

Peer-to-Peer Coaching for Small Businesses

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What is peer-to-peer coaching?

Peer-to-peer coaching is a **confidential** process through which two or more individuals of **similar hierarchical status** work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; and/or solve problems in the workplace.

Applications – who uses it?

- Best when participants feel that they have gaps in their professional competencies and/or resources
- Examples:
 - New teachers who may need help with teaching plans or managing parent issues
 - Small business owners who may not know all the ins and outs of accounting or marketing

Models

- Without a facilitator / coach
 - Two or more individuals meet, select their topics and exchange information
 - Individuals are familiar with each other and/or their roles
- With a facilitator
 - Usually groups of at least eight
 - Useful when individuals are unfamiliar with each other and/or may be unskillful/inexperienced in the peer-to-peer relationship
 - Facilitator manages the relational environment
- Hybrid
 - Combination of peer-to-peer with individual one on one coaching and other offerings such as informational workshops

Critical Success Factors

- Non-hierarchical
- Similarity of needs and interests
- A desire for personal and professional development
- Confidentiality
- Noncompetitive
- Willingness/ability to be open to constructive feedback
- Willingness/ability to contribute constructive feedback
- Commitment to the process
- Non-evaluative

The facilitator - coach

Directive

- Selects content
- Contributes content and directs conversation from group
- Monitors group participation to minimize 'hogging the floor' and 'silent partners'
- Manages the clock
- Asks powerful questions / talks to the elephant
- Manages 'bad behavior'
- Maintains action lists

Non-Directive

- Contributes only very limited content
- Draws content from group

The issue processing method

1. Select a topic from the group
 - Reframe the topic as ‘HOW DO I _____?’
2. Group asks clarifying questions about the topic
 - Resist the urge to provide solutions
3. Issue is restated at a deeper level if necessary
 - The clarifying questions may reveal a deeper issue
4. Solicit recommended solutions/actions from the group
5. Issue owner selects one or more actions to follow up on
 - Commits to respond back to the group within a given time frame with outcomes

Exercise

1. Form into groups of 5 – 8
2. Select one person as the facilitator
3. Solicit topics from the group / put on chart
4. Group selects topic
5. Facilitator moderates conversation and time allotment
6. Select second topic / repeat
7. Provide feedback on the process

More information

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