

How to Use the GROW Model of Coaching

Introduction

You want to coach someone but aren't sure how to structure your sessions. Use the GROW model of coaching¹ as a framework and the person you're coaching will understand clearly what their development needs are and how they can achieve them.

The GROW model is based on the principle that everyone has the potential to develop and improve themselves, but just need help to unlock their potential. Coaching is the key to this. It encourages people to take responsibility for their own actions, which results in commitment, and therefore optimises performance. Another key principle of the theory is that **using questions** rather than instructions will foster change more readily.

The acronym GROW stands for Goal, Reality, Options and Will. It provides a relatively simple framework for structuring a coaching session, and has been adopted by many of the world's major organisations.

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- **Goal.** After initial discussion, establish a realisable goal for the coaching assignment and if required, a target for progress in the session.
 - **Reality.** It is important that this session is grounded in reality. The person being coached should be able to assess their present situation, and give concrete examples of their performance to date. Feedback should be provided at this point.
 - **Options.** This stage offers the opportunity for the person being coached to suggest possible courses of action, and together with any that the coach puts forward, these should be evaluated and a choice arrived at.
 - **Will.** The final part of the process involves the person being coached making decisions and having the willpower to commit to them. Future steps to be taken should be confirmed and the coach should agree with the coachee how they will be supported throughout the ongoing development process.
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Here are some examples of the types of question you could use to conduct the session as productively as possible.

Goal

- What outcome do you want from this process?
- How do you feel this process will help you?
- Will this session be sufficient to cover the points you need to cover?
- What would it take for this process to be a success?

¹ Sir John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance: GROWing People, Performance and Purpose* (Nicholas Brealey, 2002).

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Reality

- Tell me about the current situation?
- Give me a specific example?
- What happens/happened when you
- Are there times when it is different?
- What do you want to change about the way you...?

Options

- How could the situation change?
- How could you improve the situation?
- What have you tried so far?
- What can you learn from others?
- Can you provide some specific options for action?
- Are you aware of the possible downsides to those options?
- Which of these suggested options would you like to try?

Will

- How can you put appropriate options into action?
- Are you aware of any obstacles to these actions?
- What is the first step? What specifically will you do?
- What further support do you need?
- Does your organisation offer support for change?
- Who do you need to tell/ask?
- How will we know when you have achieved this?

It is important to be aware that at all times in this process the person being coached is being helped to develop their own action plan rather than being directed down a certain route.

Coaching Session 'Grow' Template

Having a well-planned and clear structure is essential for ensuring that both parties get the most from a coaching session. Use this framework, based on the GROW model of coaching,² to structure your coaching sessions.

Remember, GROW is a question-based framework – help the person you are coaching to find the answers themselves rather than telling them what to do.

² Sir John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance: GROWing People, Performance and Purpose* (Nicholas Brealey, 2002).

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GROW Worksheet

Stage	Prompts and Notes
<p>Goal Agree on a goal for the coaching assignment and a target for progress in this session.</p>	
<p>Reality Assess the current situation, including constructive feedback and concrete examples of performance.</p>	
<p>Options Explore the various opportunities and courses of action that might solve the problem and achieve the overall goal.</p>	
<p>Will Gain commitment to a course of action and agree an implementation and review plan, including any support that will be given.</p>	