

Metoda™ Coaching skills

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Process management

Happy New Year! In this issue of *Coaching skills* we resume our series of articles examining each of the eleven core competencies defined in the competence framework developed by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). Previous issues of *Coaching skills* have covered the subjects *listening skills, feedback, questioning, working with attitudes, language skills, goal setting, planning, evaluation* and *contracting*. In this issue we will focus on *process management*.

Previous issues of *Coaching skills* can be found and downloaded from our home page www.metoda.se.

Understanding it is a process and not a project

It is important for a coach or mentor to understand that the work they do is about making a journey together with another person, or a group. Even when the process starts off well with planning, discussing goals and roles, making a contract etc, unforeseeable issues can come up during the coaching process. Goals can change and new issues can turn up affecting the relationship between the coach and coachee. As you know, important things also take time and cannot be forced along too quickly.

Understanding it is a mutual learning experience

New managers can sometimes have difficulties understanding that managing people is not a clinical process and that good leadership is about a continuous dialogue. This is also true in coaching and its imperative that the coach understand that it is not a mechanical process where you only establish and work through goals, evaluate and complete with a neat and tidy finish. Being flexible, attentive and to have the ability to check and reconcile is vital. Also, to be able to assess, develop and improve. It is essential to steer clear of 'traditional' management in coaching and mentoring.

How is our relationship working?

This is an important question that the coach should ask either at, or after, each meeting. Follow up regularly and evaluate your work, take time to reflect. Make the evaluation a natural process. As a coach you should be prepared to be influenced by the coachee, but you must also be able to set boundaries.

The above may seem straight forward, but are there difficulties as well?

To stick to the above points should be straight forward, but it can be difficult. For example, it can sometimes be difficult to 'put your foot down'. It can also be hard to avoid steering the process too much in order to reach certain goals and therefore going too fast. Because of these and other difficulties that may turn up it is good for a coach to have a supervisor for guidance. It is essential but can be difficult to get an in-depth understanding of the person you coach. If decisions are made without a comprehensive understanding it can lead to poor results and to only superficial changes being achieved.

Know yourself

It is important to assess the situation and ensure you are qualified before you agree to coach someone. Many of the potential risks or possible difficulties can be discussed before the coaching starts. The candidate might have needs and requirements you are not able to meet, for example they may be looking for a therapist rather than a coach. It is important to be clear on what you can and can't do from the start and to agree on what you will discuss and work through when the coaching begins. It is vital to be clear on roles and responsibilities. Some coaches even make a formal contract listing terms and conditions. This might be something for you to consider?

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