

Developing people

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Introduction

When people are offered opportunities to grow and develop in the workplace, everyone benefits. Learners acquire new knowledge, skills, and capabilities, become more effective and gain new sources of fulfilment, satisfaction, and motivation. People cite the ability to learn, grow and develop as one of the top reasons for taking and staying in a job.¹ Those who facilitate their development, in turn, demonstrate effective leadership, enable greater group/team productivity, earn dedication and loyalty from the people they help and derive personal satisfaction from their efforts. Then, where people continually upgrade and refresh their skills, the organisation as a whole can be more productive, more innovative, more adaptable, better able to attract and retain talent and in a stronger position to compete. And importantly, clients benefit as well – a more qualified workforce is better prepared to identify and meet client needs and can provide a higher quality service.

Engaging in continuous learning is also a necessity. Organisations and the nature of work continue to evolve. Work tends to be organised less along hierarchical functional lines and more in the form of cross-functional teams. Industries are facing disruptive change. Companies are forced to innovate and improve in a cycle that never ends. Customers have ever higher expectations. Demographic change means that people can now expect their working lives to span half a century or more, during which they will switch not just jobs but also careers multiple times. There is a constant influx of new technologies, and automation of work becomes more prevalent. Complexity and ambiguity are on the rise. The pace of change is becoming ever more rapid. All this points to the conclusion that one's skillset as it is today is highly unlikely to see one through the entire career and will need refreshing and updating on a regular basis.² Even niche skills, if in high demand, eventually become mainstream and ubiquitous requiring those who rely on them to reinvent themselves at some point. In fact, some see a need for people to prepare for working lives where they learn, work, learn, work, and cycle through career stages many times over.³

While everyone is personally in charge of their learning, successful managers create an effective culture of learning and actively develop everyone in their group/team. They coach members through the people development process, encourage a growth mindset, promote psychological safety, delegate often, give people ample feedback and regular coaching. They help others achieve more by developing their performance. They help people make informed learning and development decisions.

Great managers do a great job at developing others. That is how they help everyone on their group/team to contribute at their best, both now and in the future. Developing people is therefore at the core of what effective managers do. It benefits all and serves vital interests of the organisation.

1. Creating an effective culture of learning

We are all wired to learn, and we make new learnings every day. We constantly absorb new information, determine what is important, and decide how to act. This holds equally true for members in an organisation. People learn through observation and experience – their own and that of their colleagues. They discover how things are done, what attitudes dominate and what behaviours are effective. They develop new insights and perspectives.⁴

Successful organisations tap into and help guide this natural learning. Managers foster a culture where learning is highly valued, encouraged, integrated with work, and practical for people to pursue and apply on the job. They actively engage in practices which help people increase their knowledge, competence, and performance. As part of this they make sure that all members in their group/team have an up-to-date development plan to guide their learning efforts. When holding people accountable for delivering on these plans, they focus on the practical knowledge and skills gained rather than courses or certifications completed. They recognise people who take charge of their own development and celebrate those who share their learnings with others. Keen hiring from within of those who successfully master new skills and competencies allows managers to demonstrate the usefulness of engaging in self-development as well as create multiple internal mobility opportunities via a ripple effect. Recognising that the bulk of learning comes from experience, managers seek to embed reflection in work processes, e.g. through pre-mortems, after-action reviews, and journaling. They encourage social and informal learning to allow members in their groups/teams to draw lessons from the experiences of others. Importantly, managers evaluate *how* work is done in addition to *what* work outcomes are getting accomplished in order to identify developmental opportunities.⁵

An effective culture of learning is a powerful enabler of people development as illustrated in Figure 1. Core people development activities are illustrated in Figure 2 and are discussed in greater detail throughout this guide.

Figure 1: A culture of learning enables people development.



Figure 2: Core people development activities.



With a strong learning culture in place, people development will yield better results. Then, how managers approach people development itself will have profound implications for the outcomes as well. Where developing others is rooted in a desire to help them uncover and fulfil their hopes, dreams, and aspirations, the effort is likely to lead to the unlocking of positive emotions, energy, and motivation and to propel the person towards accomplishment and lasting change. In this approach, the manager acts as a coach who lets the person define an exciting personal vision for the future and then supports them in attaining it. Where, on the other hand, the manager attempts to guide the person in a direction he or she believes the person ought to follow, or if the manager focuses primarily on the gaps he or she believes the person needs to address, the person is likely to be far less

excited about and committed to the development process. Any behavioural change that results could then be short-lived and made more out of a sense of obligation than out of internal conviction or desire.⁶

2. People development process

People tend to change their behaviour in an enduring way when that change is something they themselves want. When asked to change for reasons they do not identify with, they may be reluctant to, and even if they do comply, any change that results could be short-lived. In other words, people change for their own reasons and not for those of others.⁷ An effective people development process takes this into account. One way for managers to help people develop that is likely to produce lasting change is therefore to root the effort in their hopes, dreams, and aspirations. Driven by an internal desire to attain these, the person will then persist in developing the skills and abilities as these will help them get where they want to get. They will do it for their own reasons, but in the process, as they become better skilled and more effective, they will also benefit their organisation and customers. The role of the manager is to coach everyone on their group/team through their development accordingly.

With this in mind, the people development process described here starts with the coach asking the coachee to articulate their personal vision for the future. Without regard to any perceived obstacles, who would they want to be and what would they want to do, say ten years down the line? A compelling personal vision reflects the person's dreams, desires, passions, values, core identity as well as purpose and sense of calling. When aligned with these, skill development and behavioural change becomes something the person keenly wants to pursue rather than an externally imposed mandate they might resent.⁸

With the vision articulated, attention needs to turn to the person as they are today. In this step the coach helps the person uncover an accurate view of their current self. This will allow the coachee to become fully aware of where they are relative to their envisioned future self. Areas where there already is alignment between the two are the person's strengths. These can be cultivated and built upon. Where there is currently little or only some alignment are areas that potentially need strengthening. Importantly, the view of the self will be most accurate if it is based on both how the coachee sees themselves and on how others see him or her. Inputs from others can help make the coachee aware of any discrepancies between the two and can also be a source of other insights.⁹

The next step will be for the coachee to create a development plan which identifies the skills and abilities they would like to strengthen in order to get closer to their envisaged future self. The aim of the plan is to set out a path to a future where the coachee has developed a number of key strengths that their vision requires and has addressed the skill gaps that could prevent its attainment.

With the plan in place, the coachee can start engaging in developmental experiences. These typically involve learning conceptually about a skill, experimenting with different approaches, selecting the approach that works best, practicing it to the point when the person feels comfortable with it and then practicing further until the point of mastery. Seeking feedback from others and remaining closely attuned to the impact one has will aid the process. The coachee will often find that many skills can be learned as part of their current job or role but developmental experiences may also involve assignments specifically designed to allow them to learn and practice a new skill.

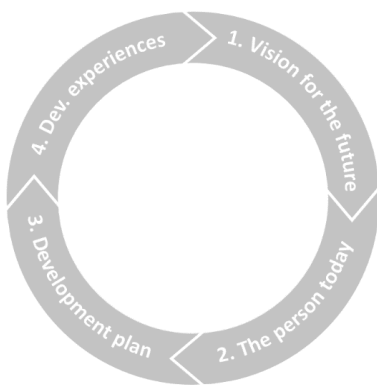
Even though developing new skills could appear to be something one can handle in isolation, the best results will be achieved if the coachee is able to enlist the support of others. Behavioural change is hard and having

a trusted support network can help immensely. In fact, one can benefit hugely from such support at each stage of the development process: from learning about the life experiences of others when exploring options for one's own future, from the feedback others can give about how one comes across at present, when deciding which learning goals to prioritise, and from a trusting and encouraging environment during the practice itself.

It is helpful to observe that the four steps form a cycle. The vision will require re-examination for its continued validity, either periodically or on major events in personal or professional life. One's current self will continue to evolve over time as well, and so engaging in regular reflection and seeking feedback from others is in order. The extent of alignment between the current and envisioned selves will also inevitably vary with time, which will have implications for the development plan and for further developmental experiences one may wish to engage in.

The people development process thus consists of four steps. These are illustrated in the diagram below and described in greater detail in the sections that follow.

Figure 3: The people development process consists of four steps.



2.1 Discovering the person's vision for the future

A compelling personal vision for the future, if it reflects one's dreams, drives, and desires, is a powerful enabler of behavioural change. It serves as an ongoing source of inspiration and motivation to persist in the change effort. For these reasons, exploring the person's vision is where all people development discussions should ideally start.

Without regard to any perceived obstacles, if the person could live an ideal life, who would they want to be and what would they want to do, say ten years from now? If their life could be perfect, what would it be like? Many will be clear in their minds about what their personal vision is and will be able to answer these questions directly. Some will prefer to work their way to the vision from the ground up by reflecting on their dreams, drives, desires, passions, values, core identity as well as purpose and sense of calling. Becoming clear about these can help crystalize the vision. Yet another approach is to ask the coachee to think directly about all the things they would still like to accomplish in their lifetime and have them group these into common categories such as career, family, health, adventure, etc. This can give rise to a holistic vision that encompasses all aspects of life.¹⁰

When the coachee is defining a personal vision, it is important for them to discern who they really *want* to be and what they really want to do from any pursuits they might think they *ought* to engage in. Otherwise, social

expectations or other causes could take them down a path which is not their true calling. Only a deeply felt vision will provide the coachee with the enthusiasm and energy they will need to succeed. Focusing on a longer time horizon, say ten years out, is another way to help the person isolate what they genuinely want. It pushes the coachee to think beyond what they had in mind for the next two or three years – a plan that might be more related to who they are today than to who they ideally would want to be if they could live a perfect life in the future.¹¹

Discovering one's ideal future self will often require some soul-searching and exploration. As part of this, the coachee may consider different destinations before settling on the ultimate. When they zero in on it, they will typically show lots of positivity, enthusiasm and excitement about what the future holds. Arriving at a compelling vision tends to fill people with energy and motivation to pursue growth and initiate change. That is how a coach can usually tell that the coachee has discovered a highly appealing future for themselves.

2.2 Understanding the person as they are today

Uncovering an accurate view of their current self will allow the coachee to become fully aware of where they are relative to their envisioned future self. The extent of alignment between the two selves will then serve as the basis for a development plan that will allow the coachee to build the skills they will need to attain their vision.

An accurate view of self is a function of how the coachee sees themselves and how others see the coachee. The collective view by others reflects how the person shows up in the world and so forms an important part of their current self. The coach should therefore encourage the coachee to request 360-degree feedback in addition to carrying out a self-assessment. Both should cover the skills relevant to the person's vision for the future.

The degree to which the coachee can accurately evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and the degree to which they can accurately predict how they are perceived by others are both measures of self-awareness. The skill assessments are therefore also an opportunity for the coachee to practice and improve this particular competency.

2.3 Creating a development plan

With the coachee now clear about where they are relative to their envisioned future self, the next step is for them to create a development plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify the skills and abilities they will work on in order to get closer to their envisaged future self. The plan also specifies the approach for developing these.

When deciding which skills to select, it may help to consider where success comes from. It turns out that successful leaders typically have a number of profound strengths while not having any critical flaws. They are rarely perfect though in a sense that they do not excel at all relevant skills. At the same time, it is a rare leader who succeeds by merely being good at many skills but not outstanding at any. The lesson that comes from this is that it makes sense to develop a few profound strengths, fix any critical flaws and only attend to other skills later.¹²

With this in mind, developing signature strengths should be the focus of the development plan. This could mean honing the skills one is already good at or, for someone with no standout strengths as yet, selecting a few most relevant competencies and developing these into clear strengths.

Any critical flaws require attention as well. Critical flaws are those that drag down the perceptions of one's effectiveness across other competencies or which otherwise get in the way of one's ability to attain their vision. A very low skill rating likely indicates a critical flaw. It most likely is one if the competence in question is also highly relevant to the person's vision and if the flaw is very obvious to most people who work with the person.

Importantly, flaws related to the lack of integrity, authenticity, or honesty are critical flaws. Fixing critical flaws, if any, will have a highly beneficial effect on one's ability to attain the vision.

This approach does not mean that one should dismiss other weaknesses altogether. To be effective, every team member needs to meet certain skill thresholds that their role requires, and if they as yet do not, these need to be developed. Excellence and exceptional results are, however, enabled by one's strengths and not by the absence of weaknesses. Developing strengths should therefore always remain the focus of a development plan.

For each skill the person resolved to develop or strengthen, the development plan specifies the approach the person will take. It identifies the developmental experiences the person will engage in along with the timelines, specific behaviours the person will practice, the resources they will access, the relationships and support structures they will put in place and any other activities the person will undertake to aid their development.¹³

With the plan likely identifying a number of skills to develop, it is helpful to be aware that the ability to focus on only one or at most two or three skills at a time vastly increases the odds of success. Having made demonstrable progress in those, the person can move on to developing further skills.¹⁴ Prioritisation can be done on the basis of the benefit to effort ratio that developing each skill offers. When prioritising, inclusion of skills that constitute existing strengths will help ensure that the person has the ability to work from those. Working from strengths allows one to feel competent which brings satisfaction and motivates. Demonstrating strengths is also likely to be noticed by others and to attract their recognition and praise. Finally, it often creates a positive halo effect whereby being good at one thing leads to a perception of overall competence.¹⁵

2.4 Enabling developmental experiences

With the plan in place, the coachee can begin developing the skills they identified. A good place for them to start is to learn conceptually about the skill. This can be done from books, magazine articles, training courses or by asking others. It will also be useful for the coachee to find someone who is already good at the skill and to observe that person apply it. With this preparation, the next step will be for the coachee to try out the new skill a few times when there is a suitable opportunity in their work or personal life.

It is then important for the person to continue applying the skill and experiment with different approaches. Inevitably some of these will turn out to work better than others. Remaining closely attuned to the impact they have as well as engaging in regular reflection will allow the coachee to gain insights about the effectiveness of each approach. Seeking feedback from others will provide a helpful outside perspective on how the person is coming across.

With the approaches that work best identified, the person can focus their practice on these selected approaches specifically and put them to use every time there is an opportunity. The new behaviours may not feel natural at first, but one is bound to become more comfortable with them over time. It is important to continue with the practice beyond this point until the skill becomes second nature and mastery is attained.

Figure 4: Learning a new skill



The role of the manager is to coach the person through these steps. Asking the right questions at the right time will help ensure that the coachee is making the most of the developmental opportunity. It will help the coachee reflect on their chosen approach, consider other approaches, reflect on the results they get and the key lessons they learn. Other ways of providing support include encouraging ongoing experimentation and continued practice as well as giving feedback to help the person improve and to recognise the progress they make. Encouraging a growth mindset and promoting psychological safety will facilitate behavioural change. Finally, helping the person overcome any major challenges or course correct, if necessary, will contribute to their success.

People often find that the skills they need can be developed in the role they already hold. In all likelihood carrying out one’s existing responsibilities gives plenty of opportunity to apply and practice requisite skills. The coach should explore with the coachee where such opportunities exist in their role. If required, the two can also explore other ways of creating developmental opportunities¹⁶:

- Devoting more time to one or more existing responsibilities and delegating or sharing others
- Being delegated additional responsibilities by the manager
- Swapping some or all responsibilities with a colleague so that both can learn new skills
- Creating new responsibilities within the role to realise both business and developmental benefits
- Joining or initiating a special project or task force
- Filling in for a colleague who is on a temporary leave
- Moving to a different role within the organisation

The coachee and the manager can come up with specific developmental assignments that give the person an opportunity to apply the skills they are developing. To illustrate how this could be done, examples of developmental assignments for selected skills are listed below.

Figure 5: Examples of developmental assignments for selected skills

Selected areas of skill	Example assignments
Collaborating with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build and maintain strong relationships with colleagues across the organisation - Work with a colleague to resolve a cross-departmental challenge - Serve on a cross-functional task force or project - Resolve a conflict with a colleague from another group/team
Influencing without authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn effective ways of influencing others and demonstrate the skill in practice - Put together and obtain buy-in for a proposal for a change to a process or service - Serve on a cross-functional task force which prioritises projects or initiatives - Agree with a colleague a change to the way they work on deliverables you use
Championing change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage your colleagues in exploring how to do something better, smarter or faster - Put together a compelling case for a change initiative and obtain buy-in for it - Join a team that is ploughing new ground in your organisation - Champion in your group a new way of working that another group has proposed
Managing and developing others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegate one of your job responsibilities to a direct report - Give your group/team frequent and regular feedback; give feedback to colleagues - Provide regular coaching to your group; agree mutual coaching with a colleague - Put in place development plans for all direct reports; teach colleagues a new skill

Source: adapted from Cynthia McCauley, “Developmental assignments”, Centre for Creative Leadership, 2006, pp. 21-40

When defining the assignment, it helps to realise that for developmental benefits to materialise, the assignment needs to be sufficiently novel for the person and should require the use of skills they set out to develop. Personal and professional growth takes place not when dealing with the familiar but when operating outside of one's comfort zone. It often feels uncomfortable as a result. Trying out new behaviours may feel awkward at first but it is a stage everyone goes through to become competent at a new skill. The willingness to experience this is what makes it possible for the coachee to become better at the new skill.¹⁷ Other than through willingness to step outside of one's comfort zone, growth is further accelerated when the assignment involves a significant change or a high stakes outcome, requires cross-functional work and engaging stakeholders across organisational boundaries, and offers exposure to diverse thinking and multiple perspectives. The more of these elements the assignment incorporates, the higher its developmental value will be for the individual.¹⁸

3. Encouraging a growth mindset

Beliefs and thoughts tend to shape the approaches one adopts and the actions one takes, and these in turn affect the results one gets. A belief that has a particularly profound effect on how one goes about their personal and professional life and that determines whether one is able to make the most of one's potential is related to whether one thinks people's personalities and abilities are mostly innate and essentially fixed or that they can be cultivated and developed. In other words, is it primarily nature or nurture; genes or the environment?

Experts say that both play a role. While everyone is born with a different temperament and unique aptitudes, subsequent upbringing, schooling, experience, learning and practice all shape us further into who we are. This process never stops and people continue to develop throughout life.¹⁹ It was originally thought that the human brain was fixed by early adulthood.²⁰ Scientists now believe that the brain continues to reshape itself throughout the adult life with new brain cells created daily and new neural connections formed as one acquires new knowledge, learns new skills and develops new understandings, attitudes and habits.²¹ This means that everyone can change, grow, and develop new abilities if they so resolve and that the way to get there is through persistent effort, continued practice and gradual improvement. Whether one subscribes to this "growth mindset", especially with reference to self, can have profound implications for what one aims for in life and whether one achieves satisfaction and attains success.

Why would one's beliefs in this regard have any major implications for one's success in life though? This is because those who uphold a growth mindset understand that the best way to advance in life is to grow and develop. They seek opportunities to learn, set themselves challenging goals, put in the necessary effort and persist in the face of obstacles. They are inspired by the success of others and look for effective role models from whom they can learn. They are open to and actively solicit feedback that can help them improve. Where they do not have a skill or ability they need, they admit it, think of it as not having it *yet* and set out to develop it. They continue to practice new skills, behaviours and approaches even when these do not come off at first, which they often do not. Thanks to all this people who have a growth mindset become more effective and achieve more.

The growth mindset can be contrasted with a "fixed mindset", one which assumes that abilities are innate and are something some just have and some do not. Where one considers one's abilities essentially fixed ("That's how I am"), one does not make efforts to grow or improve. The effort instead goes into proving one's existing skills

and abilities as this then appears to be a reasonable way to get ahead. The person becomes concerned about how they will be judged and sensitive about being wrong or making an error. Challenging goals and novel situations are seen as a risk because they may expose a lack of skill or ability. Similarly, feedback on how to improve could be met with defensiveness and the success of others perceived as a threat. As a result, people who harbour a fixed mindset tend to plateau early in terms of their performance and may end up not utilising their potential in full.²²

This helps demonstrate how one set of beliefs leads to entirely different attitudes and actions than the other. With the growth mindset leading to far superior outcomes, it makes sense to cultivate it in self and others. This is particularly important in the context of people development – if someone does not believe that they can change as a person and develop their abilities, they will likely not put in the effort and may not grow much as a result. Where a manager of others does not have a growth mindset, he or she will not be committed to developing the team or themselves. Why give people coaching and feedback if they cannot change anyway? Rather than help people grow into new roles, the manager will look to allocate roles and hire based on people's existing abilities.

The good news is that the growth mindset can be taught and learned – anyone can change their beliefs if they choose to. Just learning about the two mindsets can inspire a person to re-examine the way they think about skills and abilities. It is useful to realise that people typically hold on to elements of both mindsets, leaning more towards one or the other. It is also possible for a person to have a growth mindset in one area and a fixed mindset in another. For example, a person may believe that their analytical or reasoning skills is something they can improve but their creative abilities or emotional intelligence are fixed. Or, it could be the other way around. One way to strengthen the growth mindset is to recognise the symptoms of the fixed mindset, become aware whenever these appear to take hold, interrupt any ineffective reactions and switch into the growth mindset instead. Another way to strengthen the growth mindset is to consider all the skills and abilities one has already developed and reflect on why other abilities would be any different and not something that is learnable too. What did it take to learn one set of skills? What would it then take to learn another?

As a people manager, how can one help others strengthen their growth mindset? First and foremost, managers can stress the learnability of all skills and encourage people to think of abilities as skills that can be developed rather than as innate talents or aptitudes some just have. Managers can create opportunities for people to develop specific skills and can praise and reward their effort, perseverance, learning, and improvement and not just performance and achievement. They can challenge people to pursue assignments which are beyond their current comfort zones.²³ A powerful way to promote a growth mindset is to demonstrate how similar others succeeded in personal change or developed abilities they did not originally have. Or to invite the person to reflect on how they themselves learned a new skill or how someone they were fairly sure could not change actually managed to. Giving feedback and coaching in a forward-looking way and with a focus on the person's growth and development will further encourage a growth mindset. Promoting a culture of learning, self-development and personal growth in general will serve to strengthen the growth mindset in the organisation further still.²⁴

4. Promoting psychological safety

Another belief that affects people's ability to grow and develop is related to whether they consider their group/team and their organisation to be psychologically safe. Psychological safety is the extent to which people

feel free to speak their mind. It is a measure of people's willingness to trust others to welcome their well-intended contributions and not to attempt to embarrass, reject or penalise them for speaking up. In an environment considered to be psychologically safe, people feel free to share a thought, ask a question, propose an idea, take initiative, try a new behaviour, practice a new skill, seek feedback, ask for help or admit a mistake. This is because they know that others will respond in a constructive way. Psychological safety facilitates people's growth and development, as these require repeat practice of the behaviours listed. Where psychological safety is lacking, people are likely to feel self-conscious and may refrain from engaging in collaborative and learning behaviours. Weighing the potential gains and losses of speaking up every time, they may choose not to do so in instances when they fear they could come across as ignorant, incompetent, negative or disruptive. Any such avoidant behaviour would impede their own learning and the learning of others.²⁵

Beliefs relating to psychological safety are formed over time through daily interactions between group/team members and the leader. Leaders therefore play a crucial role in creating psychologically safe environments by shaping members' perceptions of appropriate and desired behaviour. They shape these perceptions through their own role modelling and by setting expectations of others. In particular, they²⁶:

- Are accessible and approachable. By doing so leaders make it easier for others to reach out and speak up, which is how learning behaviours are initiated. Leaders also thus exemplify this attitude for others.
- Admit they do not have all the answers. This signals that it is okay not to always know everything and lowers the barrier for people to ask questions and seek clarifications – both desirable learning behaviours which demonstrate that the person is responsible and surely not that they are ignorant or incompetent.
- Are willing to display fallibility. Mistakes do happen to everyone and the right way to go about them is to admit one promptly, learn from it and own its resolution. Displaying fallibility encourages others to accept and admit theirs. No one is right 100% of the time either, which requires similar handling.
- Invite inputs and participation. Learning and group/team success in general depend on everyone gaining access to knowledge individually held by others. Seeking it out, especially from those reluctant to contribute, is an important learning and leadership behaviour which leaders should model for everyone.
- Encourage experimentation. Learning and development requires practicing new skills and experimenting with new behaviours that often go against ingrained habits. Doing so is likely to cause one to feel unsafe, self-conscious or even stressed. Creating a safe space and encouraging continued practice helps a lot.
- Promote healthy debate. Constructive conflict of views and opinions is a powerful enabler of learning and development so long as it does not morph into personal conflict. Any and all disputes should be resolved by referencing facts and assumptions rather than group/team members' personal characteristics. Communication always needs to be respectful and the contributions of others welcomed and encouraged.
- Set and enforce expectations. Leaders should exemplify the behaviours listed above and will support group/team learning immensely if they set the expectation that all members abide by these as well.

5. Delegating effectively

5.1 Importance and benefits of effective delegation

Delegating additional responsibilities to others can be a rich source of developmental opportunities. When created with the person's growth in mind, delegated assignments can give access to experiences otherwise not replicable as part of the delegate's regular work. This means the person can learn and apply skills in a more suitable setting which aids their growth and development. In facilitating continual growth, effective delegation not only equips people with new skills but also allows them to feel more competent which enables autonomous motivation.²⁷

Other than the delegate, effective delegation benefits the manager and the organisation as well. The manager is able to focus on work that requires his or her particular skill or level of authority. This means that they can add more value and have greater impact. At the same time other important work which the group/team are qualified or can become qualified to handle is still getting done. Overall, where everyone engages in work that makes the most of their abilities, the organisation makes efficient use of its resources, and the collective output is maximised. What is more, people grow and develop in the process and so with time become even more qualified. And, as people are entrusted with new or additional responsibilities, their trust in managers and in the organisation rises. Effective delegation thus brings real benefits to all involved.²⁸

Importantly, by delegating effectively, a manager demonstrates that he or she has completed the transition from contributing individually to leading. This involves a fundamental change in how managers spend their time and energy. While executing tactical assignments on one's own could be met with approval from peers or even at times from the boss, this is not how a manager can add most value or have the biggest impact. The rank of the leader is defined by how effectively he or she involves and activates those around them. The manager's influence grows with each direct report empowered to contribute skill and best effort towards a shared objective, and it gets diluted every time the manager rolls up their sleeves to do work themselves or unnecessarily holds on to an initiative. The ability to delegate effectively is therefore a hallmark of a successful manager and a key skill to master.²⁹

5.2 Deciding what to delegate and to whom

Key to effective delegation is clarity around roles and responsibilities in the group/team. These will help inform what should be delegated and to whom. Work that cannot be allocated using these criteria alone can be considered in terms of the type of skill and level of authority it requires and the developmental opportunity it offers. Can it be done by the manager only or can a member in the group/team complete it? Who has the necessary skill and expertise? Who has the interest and will be motivated to take on the assignment? Who is keen to develop the skill or expertise the assignment requires? Who will be available to take it on? How much assistance would they require, if any, and will the manager or others be able to provide it given their other responsibilities? What is the relative workload of everyone on the group/team? What are the other fairness considerations that should be taken into account?

When deciding what and how much to delegate, it will be useful to seek input from the group/team directly. Asking each group/team member, for each of their areas of responsibility, where they would be keen to take on more and where less can help the manager delegate more effectively. The manager can also ask the group/team if

there is anything they would like him or her to do more or less of, if they think some of the manager's work could be delegated to others or perhaps is not necessary to start with. That way the manager can focus on the leadership actions that aid the performance of their group/team as well as on developing themselves as a leader.³⁰

5.3 Defining and delegating the assignment

Having defined all the details of the assignment, the manager can meet the person they have selected and delegate the responsibility. This involves explaining the assignment, sharing the rationale for it, connecting the assignment to the person's interests, values, aspirations or developmental needs, outlining the scope of their responsibility and authority, defining what success looks like, ascertaining the person's level of interest and asking for their other views and inputs, addressing any concerns they may have, and finally obtaining their buy-in and securing commitment. The better prepared the manager is for this meeting and the clearer and the more precise the way they communicate in it, the stronger the delegate's position will be to deliver a successful outcome. The better able the manager is to identify and highlight the aspects of the assignment which the delegate finds motivating, the more driven the person will likely be to deliver on it.

What is the specific function, project, task, or other responsibility that is being delegated? With this clarified, the assignment is then best explained in terms of the context, the desired result, and the purpose it serves without, however, prescribing how to get there. This will allow the delegate to find their own way to attain the objectives. Offered autonomy as to how they work and reach their goals, the delegate will feel more in control, which typically results in a higher level of motivation and engagement.

The manager can then explain all the reasons for delegating the assignment. These will comprise those of the organisation, those of the manager, those of all other stakeholders and, importantly, also those of the delegate. What is the organisation trying to achieve? Why is it important for the manager that the delegate does their best? How will clients benefit from delegate's work? Who else stands to gain and how? What is in it for the delegate? How does the assignment reflect the person's interests, preferences and values? What skills and strengths which the delegate either already has or can develop in the process does the assignment require? How will its successful completion help the person attain or make progress towards professional and personal goals? Are there any other reasons why the work involved could be meaningful for the delegate?

While the rationale can be a source of excitement about what is possible, commitment can only follow if the delegate understands their role in making it happen. What will be the contribution expected of the delegate? What authority will they have? Is their role to make a recommendation for the manager to review or can the person decide and implement the decision themselves? If completing the assignment requires group/team effort, will the delegate be the decision owner with ultimate decision authority or will they be a coordinator with a mandate to forge a consensus? Or is their mandate different still? How about other types of authority, e.g. managing others, hiring people, hiring vendors or managing a budget? Setting out the scope of the delegate's responsibility and authority forms an important part of the delegation discussion.

With the role of the delegate clear, the manager can go on to define what success looks like. What are the manager's expectations for the final work outcome? What are the timelines, budget, quality standards and any other objectives the manager would like the delegate to attain? What metrics will be used to measure these? The clearer the manager is about what they expect, the easier it will be for the delegate to deliver it.

With all these elements shared, the manager can find out what the delegate thinks about the assignment, see how interested they are in taking it on, answer any questions they may have and ask if they have any suggestions regarding the scope or definition of the assignment. What are their initial thoughts? Do they agree the assignment is something the organisation should do? Is it something they'd be able to lead? Do the scope and definition make sense to them or do they think these could be improved? Are there any other suggestions that immediately come to their mind? Will the resources and support offered to them be sufficient? Do the timelines and other objectives appear reasonable? Do they see any conflicts with other initiatives they are currently working on? Do they have any concerns? How do they think they could take the assignment forward? When can they meet the manager to share their plan or provide the first update?

Throughout the meeting the manager will keep in mind that other than to exchange information, the purpose of the meeting is to inspire the person's commitment and motivate them to high attainment. The manager will therefore want to create a compelling vision of what the assignment can offer, communicate in an appealing way, demonstrate how the assignment can be meaningful to the person, and how it offers opportunities to satisfy the psychological needs for autonomy, for feeling competent and for remaining connected with others. They will set and communicate all goals in a way that motivates best, i.e. involves the right degree of challenge and correctly targets attainment, learning, or both depending on the nature of the task and the current level of ability of the delegate.³¹ The manager will aim to structure assignments such that they entail responsibility for complete units of work that have a visible end result, as this promotes a culture of ownership and accountability.

To conclude the handoff, unless there are any outstanding concerns, the two can agree how the delegate will keep the manager updated, and how the manager can monitor progress.

5.4 Staying involved

After the handoff, the manager will need to stay involved to monitor progress, give feedback and coaching, and offer support if required. It is key, however, that the manager keep their engagement at the right level. Excessive involvement could lead to micromanagement, but staying too hands-off may mean that the delegate is not getting the support they need. To get this right, the manager should consider the person's style and skillset. It may also be helpful to ask the delegate for their preference directly and check with them periodically if they feel the balance is right.³² Importantly, people's oversight needs will evolve and can vary significantly from person to person and between assignments, which means the manager needs to tailor their approach accordingly.

To set a cadence for the monitoring of delegated work, the manager can use their regular one-to-ones with the person. There, both can review progress against the agreed timelines, benchmarks, and quality standards and the delegate can share other key highlights. This approach allows the manager to become aware of any setbacks in good time without the need to engage in excessive or overly frequent monitoring. It also creates a forum where the manager can give feedback and coaching while the delegate has the opportunity to ask for support if required.

The manager will often notice that the delegate approaches work differently than the manager would. This is as expected given that the delegate is operating with autonomy. The manager will be interested in the quality of the work outcomes and in the final result, leaving it for the delegate to find the best way to attain their objectives. That way the delegate can be in control of the assignment, with the resulting feeling of ownership fuelling their motivation and engagement, and with the ability to try out new approaches driving their growth and development.

When delegating to others, it is important to resist the urge to take back control at the first sign that the initiative is no longer on track. A manager might think it would be easier for them just to take over and complete the activity on their own. While possibly a fix for the short run, doing so would deprive the delegate of a learning opportunity and would reinforce their dependence on the manager. In the long run the success of the group/team depends on members' ability to overcome stumbling blocks and to bring initiatives to a satisfactory conclusion. The right thing for the manager to do, therefore, is to coach the delegate and see if they can bring the work back on track.³³ Being able to recover from a tough spot can be a very useful experience and a source of confidence for the future.

Other than providing feedback, coaching, and other support the person may need, giving the person encouragement and expressing confidence in their abilities will serve to motivate their continued effort. That way the manager motivates the person to live up to high expectations and also motivates self to dedicate time and energy to that person's development.³⁴ This also holds in a situation where the delegated assignment is not on track – offering encouragement will be more effective than expressing frustration or apportioning blame. Rather than motivate, doing either of these would likely undermine the person's confidence and could engender an avoidant mindset. Offering the delegate appreciation for efforts made thus far and conviction that they can succeed will be far more motivating. And saying this only reflects what the manager genuinely believes – they would not have delegated the assignment if they did not believe the person can deliver on it.³⁵

Finally, recognising contributions and achievement and showing appreciation for great work are powerful motivators. Acknowledging strong performance and reinforcing desired behaviours demonstrates that people's efforts are noticed and appreciated. Done consistently and frequently, it encourages everyone to continue giving their best, living strong values, and building a high-performance culture.³⁶ Small and unexpected gestures, such as walking over and thanking someone, can be highly motivating. Sending a personal note, publicly recognising their contribution, or holding a celebratory event to mark the achievement are other ways to recognise a person.³⁷ Such social rewards, when delivered in a personal way, are highly valued and do not need to entail tangible or monetary elements to be effective.³⁸ Recognition tends to work best when it is given immediately after the person's contribution or favourable outcome, when it honours the way the person prefers to get recognised, and when it references a specific desired behaviour rather than subjective impressions.³⁹

6. Giving ample feedback

Giving every member of the group/team regular, frequent and ample feedback is key to their ability to develop for the future and to perform at a high level in the present. Giving feedback is a vital skill for every team leader and manager of others. It is not any less useful or relevant for people in other roles who can use feedback to engage effectively with colleagues. Feedback serves to recognise and reinforce strong performance and to help people notice areas where they can become more effective. It draws a person's attention to what they may be unaware of, helps them become more competent and leads to improved performance and results. Providing regular feedback demonstrates commitment to the success and growth of others and motivates their continued effort. Fair and helpful feedback helps create trusting relationships between the manager and the group/team and between collaborating individuals.

Feedback works best if it is aligned with the person's development plan and addresses the skills he or she resolved to strengthen. This significantly increases the likelihood that feedback will be accepted as relevant, helpful and delivered with the person's best interest in mind. Linking feedback to specific skills and demonstrating how acting on it will contribute to the person's progress will increase feedback effectiveness. The focus should therefore be primarily on the strengths the person set out to master and any critical flaws they need to fix. Anything that can help the person take their performance to the next level is also immediately worthy of feedback. Matters of relatively little consequence or effect, on the other hand, might not necessarily require it.

6.1 Giving positive feedback

Effective managers make skilful use of both positive and redirecting feedback. Although both play an important role in helping others grow and achieve great results, the former is often underused. Generous use of positive feedback to recognise and reinforce strong performance is critical to ensuring that people continue to hone their skills, are aware of their strengths, feel accomplished and remain highly motivated and engaged.⁴⁰ Through positive feedback the manager draws a person's attention to a successful outcome and the behaviour that has led to it. As all feedback, positive feedback works best when it is specific. Rather than say "You did really well in the meeting", which does not shed any light on what the person did well, it is far better to tell them e.g. "You projected confidence, spoke with authority and made a really convincing argument about X". That way positive feedback helps the person notice an effective behavioural pattern and reinforces it further. It also serves as encouragement to recreate it in future. Positive feedback thus contributes to the person's growth and development directly. And it contributes highly effectively – learning happens best when one notices what works well rather than what does not. Every instance when the team or individual puts in the effort and makes a difference or delivers an excellent result is therefore worthy of stopping everyone for a minute for all to notice it, reflect on it and feel great about it.⁴¹ That way people can see what excellence and success look like and those who demonstrate highly effective behaviours can grow their strengths further. Finally, and importantly for managers, ease at and willingness to provide positive feedback increases the manager's perceived effectiveness in the eyes of the team. Managers who give only redirecting feedback do not come across as effectively as managers who give both.⁴²

6.2 Giving redirecting feedback

Redirecting feedback serves to address behaviour which is getting in the way of effectiveness. Correctly delivered redirecting feedback brings the situation and behaviour to the person's attention, describes the impact the behaviour has had, gives the person the opportunity to share their perspective and concludes in a discussion about how the person could handle similar situations more effectively in future. As does positive feedback, redirecting feedback plays an important role in helping others get better. Without it, the person might be unaware of how their behaviour is getting in the way of their success and putting at risk the attainment of their goals and aspirations. If the behaviour relates to a critical flaw a person has, withholding feedback deprives the person of the opportunity to change course and recover. It is therefore incumbent on managers to give redirecting feedback.

6.3 Having the feedback conversation

All feedback needs to be delivered with respect and care and redirecting feedback particularly so. Feedback given in a constructive and open-minded way with a forward-looking focus on helping the person improve is more likely to be accepted and to lead to the desired behavioural change. Feedback that targets the person rather than their behaviour, ascribes a motive to the behaviour or is delivered in a way the recipient finds biased could be met with a defensive reaction. How managers approach feedback conversations matters therefore greatly for the outcomes. One way to deliver feedback effectively is through the situation, behaviour, and impact (SBI) structure. This involves describing the situation in which the behaviour occurred, the behaviour itself as an observable action taken by the person, and the impact it had on the feedback provider or others present. For example, the manager could say: “Oliver, can I talk to you for a minute? During our morning team meeting today, when Olivia was sharing an idea (situation) you interrupted her twice saying it would not work (behaviour). Olivia then gave up and ended up not sharing her idea in full. Others were also unwilling to contribute ideas after that (impact). I am concerned about your behaviour.” The manager can then ask the person to share their perspective on the situation: “What is your perspective on this?” The person will then share their point of view, and the two can discuss more effective ways of responding in future.

As all feedback, redirecting feedback is best offered in the moment or as soon as practicable after the behaviour occurred. That way the event is fresh in the memory of all involved which makes the discussion more meaningful. Delaying the feedback until the next day, the next one-to-one or until after the end of the assignment, or resolving to give feedback only after the behaviour reoccurs deprives the person of the opportunity to improve right away. Secondly, the more fact-based and the more focused on observable behaviour and impact the discussion is, the lower the chance that the feedback will be questioned. Any discrepancies in facts will likely be pointed out which will diminish the credibility of feedback and will detract from the purpose of the discussion which is to agree how the person can improve. Also, a factual account of the behaviour and its impact is far less likely to be disputed or lead to a defensive reaction than if the manager were to ascribe a motive, make interpretations of the behaviour, be judgemental, label the behaviour (e.g. say it was *rude*), use a personal frame (“*you were rude*”) or generalise (“*you always interrupt*”). Thirdly, inquiring about the recipient’s perspective should be an integral part of every feedback discussion. That way the manager can learn about facts or circumstances he or she was not aware of. Soliciting the person’s input also demonstrates that the manager sees them as a person, intends to address the matter in a fair way, is open-minded and not coming to the discussion with any preconceived views. In fact, the manager can indicate that they will be asking for the person’s input at the very outset of the conversation. The manager might say: “Oliver, I would like to talk to you about our morning team meeting because I have some concerns. Let me tell you how I’d like to approach this conversation and see if it works for you. I will share with you what I saw that raised my concern and will then ask if you saw the same things. After we agree on what happened, I want to say more about my concerns and see if you share them.”⁴³ With the behaviour and impact discussed, the two can proceed to explore more effective ways of approaching similar situations. Continuing the example above, this could involve touching on the point that new ideas are fragile and so colleagues can support each other by acknowledging all well-intentioned contributions. If there is agreement on the approach, the manager can ask the person to think of a specific way they could express acknowledgement without judgement. That way the feedback discussion provides a learning and practice opportunity.

6.4 Avoiding ineffective ways of giving feedback

For feedback to be effective, it is best to avoid giving it in ways that undermine this effectiveness. Even if adopted with the best intentions in mind, these often lead to unintended consequences. One such ineffective way is to “sugarcoat” redirecting feedback, i.e. describe the behaviour or performance in a softened way or more positively than it was in actuality. The intention could be to make the discussion less uncomfortable, to reduce the risk of a defensive reaction or just make the feedback more palatable for the recipient. Softened feedback can also be the result of the manager being overly diplomatic or counting on the person to infer the unsaid. Or the manager could believe they are getting their point across clearly while in reality they are not. In all these cases the outcome is that the person is not receiving accurate feedback. This deprives them of the opportunity to improve and will likely result in them putting in less effort than necessary to change their ways. It may also cause misunderstandings later, e.g. during periodic performance appraisals.⁴⁴

Another ineffective approach is to “sandwich” redirecting feedback between two pieces of positive feedback. The thinking behind this approach is that people will be more open to hearing redirecting feedback if they also hear something positive. The real motivation, however, is often to give the manager a way to ease into providing redirecting feedback. This benefits the manager then and not the recipient. The recipient benefits when they get accurate feedback promptly. Also, people see through the “sandwich” and start to discount positive feedback as merely a prelude to real feedback. This is where the risk comes in – if discounted as not genuine, positive feedback will lose its potency in motivating people’s performance, growth and development. And delaying genuine positive feedback so that it is available for the occasion when redirecting feedback needs to be given is not an effective approach either – feedback is most effective when given timely.⁴⁵

Yet another way of giving feedback which often backfires is by asking carefully crafted leading questions. This involves the feedback giver making up their mind as to what the issue is and then trying to get the person to reach the same conclusion. How do you think the meeting went? But do you not think that you could have done better? This only works, however, if the feedback recipient is willing to play along. If they do not, a rather frustrating situation is bound to arise. Asking questions is useful when the intention is to learn something new or to help a person reflect and reach their own conclusions. To share one’s own observations, a direct approach where the feedback giver states what they have to state is far more effective.⁴⁶ With their own observations shared that way, the manager can then elicit the recipient’s point of view by asking e.g. “What is your perspective on this?”

Finally, the object of feedback matters as well. Giving feedback on talent or innate ability has the unintended consequence of promoting a “fixed mindset”. Having received such praise, the person may focus their efforts on preserving this favourable image rather than take up new challenges that could put it at risk. Such avoidance will result in diminished performance and will hinder growth and development. Praise is therefore best given for effort, improvement in skill and performance, and for goal attainment. This encourages “growth mindset” thinking. The same applies to redirecting feedback. For it to be actionable, it needs to focus on what the person can change.

6.5 Handling one’s own discomfort when giving redirecting feedback

At times managers can feel uncomfortable giving redirecting feedback. This could be out of concern that doing so will put a strain on the relationship, elicit a defensive response or result in an emotional or volatile interaction. Some just feel uneasy confronting others. A manager may also hesitate to give feedback when earlier feedback has not resulted in any improvement or if they think the person cannot change. While some of these remain

a possibility, the alternative, i.e. not giving or delaying feedback, inevitably leads to an outcome which is clearly worse – the person not getting the opportunity to course correct and improve. It helps to realise that understanding effective ways of giving feedback is a powerful first step to overcoming one's reservations. Making then a regular practice out of it, where all group/team members regularly get feedback, both removes any residual discomfort a manager may feel and gets everyone on the group/team used to receiving frequent feedback.⁴⁷

6.6 Understanding and addressing aversion to receiving feedback

Aversion to receiving redirecting feedback is not uncommon. Even if delivered in a way intended to be constructive and open-minded, feedback may still be met with defensiveness or other emotional reactions. The root cause for this is that feedback gives rise to a tension between two human needs. On the one hand, in helping the person attain personal growth, feedback contributes to their ability to satisfy the need for self-actualisation. On the other, if the recipient interprets feedback as a dig at their worth or ability, he or she will see it as something that puts his or her self-esteem at risk. This perceived threat can set off defensive and emotional reactions.⁴⁸

How one thinks about feedback has therefore profound implications for how one responds to it. Managers can therefore increase people's general openness to feedback by offering their groups/teams helpful ways of thinking about it. Highlighting the personal and professional growth benefits of acting on feedback will speak to people's self-actualisation needs. Pointing out how feedback is meant to address behaviours and outcomes and how it is not meant to devalue anyone or criticise them as a person will reduce any perceived risk to self-esteem. Discussing effective ways of actively soliciting and responding to feedback will help the group/team get more of it from across the organisation. Demonstrating how making the most of the feedback one gets translates into greater personal and professional effectiveness will serve to foster openness to feedback further still.

In-the-moment openness to feedback can be enhanced by the way in which the manager approaches feedback conversations. Defensiveness often stems from a person feeling vulnerable. A good way to start the conversation is therefore to increase the perceived safety of the situation. This can be achieved by the manager articulating his or her intent. It could be a desire for the person to be successful, for close collaboration between groups/teams to be maintained, for a project to go smoothly, for a deadline to be met, etc. This aligns the interests between the two sides and connects the discussion to a common purpose. Then, feedback is best delivered in a way which does not put the person's self-esteem at risk. This means focusing on the behaviour or action taken and the impact it had whilst avoiding personal judgements, generalisations, labelling the behaviour or ascribing a motive to it. Emotional reactions can also result if the recipient believes that the feedback giver has not taken all relevant circumstances into account. That is why eliciting the person's perspective and giving them the opportunity to be heard needs to be an integral part of the feedback discussion. The person can then share any additional information they consider relevant which will have the added benefit of releasing some of the emotional build-up, if there was any. Finally, openness to feedback goes up when the focus is on what can be changed rather than on what cannot. Shifting the attention from the past onto the future by discussing opportunities for improvement is one way to achieve this. It also reinforces the developmental purpose of feedback and so addresses self-actualisation needs.

Despite the manager's best efforts, the feedback recipient may still succumb to an emotional reaction. If this happens, it will likely be counterproductive to continue with the feedback and even worse to attempt to push the message through – the emotions are best addressed first. One way the manager can approach this is by saying what reaction they are noticing and inviting the person to share what is driving it. The manager could say: "You

seem to have some strong emotions around this. What is your reaction about?” or “I notice you went quiet. What are you thinking right now?” After the person has responded, the manager will acknowledge and validate that perspective by reflecting what the person has shared (“It sounds like you feel that [...]. I can imagine that this can be frustrating.”) The person may then share more details which the manager will again acknowledge and validate. If the emotional reaction has subsided, the manager can bring the conversation back to the feedback and can invite the person to reconsider its merits, e.g. by saying “What about the feedback do you agree with?”⁴⁹ If, on the other hand, emotions remain high, the manager can suggest that the two continue with the discussion at a later point.

6.7 Facilitating 360-degree feedback

If feedback from one person can help another grow and achieve great results, then feedback from many can have an even more powerful effect. This is where 360-degree feedback comes into play. It is not only the sheer feedback count that speaks to its advantage. This kind of feedback also usefully solicits inputs from a number of stakeholder groups the person engages with – direct reports, peers, managers and potentially customers, suppliers, and others. This is important as each of these groups experiences the person’s behaviour in a different context and so can make observations that others cannot. Finally, multiple respondents in each stakeholder group mean not only more but also more accurate feedback, since averaged responses tend to be more on the mark than individual feedback.

360-feedback offers a holistic picture of how a person shows up in the world. It allows the recipient to find out if there are any gaps between how he or she intends to come across and how he or she is actually perceived. Unlike the former, it is not easy to know the latter without asking others. With personal effectiveness determined by how one engages and comes across rather than by the intentions one has, any gap between the two had better be found out fast. Making and acting on insights that come from 360-feedback can have a transformational effect on one’s career. Also, this type of feedback is by far one of the best ways to find out about one’s strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, it yields results which are significantly more accurate than those coming from self-assessment. With the effectiveness of a development plan relying heavily on the accuracy of the inputs that go into it, those seeking to grow and develop would not want to miss out on the benefits that 360-feedback can offer.

Managers can help their groups and teams make productive use of 360-degree feedback in a number of ways. First of all, clarifying that it is intended to assist everyone in their growth and development rather than managers in carrying out evaluations of results and performance will result in people being more open to it. Secondly, discussing with the group/team the benefits such feedback brings and the transformational role it can play for every recipient will likely increase people’s openness to it further still. To model such openness, managers can share with their groups/teams the 360-degree feedback they themselves received, normalising the fact that everyone has some developmental needs. Thirdly, offering the group/team helpful ways of thinking about feedback and providing guidance on how to incorporate it into their development plans will ensure everyone can make the most of the exercise. Finally, recognising those who change and improve on the back of the feedback they get will set a powerful example for others – achieving this is, after all, a far more impressive feat than being perfect all along.

6.8 Giving periodic evaluations of results and performance

With feedback given regularly and frequently throughout the year, the more formal periodic evaluations of results and performance will mostly restate what has been discussed previously. That way what the manager shares during the evaluation will rarely come as a surprise to the group/team member. Importantly, people will not have to wait what could potentially be months until the periodic evaluation to get feedback on their performance – it will have been shared in real-time right when it was needed. And, with good record keeping of all feedback shared, managers will find it easy to retrieve the information they need to prepare the periodic evaluation when the time comes.

It is a good practice for evaluation meetings to cover both the people's results and their performance. This allows managers to:

- Evaluate people's *results** during the period that has just ended so that there is a fair basis for the manager to give recognition and rewards, if any, or to administer consequences.
- Evaluate people's *performance*** in the period that has just ended in order to help them do even better in the period that has just started.

As such, it is the performance part of the evaluation that is of greater relevance when it comes to developing people. While the evaluation of results will say what the person's results have been, it will not shed much light on what has led to those results. That is something the evaluation of performance will make clear. As part of it, the manager highlights the person's demonstrated strengths as well as areas which require improvement. This then helps the person understand what to continue doing, what to add to their repertoire, and what to change in order to perform even better going forward. Strong performance, in turn, facilitates result attainment.

The strengths and weaknesses identified through performance evaluations thus become an important input into people's personal development plans (alongside other considerations such as the person's vision for the future and the skill requirements of his or her current role). It is useful to keep in mind that it is a good practice to hold discussions covering people's development a week or two after evaluation discussions. That way people will have the opportunity to reflect on the evaluation, use it as a check-point against their long-term developmental goals and come prepared with ideas as to where they could focus their developmental efforts in the next period.⁵⁰ In that meeting, the manager can coach the person through the people development process to help him or her reconnect with their vision for the future, consider where he or she is today, revisit the development plan, and prioritise developmental assignments. The manager thus continues to work with the person to help them grow and develop.

Agreements reached in the development planning meeting can then be used as inputs into goal setting for the next period. That way the person's progress and attainment can get recognised along their other accomplishments.

* Actual work outcomes vs. goals set, adherence to organisational values and standards, skill improvement as laid out in development plan

** Effort expended, choice of approach, level of knowledge and skill applied to work at hand, time allocation and prioritisation

7. Giving regular coaching

Coaching is a leadership practice that unlocks the potential of individuals and teams in order to help them fulfil their immediate responsibilities more effectively as well as advance their development for the long run.⁵¹ This is achieved through interventions that support people (and teams) in setting priorities, finding the best way to attain them, moving forward and taking responsibility for their decisions and actions. Interventions are intended to allow the coachee to come up with answers on their own and so consist primarily of open-ended questions. A coaching manager intentionally refrains from giving advice or offering interpretations and solutions. By giving people space to arrive at these on their own instead, coaching empowers, raises awareness and promotes accountability. When the insights, conclusions and ideas are theirs, people act as owners. Able to exercise control and operate with greater autonomy, they are more motivated, more creative and more engaged. Over time, they develop a habit of taking responsibility and taking the lead, thus enhancing their own effectiveness and that of the organisation.

7.1 Why coaching works?

Giving regular coaching increases the effectiveness of both the manager and the group/team. It helps the manager fulfil their core responsibility – setting the overall direction and empowering the group/team to find the way to get there. It also helps to keep the manager away from what the purpose of their role is not – jumping in with answers and solutions. A coaching manager realises that allowing people to find their own way makes them more empowered and less dependent on advice and suggestions from others. That is how people can learn to operate with greater autonomy, make fuller use of their knowledge and expertise, and grow faster as a result. To do otherwise would create an overdependence on the manager which would hamper productivity and creativity. There is also a risk that, unable to keep up with all the detail the group/team run past him or her, the manager could become a bottleneck and slow down work. This is a sure way to get overwhelmed and lose focus. Coaching, in contrast, unlocks the potential in the group/team, allows both the manager and members to add more value in their respective roles and makes work more meaningful for everyone.

Some may think that work life is sufficiently busy as it is, and so spending time on coaching and allowing time for people to find their own way is not something a manager can easily afford. When a manager says they do not have the time to coach though, then in all likelihood they do not have the time not to. Short-term it might be at times quicker to just give others instructions how to do something if they ask, but in the longer run this approach will likely prove unsustainable and counterproductive. First of all, in a world where change is rampant, even if the manager encountered a similar situation in the past, what worked back then might not necessarily be the best way forward now. Often it will not. The manager cannot therefore give an answer at the drop of a hat and would need to analyse the circumstances first. There is no time saved from approaching the manager then – someone still has to do all that work. Secondly, in following the manager's advice most of the time, team members would miss out on the opportunity to learn how to operate with autonomy: make use of their own expertise, apply their own judgement, reach their own conclusions and make their own decisions. That would be detrimental to their growth and development. And, in the longer run, continuous advice giving would absorb more of the manager's time overall than it would take to coach the team how to operate with greater autonomy. It would also detract from the manager's core responsibility which is to lead and to manage. It could also convince the team that running

things past the manager whenever they do something is what the manager expects. That could result in both the team and the manager engaging in a ritual which neither side sees much value in. Finally, coaching does not have to take much extra time in the first place. When thought of as a way of engaging with people that aids their growth and development, coaching can take place on occasions that are scheduled and taking place already.

7.2 Having a coaching conversation

Managers provide coaching to support people in developing their performance and building skills. For example, a manager might coach a person/team to support them to reach a goal, overcome a challenge, find a way forward, make a decision, set priorities, change a behaviour, resolve conflict, learn from an experience, build a strength, etc. In the coaching conversation the manager will ask the coachee questions aimed at helping them define for themselves what it is that they want to focus on, become aware of all relevant aspects of their current situation, explore all their options, and decide what they want to do. The manager will then often continue to support the person/team with further coaching until they have taken all necessary actions and attained their desired results. While there are many ways to coach, one way to hold a coaching conversation which works in a wide range of circumstances is through the goal, reality, options and way forward (GROW) structure presented below⁵².

Goal	What is the person's / team's goal? What are they trying to accomplish? Where do they want to get to?
Reality	What is the current situation? What are the challenges? What has the person/team tried? What worked?
Options	What could the person/team do to move towards the goal? What else? And what else?
Way forward	What will the person/team do now? And will they do that?

Each element is described in greater detail in the sections that follow. Depending on the matter, it may take one or more coaching conversations to cover them all.

7.2.1 GROW – Goal

A good starting point to any coaching discussion is to find out what the person/team wishes to discuss or address. What would they like to focus on? What is on their mind and what is going on in their world? What have they set out to accomplish that they require support with? What challenge are they facing that they would like to overcome? How would they then define their goal? And what is the outcome of this particular exchange with their manager that they are looking for? At the end of the meeting, what do they need clarity about that they do not have now? What actionable outcome are they looking for? Approached this way, the ownership of the session is firmly with the coachee from the very outset.

After the coachee has stated their discussion topic, it is always a good idea to see if there is anything else they would like to bring up. Perhaps there is something they have not thought of immediately, or they only raised the first matter that came to their mind. There could be further areas the person/team might need support with and asking “And what else?” will help uncover these. In fact, it makes sense for the manager to keep asking if there is anything else until the person/team has had a chance to share everything that is on their mind and says that there is nothing else. That way the manager can help ensure that nothing important is left out.

If the person/team has raised a number of topics they would like support with, it is important for the manager to let them prioritise these and select the one they would like to discuss first. This will allow the coachee to focus on what is most useful and important for them. The manager could ask: “If you had to pick one of these to focus on, which one would be the real challenge for you?”⁵³ And in case there is a proliferation of challenges, the manager could see if the coachee can think of a way to group all items into common themes first.

The focus of every coaching discussion should be on the coachee and the role they play. With this in mind, if in framing the issue the coachee appears to be preoccupied with the role of their direct report, another colleague, project, or process, it is best for the manager to bring the person’s attention back to what this situation means for them. This will make it easier for the coachee to take ownership of resolving the matter. The manager could say: “I think I understand some of what’s going on with [person, project, process]. What is the real challenge here for you?” That way the manager can focus on coaching the coachee, and the coachee can in turn coach their direct report, resolve the matter with the other person or manage the project or process as necessary later.⁵⁴

Finally, given the attention-focusing effect goals have, it is important for them to be stated in the positive. Defined in terms of a favourable outcome (e.g. we want to be number one or number two), a goal focuses attention on that favourable outcome. This has the effect of inspiring and energising. It also breeds positivity. Goals framed in terms of avoiding an undesirable result (e.g. we want to avoid staying in the position we are in) have the opposite effect – they bring attention to failure. Fortunately, any goal can be easily restated such that it targets a successful outcome, and it is important that goals are always stated in the positive.⁵⁵

7.2.2 GROW – Reality

With the goal defined, the next step will be for the manager to invite the coachee to clarify the current situation. The purpose here is for the coachee to revisit all relevant facts, form an overall view of the situation, clarify their thoughts and feelings, and make new insights. To achieve this the manager asks open-ended questions rooted in *what*, *who*, *when*, and *where* to help the coachee develop awareness of the situation as it is in actuality. What is happening? What is the present situation? Who is involved? Who is affected? What is the real issue here? What has the coachee’s been plan so far? What actions has he or she taken? What were the results? What has prevented the coachee from achieving more?⁵⁶ To help the person/team explore any aspect of the situation in greater detail, the manager can probe further by asking “What else can you say about that?” and “What else is important here?”

Why questions are best avoided as asking these can come across judgemental and could put the person on the defensive.⁵⁷ If the coach believes it is still helpful to explore motives and reasons, he or she can ask *what* questions instead, e.g. “What got you to choose this course of action?” or “What were you planning to achieve?”⁵⁸ *How* questions are also best avoided at this stage as they invite analysis. Before engaging in analysis, however, it is first best to gather all facts. Attempted too early, analysis can lead to theory formation and biased fact gathering afterwards. Switching between analysis and observation is also taxing as these are different mental modes.⁵⁹

As the coachee proceeds to share the facts, it benefits the coachee when the manager paraphrases what the coachee says or alternatively reflects it back to them using the coachee’s own language, making sure they do it in a neutral and non-judgemental way. This serves to acknowledge what the coachee is sharing and importantly lets them hear and clarify their thoughts for themselves.⁶⁰ Other than paraphrasing, the manager also listens attentively to what the coachee says. Does it appear that the person is focusing mostly on one aspect of the situation (e.g. process) and may be overlooking another (e.g. people)? If that is the case, then asking further questions about the

unaddressed aspect could help the coachee notice how something may have been missed or not attended to. Such insights can then be helpful when it comes to exploring options and deciding the way forward.

Other than help the person/team revisit the facts, it is useful for the manager to ask the coachee about their thoughts and feelings in light of these and what actions they have already taken to move toward their goal. What are their thoughts about the situation they are in? How do they feel about it? What actions have they taken? What results did these bring? Were these results what they were hoping for? This will help the person/team develop awareness as to the link between how one's thoughts and feelings affect the course of action one takes and then in turn the results one gets. Such insights can be of great help when it comes to improving one's effectiveness. If the person is aiming for different results, then what different approaches could they try? How would they need to think and feel about the situation to act in that new and different way?

It might at times appear that the coachee could be having limiting or otherwise unhelpful thoughts or beliefs that may be getting in the way of attaining their goals. These are often expressed through statements where the coachee says they *always* face a certain challenge or are *never* able to overcome it. The role of the manager is to uncover such beliefs and support the person to defeat these. The manager could proceed as described in section 8.1 or alternatively could challenge the coachee to remind themselves of an instance which disproves their belief. For example, if the person suggests they always get stressed when presenting to a group and are never able to come across relaxed, then the manager could ask for one instance when the coachee was confident and presented with authority. The manager can then explore with the person further how they prepared for the occasion back then and what they could do ahead of the forthcoming event to be ready.

7.2.3 GROW – Options

With the situation diagnosed, and before the coachee can decide on the course of action to take, he or she (or the team) will need to identify and consider their options. The way the coach can help here is to make sure that the person/team comes up with as many of these as possible. This is because the broader the pool of options to choose from, the higher the odds of making a good decision.⁶¹ In fact, augmenting a simple choice of doing something vs. not doing it (or between doing something one way and doing it another way) with just one further option of doing something else (or doing it differently) can significantly increase the success rate of a decision.⁶² The more options the coachee is able to think up, the better their decision will therefore likely be. The coach can facilitate this by encouraging the coachee to consider multiple options. Asking what the person/team has already thought of, acknowledging all ideas and then challenging the person/team to come up with further ideas (“And what else could you do?”) is one way to achieve this. It may make sense to keep asking “And what else?” until the person/team says they cannot think of anything else.

At times the coachee may feel stuck believing that their options are limited to just one or two. This could be because the person/team feels constrained by circumstances, e.g. a narrowly defined scope or objective, perceived lack of resources or limited ability to obtain support from others. If that appears to be the case, the role of the manager is to encourage the coachee to engage in free and unconstrained thinking, while refraining from giving the coachee advice or offering solutions. What really matters here? What is the right thing to do? If the coachee could do anything, what would it be? If no constraints existed, what would they do? With this established, the manager can then ask how the person/team could overcome any obstacles they thought stood in the way such that

their newly identified options could become feasible. This approach can open up further and possibly better options, meaning a greater likelihood of success for the final outcome.

If the person/team on their own is able to come up with so many ideas, then them collaborating with others can result in even more. What is more, coming from people with different backgrounds, the ideas themselves are then likely to be more diverse as well thus benefitting the breadth of the options pool. Also, involving others in finding solutions has the added benefit of facilitating their buy-in and support for the decision when it is made. In this spirit, who could the coachee reach out to? Who could help brainstorm ways of attaining the desired outcome?

The role of the coach is to support the coachee in finding their own way. When providing coaching to a direct report, the manager therefore refrains from offering advice, at least until after they have given the person/team plenty of opportunity and encouragement to come up with options and ideas on their own. If the manager is approached for advice, the manager could say: “That is a great question. What have you already thought of?” or “That is a great question. I have some ideas which I will share with you, but before I do, what are your first thoughts?”⁶³ Once the person has offered these, the manager could ask what else the person/team can think of and could continue asking “And what else?” until the coachee runs out of ideas. If the options the person/team has come up with include what the manager had in mind, then that is very good news, and the manager can confirm that this is the case. If not, then it is at this point that the manager could offer his or her input.

At times the manager may feel that the coachee has not noticed an opportunity that is superior to all the options identified thus far. The manager can then say that he or she also has thoughts on the matter and ask if the coachee would like to hear them. Any advice is then best given directly, e.g. “I think you should consider...” rather than in question form, e.g. “Have you thought of...?” Or, if having weighted the pros and cons of all options, the person/team is intent on going in a direction which the manager believes is suboptimal, the manager can probe further to understand the coachee’s thinking in more detail. The manager could ask the coachee what results they expect to attain by pursuing that selected option. What is the upside? What are the risks? What other outcomes could taking that route lead to? What will be the consequences of each? Can the person/team live with these in all cases? That way the manager can make sure the person/team has thought through all the implications and has had the opportunity to consider all options.

7.2.4 GROW – Way forward

With the options explored, the coachee can identify the one they want to pursue and can put thought into how they will go about it. The manager can in turn ascertain the person’s/team’s level of commitment to their chosen course of action. What will they do? Are they convinced this is the best thing to do? Are they willing to own it and take it forward? How will they go about it? What needs to happen now? Who do they think they will need to involve? What support do they need from the manager? How will they track their progress? With the will and the way confirmed, the coachee can proceed with the plan and can then meet the manager periodically for further coaching as and when required. That way coaching results in considered and committed action.

7.3 Engaging with the coachee effectively

Whether coaching is effective depends heavily on how the manager engages with the coachee. The effectiveness of this engagement, in turn, relies on the manager's ability to adopt approaches which often go against ingrained habits. It is therefore useful to consider what ways of engaging lead to effective coaching outcomes.

With the purpose of coaching being to unlock the potential that resides in the coachee, effective coaching requires that the manager ask incisive questions and listen deeply rather than put forward their own ideas and suggestions. Some may find this difficult, as the instinct will often be to jump in with advice, especially when the manager sees the person/team struggling. It takes will and deliberate practice to develop a habit of not interrupting and letting the coachee arrive at answers and solutions on their own. That way the manager can add much more value, however, than if they were to do the opposite.

Coaching questions tend to work best when they are short, simple and straightforward. Open questions rooted in *what*, *who*, *when*, *where*, *how many* and *how much* are effective at raising awareness and responsibility in others and so are highly suited to coaching interactions. Closed questions and questions rooted in *why* or unqualified *how* are best avoided as they respectively shut down thinking, imply criticism and invite analytical reasoning. Asking "What were the reasons" and "What were the steps" instead of *why* and *how* tends to yield more specific and factual responses, if the manager must ask. Questions formulated according to these principles encourage observation, train attention and bring to awareness considerations that may be important.⁶⁴

Except at the outset of the coaching interaction, when it is appropriate to discuss its purpose, questions during the coaching session itself are best asked directly, without additional introductions or explanations. If the manager feels it is necessary to lessen the heaviness of a question, he or she can start with "Out of curiosity, what ...". Then, asking just one question at a time will help ensure the coachee does not become overwhelmed. And, having asked the question, the manager needs to give the person space to collect their thoughts. Becoming comfortable with silence is crucial here as rephrasing the question or asking follow-up questions while the coachee is thinking would only serve to distract them. After the person has given their answer, it is a good practice for the manager to first acknowledge, reflect, or rephrase what the person has said before proceeding with further questions.⁶⁵

As does asking good questions, good listening plays an important role in every coaching conversation. When a person is really listened to, they feel supported, valued, and encouraged. Listening well conveys respect for the other person's views and contributions. Effective coaching requires deep listening – being fully attentive to what the coachee says and how they say it. This means paying attention not only to the words but to the tone of voice and body language as well. It also means avoiding distractions of any kind such as thinking in parallel about another matter or the next question to ask. This would be quickly noticed by the coachee, would reduce trust and would distort the flow of the coaching conversation. Finally, effective listening also requires monitoring one's own emotions and reactions to make sure these do not reveal manager's judgement or preference or otherwise unduly influence the coachee. Self-awareness thus helps the manager maintain their neutrality and detachment.⁶⁶

Furthermore, to coach effectively the manager needs to be prepared to cede control over the discussion to the coachee and refrain from directing its course. The objective is, after all, for the coachee to become well versed in defining priorities, assessing reality, identifying options and making decisions on their own rather than relying on the manager to do it for them. Effective coaches adopt a mindset that the coachee is capable, resourceful and full of potential. With this mindset there is no need to control the conversation and the manager can instead give the person/team room to reach their own conclusions and make their own considered choices. This means the manager

is not attempting to steer the discussion in any particular direction and instead follows the train of thought of the coachee and lets them explore all the avenues they are interested in. If, after that, there are still some aspects of the situation which the manager feels the coachee may have left unaddressed, the manager can inquire “Is there anything else?” or “I notice you have not mentioned [aspect]. Is there any particular reason for this?” Or, at the stage of identifying options, after the coachee has exhausted all their ideas and cannot come up with anything else, if the manager can think of further alternatives, they can say “I have a couple of ideas, would you like to hear them?” The only aim here, however, should be to support the coachee in considering all options, not to influence any particular choice. The decision about the way forward needs to be made and owned by the coachee. Their commitment to the chosen course of action would be diluted if this choice were to be influenced by the manager.⁶⁷

In addition to all this, to be able to engage effectively the manager needs to recognise and accept that everyone has a unique way of being, follows a different style and approaches things differently. Each holds their own values, beliefs, views, and preferences. These will have been influenced by a multitude of factors such as upbringing, education, cultural and social background, life experiences, peers, and role models. What is more, everyone continues to evolve as they go through their life. All in all, everyone on the group/team, the manager included, will in all likelihood differ in a multitude of ways. Effective coaching requires that the manager respect these differences, remain non-judgemental and engage with people without attempting to impose his or her own ways.

Finally, where the manager brings positive energy into interactions with the person/team, they engender positivity in them as well and create an environment conducive to people’s growth and development. Where the manager creates frequent opportunities for the coachee to notice their strengths and make progress towards their goals, they help the person/team experience positive emotions and become excited about what the future holds. This allows the person/team to become more open, more engaged, more creative, and more motivated.⁶⁸

8. Addressing performance issues

The results people get are determined in large part by the actions they take. In the world of work, the totality of a person's actions over a period of time amounts to his or her performance. A person's performance can be evaluated using the following measures⁶⁹:

- Effort: the amount of effort the person is expending in carrying out their work;
- Approach: the choices the person makes about *how* he or she will carry out the work;
- Knowledge and skill: the level of knowledge and skill the person is applying to his or her work;
- Time: the amount of time the person is allocating to the work that matters most.

Performance is always the goal owner's responsibility. There are certain practices, however, which managers can adopt to aid their groups and teams in attaining high performance. These include giving feedback and coaching. Regardless of results and performance, feedback and coaching can always help the group/team perform better. It is especially important to provide these when in the view of the manager either results or performance are lacking.

There can be different reasons for a performance gap. It could be a knowledge/skillset gap, a mindset gap, or it could be other reasons. Or it could also be a combination of these.

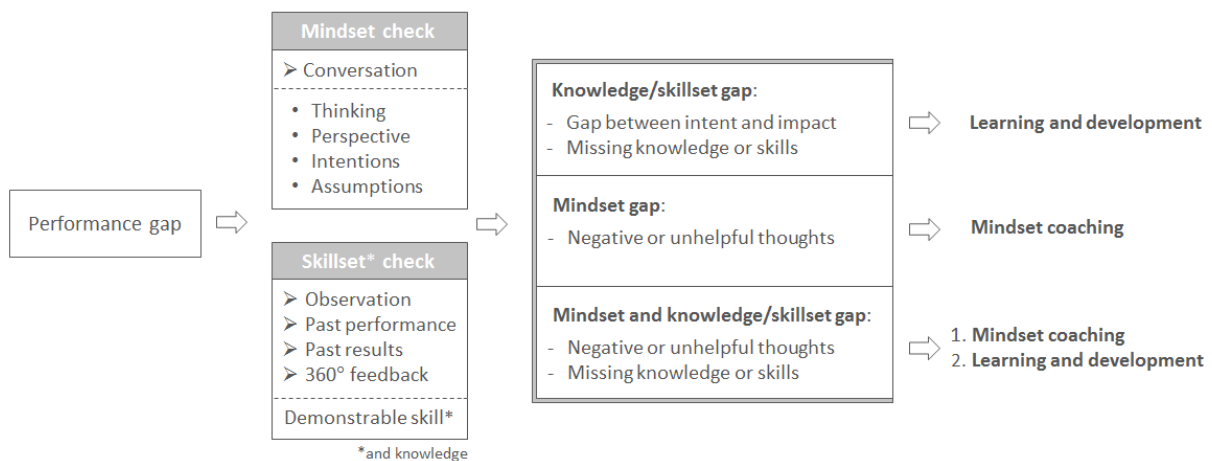
A knowledge/skillset gap exists when the person's intent does not translate into the intended impact. The person does not know how to do attain his or her goal but is keen to learn it. A mindset gap arises where a person has the requisite knowledge and skill but lacks the willingness to apply himself or herself fully. If the person lacks knowledge or skill and is not willing to acquire these, then there is both a knowledge/skillset and a mindset gap.

Whenever there is a performance gap, the best way to find out what is behind it is to talk to the person and ask. Asking about the person's work and anything that could be affecting it and then listening carefully to what the person says and how he or she says it will make it possible to understand his or her thinking, intentions, perspective, and any assumptions he or she made. If the thinking is helpful, then the performance gap could be attributable to a knowledge/skillset gap or to other reasons. If the person is having negative or otherwise unhelpful thoughts, then there likely is a mindset gap and possibly also a knowledge/skillset gap or other reasons.

Where the conversation with the person indicates that there is a mindset gap, the manager should provide the person with mindset coaching. One way to do this is described in section 8.1. Whether there is a skillset gap, in turn, can be inferred from observing the person work, from their past performance and from 360-degree feedback. If the person has demonstrated the necessary knowledge and skill in the past and a comparable level of attainment, then it can be assumed that he or she does not have a skillset gap. Otherwise, unless there are grounds to believe the person does have the requisite knowledge and skill, it is possible that they do not. It is best for the manager to have a discussion with the person and find out. To introduce the topic and share their observations in a neutral way the manager could say: "Tell me where I am wrong, but I am noticing [description of performance gap]. What do you think?" If the person indeed turns out not to have the requisite knowledge or skill, then they could benefit from learning and skill development. One way to approach this is described in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

Ways of identifying and addressing knowledge/skillset and mindset gaps are illustrated in Figure 6 on the following page. If both types of gap are present simultaneously, then the mindset gap requires attending to first.

Figure 6: Addressing a performance gap by identifying and addressing knowledge/skillset and mindset gaps



Source: Adapted from Kris Plachy, “Setting expectations and assessing performance issues”, UC Davis, coursera.org, accessed Aug 2017

8.1 Providing mindset coaching – helping people notice how thoughts affect results

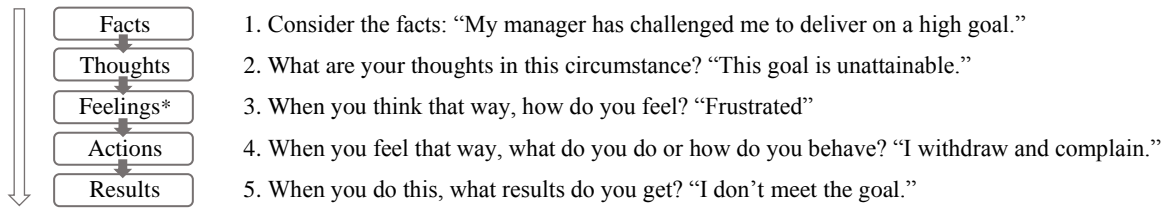
What one thinks affects greatly the results one gets. Thinking helpful thoughts is a powerful enabler of effective behaviours and successful outcomes. Similarly, having unhelpful thoughts often gets in the way of productive work and one’s ability to achieve desired results. Managers can be of great help if they are able to identify such situations and coach the person to bring this effect to their attention.⁷⁰

When a person has the knowledge and skills required but their performance is not satisfactory, then ineffective thoughts could be interfering with their ability to produce great work. To find out what someone is thinking it is always best to ask. Asking about the person’s work and anything that could be affecting it and then listening carefully to what the person says and how they say it will make it possible to understand their thoughts.

It is important to distinguish between thoughts and facts. For example, if a manager challenges a person to deliver on a high goal, that is a fact. In this circumstance, one person could think “This is achievable. If I work hard, I will meet the goal”, while another might think “This goal is unattainable”. These are thoughts, not facts, even if the person believes in them strongly. Facts are common for all, and thoughts are unique to each individual. Unlike facts, everyone is free to choose the way they think, which is why the distinction is important. Managers need to bring this to the person’s attention if necessary and should not accept thoughts as facts themselves either.

With the person’s thinking understood, the coach can help them notice how their thoughts affect the results they get. One way to look at this is to consider how thoughts engender feelings, how thoughts and feelings guide the actions one takes, and finally how these actions lead to results. Figure 7 on the following page illustrates this. Asking the questions listed below can help the person realise how unhelpful thoughts lead to unfavourable results.

Figure 7: Making a person aware how unhelpful thoughts adversely affect results

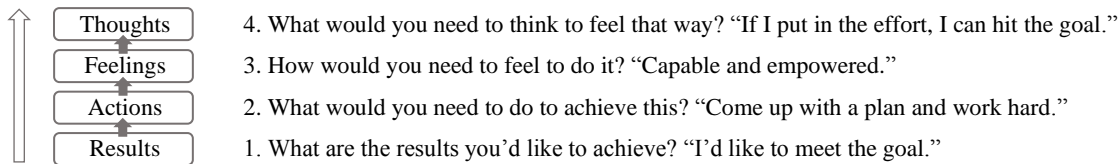


(*) Feelings are not thoughts. Feelings are one word (e.g. "frustrated") and anything longer is a thought. If, when asked about their feelings, a person says “I feel the goal in unattainable”, that is a thought and not a feeling. Explain the difference and ask the person for a feeling.

Source: Kris Plachy, “Setting expectations and assessing performance issues”, UC Davis, coursera.org, accessed Aug 2017

With the causal effect between thoughts and results established, the coach can discuss with the person whether the result they are likely going to get is satisfactory to them. To arrive at the type of thinking required to support the attainment of a successful outcome instead, the coach can then coach the person through these steps in the reverse order, i.e. asking about the preferred result first, then about the actions that its attainment would require, and so on. This is illustrated in Figure 8 below, which includes examples of questions the coach could ask.

Figure 8: Helping a person realise how the results they hope for require different thinking



Source: Kris Plachy, “Setting expectations and assessing performance issues”, UC Davis, coursera.org, accessed Aug 2017

That way the coach can bring to the person’s attention the powerful effect of how thoughts affect the results one attains. It will also allow the person to realise what type of thinking could be more effective in their current situation. This does not mean that the coach should encourage the person to think thoughts they do not believe in. It merely means that the coach can invite the person to consider a different, more helpful, perspective and see how it could make it easier for them reach their goals and aspirations.

Where the discussion is between a manager and their direct report, the next step is for the two to explore what actions the person will take as a result of this new thinking. Once the person has come up with a plan, the two can then meet periodically to review progress. Such follow-ups will also be an opportunity for the manager to provide the person with ongoing motivation and help them avoid slipping back into ineffective thinking.

Finally, it needs saying that no one can change the mind of another. It is only the other person who can change their mind. It is possible that they may remain attached to their original thinking despite the manager’s coaching efforts. If that is the case, the manager needs to hold the person accountable for their results anyway. It is still

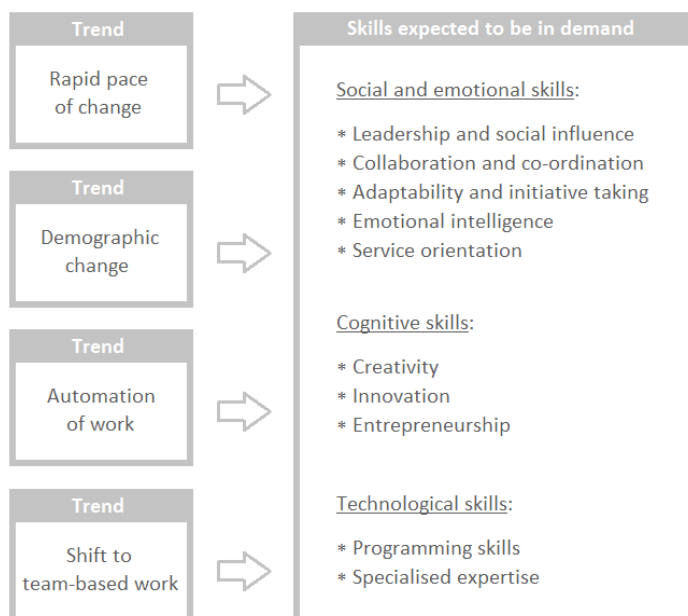
the person’s responsibility to deliver on their goals and objectives. The manager’s responsibility is to coach the person and help them understand that if they keep the same beliefs, they will likely keep getting the same results.⁷¹

9. The future of work

As stated earlier, people development discussions are best rooted in the person’s vision for the future – a reflection of their values, dreams, drives, desires, hopes, and aspirations. When articulating the vision, the coachee is asked to imagine that they could live an ideal life and not concern themselves with any external considerations such as the trends affecting the future of work and what skills are likely to be in demand in years to come. Yet in all likelihood the person will not dismiss these entirely. It is, after all, not unreasonable to consider whether such factors are expected to provide a tailwind or the opposite in one’s journey to attain the vision.

Throughout time, change affecting the world of work kept giving rise to new jobs and new ways of working, and these in turn kept leading to shifts in the demand for skills among workers. This process is therefore not new and is something that is expected to continue. Understanding the type of change which is now underway and the prevalent trends can help infer what skills are likely to be particularly in demand in the workplace in the coming years. The forces affecting the world of work today and their skill implications in general are presented in Figure 9 and described in further detail in section 10.1 below. Section 10.2 that follows covers the implications for leadership skills in particular.

Figure 9: Trends affecting the world of work and the skills expected to be in demand as a result.



Source: Adapted from Erica Volini et al., “Global human capital trends 2019”, Deloitte Insights, pp. 28-41, 47, 53, 79-82; Jacques Bughin et al., “Automation and the future of the workforce”, McKinsey, 2018, pp. 4, 5, 9, 11, 22, 41, and Till Alexander Leopold et al., “The future of jobs report 2018”, World Economic Forum, pp. vii, viii.

9.1 Trends affecting the world of work today

9.1.1 Rapid pace of change

Companies are facing disruptive change. New business models are upending whole industries. Customers have ever higher expectations. Firms are forced to innovate and improve in a cycle that never ends. People transition between jobs more often than ever before. There is a constant influx of new technologies. Complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty are on the rise. The pace of change is becoming ever more rapid. This means there is a need for organisations and their people to sense what is going on, act, adapt, extend capabilities and deliver for clients fast. It means that what is coming next is often unknown. This environment calls for leadership, adaptability, initiative taking, emotional intelligence, collaboration and service orientation skills as well as resilience and the ability to cope with complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity. It requires that people constantly learn and build new skills.⁷²

9.1.2 Demographic change

Demographic change, driven by increases in life expectancies and declines in fertility rates, means that people can now expect their working lives to span half a century or more. During this time, given the pace of change affecting the world of work, they will likely switch not just jobs but also careers multiple times. This calls for skills such as adaptability, entrepreneurship and initiative taking, to allow one to continuously refresh and update one's skills, identify the opportunities that present themselves and make the most of them. Emotional intelligence along with resilience and the ability to cope with ambiguity and uncertainty will allow one to navigate change effectively and overcome any challenges that may come with it.⁷³

Demographic change also means that there are now representatives of up to five demographic cohorts in the workplace. Every colleague will hold their unique values, beliefs, views, and preferences, and these will have in part been influenced by the generation they are part of. It takes leadership, emotional intelligence, collaboration and influencing skills to empathise with, engage and motivate people effectively in such diverse environments.

9.1.3 Automation of work

Automation is becoming more prevalent in the workplace. In general, automation is well positioned to replace work that is routine, repetitive and requires only basic cognitive skills. In contrast, work that requires social and emotional skills is not easily automatable. The relative demand for these is therefore expected to rise significantly. Skills that fall into this category include leadership and social influence, collaborating and co-ordinating with others, adaptability and initiative taking, and emotional intelligence. Similarly, work that requires certain higher cognitive skills such as creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship does not lend itself to automation well and so the relative demand for it is likely to rise. Finally, technological skills such as programming are set to experience a strong growth. As organisations deploy automation, they will require people with requisite technology skills.⁷⁴ Moreover, demand for specialised expertise in areas such as machine learning, big data, cloud computing, and information security is expected to rise.⁷⁵

9.1.4 Shift to team-based work

Organisations continue to experience a shift to team-based and cross-functional work.⁷⁶ Such a collaborative way of working gives organisations an advantage when it comes to their ability to sense what is going on, adapt, extend capabilities and deliver for clients fast. It also spurs creativity and innovation. When people with varied expertise work together as a team, they tend to come up with better ideas and solutions than when contributing for their own function only. And, where everyone feels ownership for the entire work product, draws energy from collaborating with others and is able to learn about and gain experience in functional areas beyond their own, members in cross-functional teams typically report high levels of fulfilment, satisfaction and motivation. Finally, cross-functional settings offer a prime opportunity to learn and practice highly useful transferable skills: leadership, collaboration, influencing, emotional intelligence, and entrepreneurship. It is these skills that will be in greater demand as team-based and cross-functional work gains further prominence.

9.2 New leadership competencies for the new operating context

The rapidly evolving business environment as well as changing expectations of customers, employees, and other stakeholders demand that traditional management skills be augmented with a new set of leadership competencies. These will enable leaders to future-proof their skillsets and steer their organisations in fast-changing times. The new operating context and the leadership competencies it calls for are summarised in Figure 10.

Figure 10: The new operating context means that effective leadership requires a set of new competencies

Traditional approach		New leadership competencies	New context
Delivering results with organisational capabilities entrusted to the leader	+	Ability to sense opportunities in fast-changing external conditions, adapt and capitalise on those	The <i>pace of change</i> requires that organisations be able to sense, lead, and extend their capabilities to meet and exceed organisational goals.
Focus on performance of leader's own function	+	Focus on effectiveness of the leadership group/team and of the organisation as a whole	The <i>pace of change</i> demands that leaders collaborate more closely to allow the business to adapt, improve, and deliver for clients <i>fast</i> .
Delivering consistent and stable results reliably	+	Confidence leading in complex and ambiguous situations	The <i>pace of change</i> means that organisations need to be able to lead in an environment where what is coming next is often uncertain.
Business financials and shareholder returns are the primary outcomes	+	Ability to craft and convey purpose and communicate value created for all stakeholders	<i>Changing demographics</i> and <i>changing employee expectations</i> have challenged organisations to focus on both profits and purpose.
Delivering customer service efficiently and to a high standard	+	Anticipating and staying attuned to customer needs, expectations, and reactions	<i>Changing customer expectations</i> are prompting organisations to create a distinctly human experience and to establish a personal connection

Maintaining operational efficiency and performance	+	Innovating to constantly improve operations, products, and services	The <i>pace of change</i> across industries is forcing organisations to improve in a cycle that never turns off
Enabling structured career and talent programmes	+	Inspiring and motivating a diverse workforce; facilitating nonlinear career paths to appeal to new expectations of today's talent	<i>Changing employee expectations</i> challenge organisations to appeal to a diverse range of workers by bringing more meaning to work and through developmental opportunities

Source: Adapted from Erica Volini et al., "Global human capital trends 2019", Deloitte Insights, p.40

Conclusion

Developing people is at the core of what effective managers do. By developing people on their teams, managers help them contribute at their best, both immediately and in the future. When people have opportunities to grow and develop, they not only become more skilled and more effective but are also more motivated, engaged, and satisfied. Managers who develop others gain a reputation as effective and inspiring leaders. They are able to build dedicated and committed groups and teams whose members go the extra mile and strive to exceed expectations. Where everyone in an organisation can grow and develop, the organisation as a whole can be more productive, more innovative, more adaptable, better able to attract and retain talent and in a stronger position to win clients.

We are all wired to learn and make new learnings every day. Effective managers tap into and help guide this natural learning by fostering a culture where learning is highly valued, encouraged, integrated with work, and practical for people to pursue and apply on the job. This lays the foundation for successful people development.

Managers develop people by engaging in six core people development activities. They coach team members through the people development process to help them anchor their efforts in an exciting personal vision for the future. They encourage a growth mindset to instil a belief that with effort everyone can change and can build new skills. They promote psychological safety to create an environment which is safe for individual and group/team learning. They delegate effectively, often, and with people development in mind. They give ample feedback to reinforce strong performance and to help people notice areas where they can become more effective. And importantly, they coach people regularly to empower them, raise their awareness and to promote accountability.

Successful managers know that developing people benefits all and serves vital interests of the organisation. They take every opportunity to help others become better and more effective.

Version control

No.	Date	Changes
1	Dec 2019	Original version
2	Nov 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Updated the way certain terms are used (groups/teams, performance/results) for consistency- Updated section 6.8 (“Giving periodic evaluations of results and performance”)- Updated section 7.1 (“Why coaching works?”)- Updated section 8 (“Addressing performance issues”)- Made minor wording changes throughout the guide

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