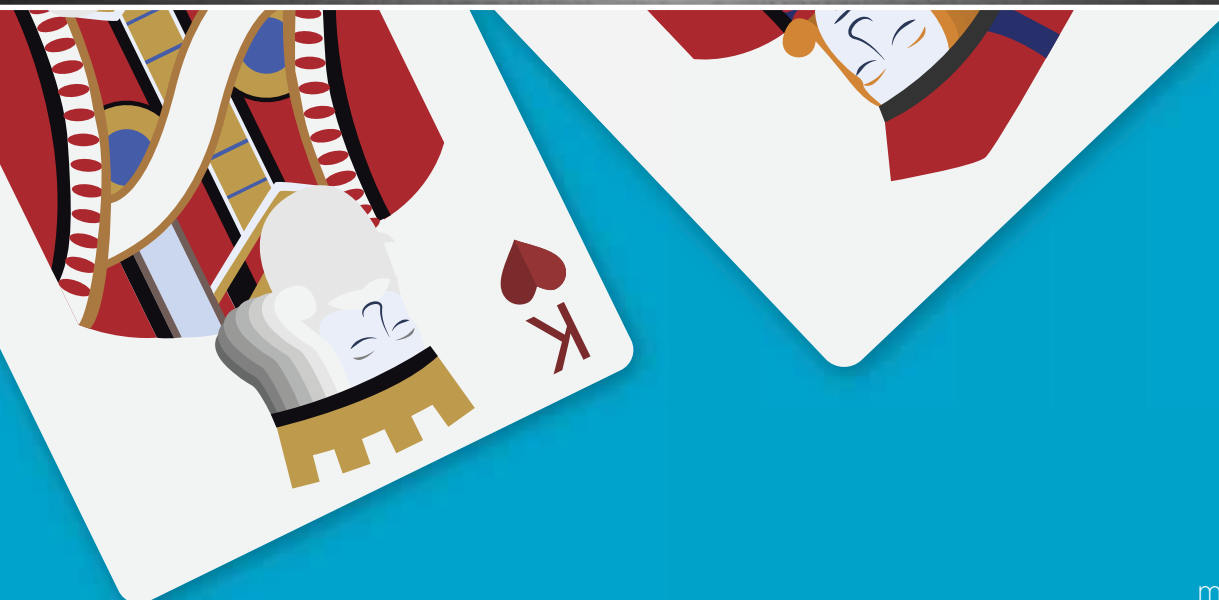




5 TELLS TO IMPROVING YOUR COACHING HAND

A Fundamental Leadership Competency



A Case for Coaching

The word **'coaching'** has quite the history. It can be traced back to a Hungarian word 'kocsi' meaning 'carriage'. By the 1830s the term coaching began to establish itself among professors at Oxford University who worked with students to 'carry' them through exams. More recently, of course, the term has become synonymous in the realms of sport and business strategy.

Any peak performer in their chosen field, no matter how masterful, generally has a great coach to work with. An example close to home would be Anna Meares. Anna is Australia's greatest female track cyclist. Her short bio of achievements includes being a three-time Olympian, dual Olympic champion with five Olympic medals (Gold and Silver – London 2012, Silver – Beijing 2008, and Gold and Bronze – Athens 2004), a ten-time world champion across four different disciplines and a five-time Commonwealth Games champion. Not only talented, she is tenacious, driven, humble and someone I've been fortunate enough to meet, given we have an agent in common.

In an interview with The Herald Sun concerning her coach, Gary West (who sadly passed away from Motor Neurone Disease, aged only 57), she commented:

'Gary has been significant in my career, in the eight years I've worked with him I've won 9 of my 11 world titles, three of my Olympic medals and four of my Commonwealth gold medals. Six of the eight world records I have ridden have been under his guidance.'

'I asked him at the beginning of working with me if he was in my corner... I don't even need to think it today.'

Anna makes a great point right there regarding one's coaching ability. Coaching is not about you, nor is it about what the pupil can do for you. Powerful coaching has to be about them.





Given the busy pace of today's world, the need to keep up with change is constant, but this can sometimes seem like an insurmountable task to the busy executive. Due to the speed that change, transformation and evolution is required, coaching has now become a standard skill required by anyone holding a people-leading role.

Traditionally speaking, learning and development were how information was transferred and upskilling occurred.

Nowadays, actual transference of knowledge to fill skill gaps can happen, and should happen, everywhere. In every nook and cranny, learning occurs: on the job, during e-learning and workshops, peer-to-peer and certainly via direct leaders and managers. So coaching has now become a fundamental tool in the capability toolkit of a competent people leader. In fact, I'd go as far to say that 60 – 70% of a manager's time is best spent coaching, strategising and implementing tools that foster individual peak performance within their tribe.

In a business sense, coaching is an essentially required, grass root team method used to drive improvement and outcomes through accountability and mentoring. It drives a speedier and more personalised individual learning pathway for a greater level of awareness and action from the subject.

It's also a method that 2-I-C's and next level seniors or potential leaders can learn to transfer specific skills to their peers, thus helping to create results even sooner.





So, what's the difference between coaching and managing?

They are two distinctly different competencies. In the past 10 years it's easy to observe the shift in businesses to have managers double as coaches. It's now a common expectation within a role.

In the same way sales and marketing are symbiotic, there may well be a synergy between managing and coaching. Excelling at one doesn't automatically equate to succeeding in the other.

Successfully steering a coaching conversation is where traction is both sought and won. Coaching is an individual learning pathway that requires potentially greater levels of trust, vulnerability and more subtle awareness and leverage than authoritative direction alone. Amending the title of documentation from 'One on One' or 'Performance Review' to 'Coaching Plan' most certainly doesn't cut it.

A willingness to coach (and be coached) is a great start but depending on how you position, apply, conduct or leverage any interactions determines whether it's good or great.

If you're banking on coaching to have a positive impact, here's a shortlist of five tells to suggest the hand you're playing is a bluff. You think you're coaching for a jackpot when in fact you're holding an ace high, or a pair, instead of a royal flush.

**As A Coach,
What Hand Are
You Holding?**

A graphic of a white rectangular sign with rounded corners, featuring the text 'Tell #1' in bold red font. The sign is layered over two grey diamond-shaped cards with a subtle pattern.

Tell #1

Recurring Coaching Conversations That Feel Like Groundhog Day

You think you've told someone clearly what, how and why to change a specific action or behaviour. As the days, weeks and sometimes months tumble by you feel somewhat like Bill Murray in 'Groundhog Day' finding yourself repeatedly lost in the same dialogue. The change has been minimal, if at all. What's worse is the opportunity of time lost.

Rather than pointing a finger of blame, look in a mirror. The reason of such recurrence is potentially due to the manner of your method.

Swap it out: What can you do to make sure dialogue and exchange fosters actual self-discovery, solution thinking, and commitment to an individual action plan?

Whilst you can add more sophisticated tools to your kit, the fundamental principles of the classic GROW model points to exactly this:

- G** **Goal** – What does the pupil want to achieve?
- R** **Reality** – What's happening for them right now?
- O** **Options** – What could the pupil do differently?
- W** **Will** – What will the pupil do differently?

A graphic of a white rectangular sign with rounded corners, featuring the text 'Tell #2' in bold red font. The sign is layered over two grey diamond-shaped cards with a subtle pattern.

Tell #2

You're The One Doing Most Of The Talking

The second tell sign is exactly that. The dialogue is weighted in favour of your own voice. You're so busy 'telling' the effectiveness of your coaching that it may, unintentionally, be killing rather than inspiring a deeper journey of self-reflection, self-awareness and solution thinking.

Swap it out: There's a time for you to offer your pearls of wisdom. Choose that time wisely whilst allowing essential elements of self discovery and commitment to unfold.

A graphic consisting of three overlapping grey diamond shapes. The topmost diamond is white and contains the text 'Tell #3' in red. The other two diamonds are grey and partially obscured.

Tell #3

The Goals Being Set Are 'Poorperformance' Goals

No, that's not a typo, we'll get to the spelling in a moment.

Whilst it may be important that set goals are work related, individual potential at any given moment is far greater than current performance and certainly well beyond merely a strike rate, error % or revenue.

In fact, most goals individuals strive to achieve live outside the scope of the office and in the realms of personal fulfillment. If the only reason you're coaching is to help set a goal around a KPI running low, you're actually coaching against poor form - hence 'poorperformance' goals.

Swap it out: Ensure all goals include helping identify a skill set to be improved (learning goals) and ideally tie it somehow to aspects of personal satisfaction (fulfillment goals) rather than KPI metrics alone.

A graphic consisting of three overlapping grey diamond shapes. The topmost diamond is white and contains the text 'Tell #4' in red. The other two diamonds are grey and partially obscured.

Tell #4

Lack of Awareness That An Improvement Plan Is Pending!

If you've slipped into tell #3, then tell #4 often pairs with it. Whilst individuals are generally self aware enough to identify a string of lacklustre results or behaviours may lead them down a path of official performance improvement, the inevitable official counselling still somehow emerges as a nasty shock.

If you wait until performance is poor before attempting to impact it under a loose guise of 'coaching', your overall understanding of coaching and performance management has been confused.

Swap it out: If you think in metaphors for a moment, consider overall performance akin to overall personal health. Do you wait until someone is seriously ill before proactively encouraging them to live a healthier life? If not, then begin to see coaching the same way. Coachees aren't 'patients'.

Even the healthy overachievers may strive towards greater fulfillment, wellbeing and reward.

A graphic featuring a white card with the text 'Tell #5' in red, placed on top of two grey cards. The cards have a subtle pattern of small dots.

Tell #5

Coaching & Performance Management Are Perceived The Same

Which brings us bluntly to the final card call. It's no coincidence the best of the best in all fields (business or sport) frequently seek counsel or support from a professional coach they trust.

Coaching is not a 'tick the box' activity. Approach it with the sincerest intention of an end-to-end process including encouraged self-accountability and follow-up. The moment coaching becomes a 'tick the box' task in the mindset for either the coach or coachee, it's time for a rethink.

There are several coaching bodies known for accreditation. Without opinion or bias to tell you what you should look for amongst them, each has one thing in common: fundamental principles and philosophy in place.

Tell #5 is simple. What is your overall method? What is your M.O? (Modus Operandi) Can you articulate and deliver it?

Swap it out: If you have no method and have simply been flying by the seat of your pants, maybe it's time to rethink. Research, up-skill and follow through with an holistic approach to coaching in mind. Or hire a professional who can.





Take an honest self-assessment. Trade in your current hand, whether ace high, three of a kind or a pair, and exchange it for a royal flush.

Either way, coaching is a powerful weapon. The question is are you using it as a gun to the head or as a targeted direction?

So concludes this e-book of coaching tips, patterns to break or, more importantly, skills and behaviours for leaders to adopt in their coaching interactions. We release a lot of knowledge and IP through my social channels so please get connected and share with your peers.

Coaching is one component of our **'5C Model'** for leaders. Along with bodies of work like **'GLOW'** (a full leadership and management bespoke training program) and **'Thought Tank'** (tools for the layers of behavioural sciences to better harness individual or team talent and peak performance.) All these IP programs live within my online academy in **'LEADERSHIP'**; the leadership and talent development catalogue.

Additionally the full development academy targets personal development, professional development and collaborative wisdom in addition to a depth of leadership development programs and tools of which coaching and the **'5C Model'** is a small, powerful part.

Connect with us and contact us for a free exploratory conversation to see how we can decisively (not 'perhaps') help you design, implement and drive a complete sales capability framework that will help you achieve fulfilment, success and your business goals.



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