

# COACHING GUIDE

# AN INTRODUCTION TO COACHING

## Coaching and Performance Management

The essence of coaching is to enable someone to work through a problem, find a solution and act upon it. Coaching, therefore, is not about giving solutions or feedback.

Coaching in the workplace should focus on the performance of the individual(s) concerned not just the outcome. It is possible for a recruiter to exhibit poor performance and still get a positive outcome:

*Recruitment Consultant calls a candidate and makes them an offer without a trial close. The candidate accepts and all is good.*

Although the outcome is fine the performance to get to it was substandard. This recruiter has now developed a “short cut” to the process that does not appear to effect the result. At some point in the future they will rediscover the hard way the importance of the trial close.

It is also possible for a recruiter to exhibit good performance but not get the result they had wanted:

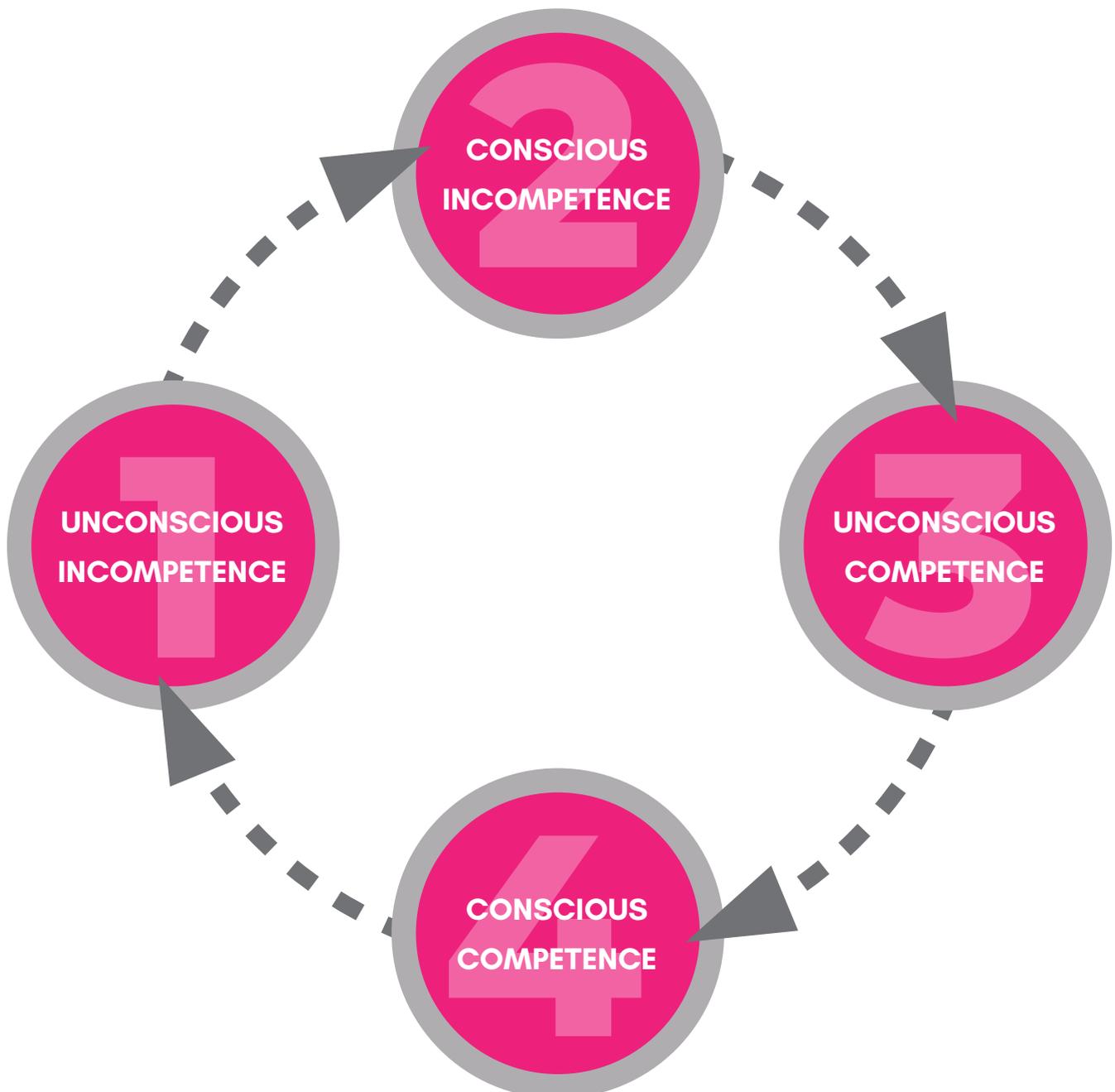
*Recruitment Consultant taking a job order from a new client pitches for exclusivity. They demonstrate the benefits to the client in terms of higher level of commitment from the recruiter, greater level of resources and stronger single message being taken to the market. Client rejects idea. Recruitment Consultant repositions and reminds client of their need to move quickly and the importance of finding someone in the right timescales. Client concedes this is true but wishes to phone one other agency he has worked with a lot over the past 3 years.*

The performance is good, despite the result. With greater practice and consistency of application this performance will produce good quality results in the long run.

# CONSCIOUS COMPETENCY MATRIX

The following model highlights eloquently the need for purposeful practice to ensure that trainees get the opportunity to repetitively practice the core skills that will create excellence in the future. The danger is that we can quickly assume that a trainee is achieving unconscious competence well before they really are.

With your experienced team members there is a danger that they will ultimately regress to unconscious incompetence if they (or you) are not periodically checking how they are executing their key tasks. This creates a need for a “Resourcer’s MOT” to be completed at least every six months. This could then provide opportunities to help existing team members improve their results by taking a more performance related approach to their work, rather than purely focusing on their results and achievement of KPIs.





### **Unconscious Incompetence**

- the person is not aware of the existence or relevance of the skill area
- the person is not aware that they have a particular deficiency in the area concerned
- the person might deny the relevance or usefulness of the new skill
- the person must become conscious of their incompetence before development of the new skill or learning can begin
- the aim of the trainee or learner and the trainer or teacher is to move the person into the 'conscious competence' stage, by demonstrating the skill or ability and the benefit that it will bring to the person's effectiveness



### **Conscious Incompetence**

- the person becomes aware of the existence and relevance of the skill
- the person is therefore also aware of their deficiency in this area, ideally by attempting or trying to use the skill
- the person realises that by improving their skill or ability in this area their effectiveness will improve
- ideally the person has a measure of the extent of their deficiency in the relevant skill, and a measure of what level of skill is required for their own competence
- the person ideally makes a commitment to learn and practice the new skill, and to move to the 'conscious competence' stage



### **Conscious Competence**

- the person achieves 'conscious competence' in a skill when they can perform it reliably at will
- the person will need to concentrate and think in order to perform the skill
- the person can perform the skill without assistance
- the person will not reliably perform the skill unless thinking about it - the skill is not yet 'second nature' or 'automatic'
- the person should be able to demonstrate the skill to another, but is unlikely to be able to teach it well to another person
- the person should ideally continue to practise the new skill, and if appropriate commit to becoming 'unconsciously competent' at the new skill
- practise is the single-most effective way to move from stage 3 to 4



### **Unconscious Competence**

- the skill becomes so practised that it enters the unconscious parts of the brain - it becomes 'second nature'
- common examples are driving, sports activities, typing, manual dexterity tasks, listening and communicating
- it becomes possible for certain skills to be performed while doing something else, for example, knitting while reading a book
- the person might now be able to teach others in the skill concerned, although after some time of being unconsciously competent the person might actually have difficulty in explaining exactly how they do it - the skill has become largely instinctual this arguably gives rise to the need for long-standing unconscious competence to be checked periodically against new standards

What we have not included in this model is the 5th stage of development – the attainment of mastery. To achieve mastery requires a dedicated commitment to continuous improvement and learning and acceptance of the fact that there will always be opportunities to develop and improve. Achieving mastery requires a focus on pushing one's self to higher levels of attainment by setting goals that feel tantalizingly out of reach, that with purposeful practice will be attained – only for another goal to appear, once again just out of reach.

# HOW TO COACH

Coaching focuses on the longer term goal of creating a successful recruiter who can make independent decisions. Once that trainee has exhibited the ability to follow a process under instruction they then move from development position of instruction to one of a coaching style. Coaching about listening and asking good questions to pull acquired knowledge through into contextual decisions and activities.

A simple, yet highly effective coaching model which we recommend can be broken down into the following four steps:

## **Discover their objectives**

Just because you think you know what your objectives would be for a specific task or session of activity does not mean that this is the same for your trainee (even though they have been in a training session with you they may have realigned what they consider to be their objectives). What else could they get out of the activity? Have they thought about secondary wins they could achieve?

## **How are they doing?**

How are they going to deliver the objectives? How have they selected their strategy? How are they getting on with executing the strategy? What challenges are they encountering? What training are they calling upon to help them?

## **What are the options?**

How else could they do it? What tactics could help? What flexibility are they giving themselves to get to their objectives? How are they dealing with the obstacles they are encountering? Are they reflecting on their performance and reviewing what they could do differently?

## **What are the current outcomes?**

How are their chosen methods and processes effecting their results? What else could they achieve in addition to what they have delivered?

# EXAMPLE COACHING PROCESS

## Calling Candidates to Update

Sit next to your trainee whilst they are doing, or are about to commence, a candidate update session.

Before they make a call ask them:

What type of session are you about to begin? (test their basic awareness)

How many candidates do you expect to speak to in the next X minutes/hours?

What would a good volume look like? Excellent? What's your minimum expectation?

What do you plan to get out of the calls? What else? And what else?

(Ask this until you are happy that they have good primary and ancillary objectives.)

How are you going to make sure you achieve those objectives? Which are the most important for you? What would happen if you failed to achieve those objectives?

Let them start to call candidates. Listen to the first few calls to identify patterns:

How do the calls you are making compare to the objectives you set yourself?

What is stopping you from discovering X?

(Even if you know it is because they are not asking the question you need to refrain from feeding them instructions like "why didn't you ask X?")

How could you improve the quality of the call? Which area do you think you need to focus on the most?

Give feedback on what is working well. Be specific. Question around the areas that need more attention.

After asking your questions and giving them the opportunity to answer and reflect ask them what they will do differently on the next call.

Listen & repeat

# GENERAL COACHING QUESTIONS

As we have seen the questions used during coaching sessions are at least as important as the answers you seek. Here are some suggested coaching questions:

- What's happening right now?
- What's not working for you?
- What is the current situation?
- What is preventing you from making progress?
- When did things begin to go right/wrong?
- Where did you begin to lose track of ....?
- Why is that happening?
- What's at the root of this problem?
- What's STOPPING you?
- What caused that to happen?
- What's important to you about the need for (x behaviour)....?
- What is the gap between where you are now and where you want to be?
- What are the biggest challenges/risks here?
- What would you like to see happening?
- Where do you want to be?
- What do you want to achieve?
- If x wasn't a problem, how would things be then?
- What would push you forwards on this?
- What are your best 'blue sky' thoughts on what you could achieve?
- Who could you ask?
- What tools would help you?
- How much time would that realistically take?
- What will you need in order to take you from a 7 to a 10?
- What can I do to support or help you?
- What feedback would you find useful?
- If you were to take that action, how will that improve things?
- What will people be saying when you have achieved this?
- In what ways does this make (x action) a satisfactory solution?
- What are the consequences of not doing this?
- When will you start / do it by?
- How will you know when you have achieved this?
- If you do x, will it resolve the problem?