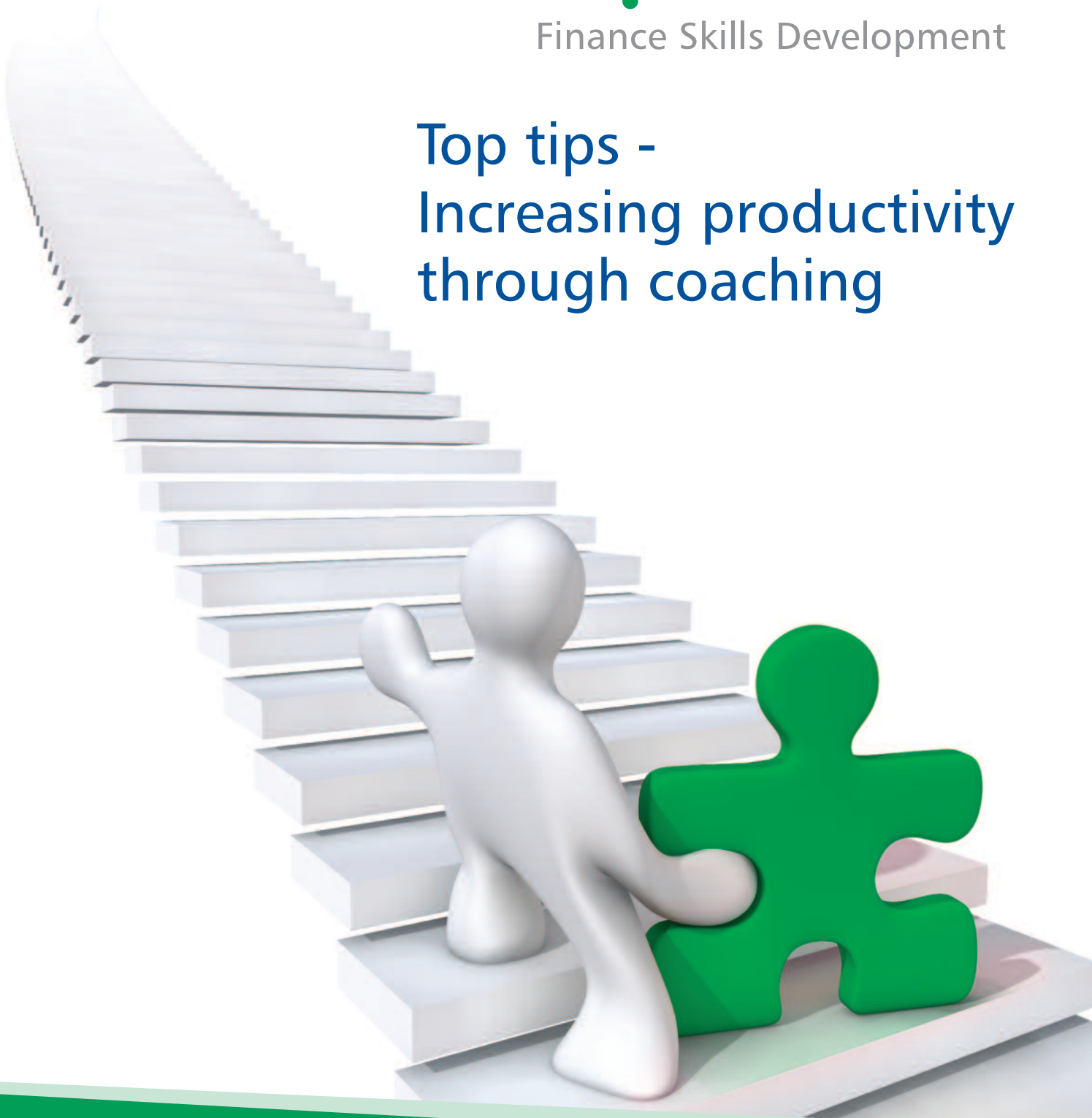




Finance Skills Development

Top tips - Increasing productivity through coaching



Top tips - Increasing productivity through coaching

What is coaching?

At a time when resources are ever more precious it is vital for managers and finance staff to be able to work together to do more for less. For this to be possible both parties need to be motivated to learn and improve. We know that one of the best ways to engage staff is for managers to adopt a coaching style of leadership.

Within NHS Finance, we have defined coaching as, "A process that seeks to unlock the potential of an individual by giving them new information and providing them with the resources and support they need to learn".

To unlock people's potential, managers need to delegate more frequently, devolving responsibility as far as possible and allowing people to use their initiative. They need to enable and encourage staff, taking time to demonstrate and share information and learn to ask questions and encourage rather than instruct and tell.

Why Coach

Increasingly NHS Finance organisations are recognising the benefits of adopting coaching as their predominant style of leadership.

Listed below are some of the benefits you can expect to attain as a result of managers adopting a coaching style of leadership.

Benefits for the individual

- Staff feel supported and motivated.
- There is a step change in performance.
- Improvements are sustained.
- Self-awareness and self-confidence increase.
- People experience better relationships with the team.
- Quality of life is improved.

Benefits for Finance

- There is a step change in performance and productivity which is sustainable.
- People & resources are better utilised.
- Sickness levels are reduced.
- Staff retention improves as people feel important and cared for.
- Relationships in the team improve.
- There is greater flexibility and responsiveness to change.
- Managers have more time to focus on improvement.

How it works – the coaching process

Coaching is different to teaching. The latter relies on instructing, showing and telling where individuals can't work it out for themselves and where they are relatively passive. Coaching is about learning and improving by having a go and by facilitated self reflection.


Research completed originally by IBM, but then confirmed more recently by the UK Post Office demonstrates that after three months our recall and retention is 55% higher if we are actively involved in working out activities for ourselves and not just told what to do.

There are a range of coaching interventions which are appropriate for managers to use at different times. Within this continuum, a more directive form of coaching is appropriate where a new skill needs to be learned. Where more personal issues are involved, a non directive approach is often more appropriate.

← The coaching continuum →

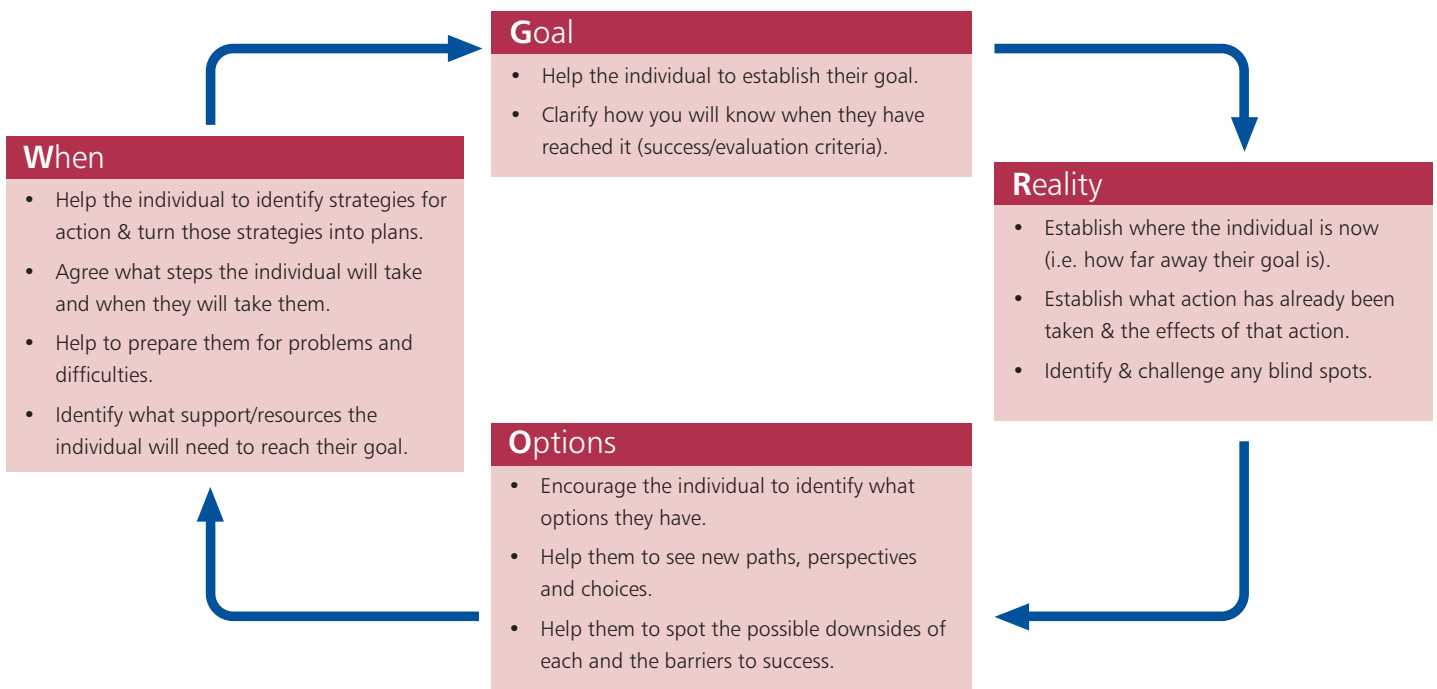
<p>Directive coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a new skill is required (e.g. designing a spreadsheet or delivering a finance training workshop). The manager and the learner set the agenda. The individual learns best by having a go and through facilitated reflection - but the coach also has expertise to share. Often quick. 	<p>Mix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where an individual wishes to improve their general performance – (e.g. the impact of their personal style). The manager and/or the learner set the agenda. The learner needs to reflect more deeply and be prepared to change and is facilitated in this by the coach. The coach/manager has expertise to share. May take longer. 	<p>Non-directive coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where an individual needs help with longer-term development and/or a personal issue related to work (e.g. career planning/work-life balance). The learner usually sets the agenda. The learner wants to explore, clarify, plan and change. The coach does not share expertise but facilitates through deep listening and effective questioning. Often takes longer.
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Coaching in a directive way involves the following steps:

1. Agree the learning goal
 2. Demonstrate the skill
 3. Allow the individual to have a go
 4. Encourage learning through self reflection
 5. Provide feedback if and when required
 6. Review the learning and re-set the goal if necessary
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Most people find this easier than coaching in a non directive way.

A well known model for the latter is the **GROW** model shown below:



The skills and characteristics of an effective coach

Using the GROW model successfully requires managers to develop rapport with staff, to listen deeply and to use their intuition to ask questions which help the individual find solutions for themselves. It can be difficult for line managers when the answer seems obvious or when there is little time. However we know that people are more committed to the end result when they find it for themselves.

Listening	Questioning	Respecting and believing in people	Facilitating - not encouraging reliance	Self awareness
Ability to create rapport.	Open, inquisitive, questions, positively framed.	Ability to provide constructive, non-judgemental feedback when appropriate.	Separating empathy from sympathy "I can tell you are confused" rather than "Yes it's confusing".	Being trustworthy and trustful. Confidentiality and safety are crucial.
Being comfortable with silence. Being patient.	Asking questions which empower i.e. assume that someone can achieve.	Being comfortable with not knowing the answer and trusting that the individual does.	Acknowledging not praising, "You were strong and kept your word" not "Well done".	Not allowing yourself to be drawn into the individual's emotions.
Listening to your intuition.	Not asking leading questions.	Using positive language "Tell me about when you did this well" rather than "Can you think of a time when it went well?"	Believing that it is an equal relationship – that you are not needed to be an expert.	Being flexible – able to work in whatever way is best at that moment.
Being present – listening at a deep level and not focussing on yourself or relating what the person says to your own experiences.	Challenging appropriately through asking insightful questions.	Respecting and celebrating the individuality of the learner.	Encouraging the individual to set the agenda and following their path where relevant.	Being able to evaluate honestly how the coaching is going and what you need to do differently to make it more successful.
Entering their world. Suspending judgement and listening to what's not being said too.	Summarising and reflecting back.	Not imposing your own values.	Encouraging different perspectives – helping the individual to identify & overcome their limiting beliefs.	Recognising when you're not the right person to be the coach.

For further information about how to make coaching work well go to www.fsdnetwork.com and download the 'Guide to Coaching within NHS Finance'.

This document has been written by leadership development and coaching specialists, House HR, Training & Coaching in conjunction with NHS Finance Skills Development.



House HR, Training & Coaching have been working with colleagues from NHS Finance for the last twenty years. We regularly help finance managers to become better coaches through training programmes and one to one coaching.

You can find out more on our website: www.HouseHR.co.uk.
You can email us at kahouse@btinternet.com and phone us on 01924 254122.

www.fsdnetwork.com