful coaching. It's not just about identifying what needs to be achieved, but more critically, about fostering a clear vision and strong commitment within your team member. As a coach, your role shifts from assigning tasks to facilitating a process where individuals define their own objectives, ensuring greater ownership and sustained motivation.

While managers often think about goals in terms of performance metrics, a coaching approach broadens this to include developmental, behavioural, and even personal aspirations that align with professional growth. This section explores strategies to guide your team in setting powerful, meaningful goals.

1. Facilitate SMART Goal Creation

Move beyond general statements by guiding team members to define goals that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound. Ask probing questions like, *"How will you know when you've achieved this?"* or *"What's a realistic deadline for this goal?"* to help them clarify each aspect. This clarity builds a solid foundation for action.

2. Ensure Ownership, Not Just Acceptance

A goal is only as strong as the individual's commitment to it. Rather than suggesting goals, empower your team member to articulate their own. Explore their intrinsic motivations: *"Why is this goal important to you personally?"* or *"What impact will achieving this have on your career?"* When goals are self-chosen, the drive to achieve them is significantly higher.

3. Develop an Actionable Plan

Once the goal is clear, help your team member break it down into manageable steps. This creates a roadmap and reduces overwhelm. Inquire: *"What's the very first step you can take towards this goal?"* and *"What resources or support might you need?"* Establish clear milestones and check-in points to track progress and provide encouragement along the journey.

Remember, the goal-setting conversation is an opportunity for your team member to gain clarity, build confidence, and take accountability for their own development. Your role is to be the guide who illuminates the path, not the architect who designs it.

SUMMARY & KEY TAKEAWAYS

Your Coaching Commitments: 7 Things to Do Starting Now

You've covered the full arc — from mindset to framework to conversation structure to real-world application. The gap between a manager who knows about coaching and a manager who coaches is one thing: consistent practice. The seven commitments below are your bridge. Each one is small, specific, and immediately actionable. Pick the three that feel most urgent and begin this week.

1

Shift your default from telling to asking

Before your next team conversation, commit to asking at least one open question before sharing your perspective. Start small: "What do you think?" is a coaching move.

2

Book a dedicated coaching 1:1 this week

Schedule a conversation explicitly framed as a coaching session — not a status update. Tell your team member: "This is your time. What do you want to explore?" Let them set the agenda.

3

Use the GROW model as your conversation GPS

In your next coaching conversation, work through Goal → Reality → Options → Will in sequence. Print out the question bank from Module 2 and keep it at your desk. Use it shamelessly.

4

Practise 70/30 listening in every 1:1

Aim for your team member to speak 70% of the time. After every question you ask, wait in silence for at least five seconds. Track this for one week and notice what surfaces.

5

Give one piece of SBI feedback this week

Identify a behaviour — positive or developmental — and deliver it using the Situation–Behaviour–Impact structure. Notice how it lands differently from your usual feedback style.

6

Invest 15 minutes in a high performer

Reach out to one of your strongest team members and ask: "What are you most excited about in your career right now, and how can I help?" Then listen. Really listen.

7

Re-take the self-assessment in 60 days

Growth requires measurement. Set a calendar reminder for 60 days from today to revisit the self-evaluation in Module 7. Track your score change. Celebrate the gains. Double down on the gaps.

> **A final word from PlanetSpark:** The best coaches are not born — they are built, conversation by conversation, question by question, in the ordinary moments of management. You already have everything you need to begin. The only question is: *will you?*