

The Coaching Game

Our solution to this often difficult topic is an ingenious board game – a friendly environment in which to explore the serious benefits of coaching - and practise vital coaching skills.

The Coaching Game

Key skills

- Definition of coaching
- Coaching techniques
- One-to-one coaching practice
- Good & bad approaches to coaching
- Coaching as a two way process
- Questioning and listening
- Probing

The Coaching Game Trainer's Comment

First Class!

An excellent 'accelerated learning' tool that we use on every training course involving coaching.

S. Harris, Tuesday's Training.

Timing About one hour plus a debrief

Participants Up to two teams of six people

The Coaching Game

Key learning points

- the aim of coaching is to improve individual performance
- the first step is to establish rapport
- the problem area needs to be carefully defined
- listening is an essential skill for a coach
- the person being coached needs to take ownership
- the person being coached states the options and way forward
- the coach sets the agenda
- follow-up is crucial.

The Coaching Game

How it works

This activity is in three parts. First, it asks the question, what is coaching? Individuals then complete a *Coaching Opportunities Form* to identify areas where they feel they need coaching – maybe in areas of planning, decision-making, time management etc.

Next, they sit around the game board and practise their coaching skills. Finally, the

Trainer leads a debrief on the issues raised and the learning points of the activity.

At the start of the game board stage, each player takes two *What to Say* cards and two *Coaching Tips* cards. These act as prompts when it is a player's turn to 'coach'.

The Coaching Game

How it Works (cont'd)

There are four types of squares on the board:

- 1. Coaching Tips squares** The player takes a *Coaching Tips* card and reads it aloud to all players - for discussion for up to two minutes - or picks a second card. The cards are retained by the player for use later.
- 2. What to Say squares** The player takes a *What to Say* card and reads it out for discussion. Is it something you would say at a coaching session - or not? If not, it is 'binned'. Otherwise it is held for later use.
- 3. Coaching Opportunity squares** These each show a different, key management skill. If a player lands on one of these squares they check to see who ticked that particular topic on their Coaching Opportunities Form. That player then receives a mini-coaching session from the player who landed on the square. Players use the cards they have collected on *what to say* and *coaching tips* to help in the coaching process.
- 4. Problem squares** A player landing on these may nominate another player to pick a Problem Card, to read it to the group. The first player then conducts a coaching session while the recipient "role-plays" according to a statement on the card.

The Coaching Game allows participants to coach and be coached in a quick and non-threatening way. It is engaging and very supportive for all the participants and its format means that much of the experience sticks in people's minds.

It takes the fear out of coaching and therefore is an ideal introduction to the subject, allowing participants to relax and address some of basic issues – such as **style of approach** and the **use of language**. Trainers can then move onto a more in-depth discussion of the subject, in the knowledge that participants have some recent real-life experience to draw upon.

The Coaching Game More Trainers' Comments

*The participants found **The Coaching Game** was highly practical and dealt with their workplace needs rather than the traditional theory-style programme.*

•••

The questions provided useful levers to develop debates about the varying styles of coaching and the need to develop styles to fit individual coachees.

•••

Ideal on our coaching foundation course but would also use it to review workshops.

•••

The best learning from a trainer's point of view was allowing you to observe the individual styles of the participants and quickly develop a working knowledge of their abilities.

•••

It gave us a good opportunity to air real life scenarios that related to the cards. (participant)