

Coaching Tools



Kickstart Your Coaching

A guide to starting your TEX.inc coaching journey!

"I absolutely believe that people, unless coached, never reach their maximum capabilities." Bob Nardelli

Coaching Truly is Magic

As a TEX.inc Coach, you are about to witness significant shifts in the professional lives of your coachees. We know that to be true because as the demand for coaches in the workplace has increased, so too has the research that supports their value and effectiveness.

Findings show that coaching can relieve stress and anxiety, simply through the development of a confidential, supportive relationship where the coachee feels free to discuss professional challenges and explore a range of perspectives. And with the setting of personally meaningful goals and adoption of solution focused goal striving, coaching provides a boost to wellbeing and a greater sense of self efficacy too. Combined, it's no wonder that in today's rapidly changing workforce, people are seeking coaching to develop personal resilience that helps them manage the inevitable changes taking place.

You ready to get started? This e-book is your first step in a rewarding journey. In the pages that follow, we'll introduce you to some of the key coaching considerations to help you create some of your own coaching magic. Beyond these introductory pages, there are many avenues you can explore to enhance your coaching, that will bring you up to speed with evidence based, contemporary coaching practices. Keep in mind, our Super Coaches are here to support your own professional development, so be sure to book in a session and explore the many opportunities that lie ahead for you! For now, the following pages provide you with some basic tips and tricks to get your coaching journey started!

Three Tips for Effective Coaching

So, you're an expert in your field. But how do you translate that expertise into coaching? After all, coaching is not a skill that comes naturally to everyone, and it's certainly not something we learned at school! While you may have been lucky to have received training in coaching through your organisation, we know some of you are diving in the deep end on your own.

So how can you go from being someone who knows their stuff for their personal and professional advantage, to someone who asks coachees the questions they'll need to build their self-awareness and action their goals? There are a myriad of training programs you could immerse yourself in, and if you've never coached before, these might be of benefit. But we know many of you with existing knowledge and experience are itching to dive in and give coaching a go, so we've collected some of the leading lessons and advice from coaches using evidence based practices that will ensure you have a smooth start.

1. Decide on Coaching Boundaries

As a coach, you'll want to assist your coachee move from insight to action. Agree at the outset with your coachee on what kind of communication (if any) you will use to assist them remain accountable to their goals. If between session 'check ins' are agreed upon, consider what technology you might use to streamline your communication. Facebook and LinkedIn Messenger can cut out long emails, and help you both stay straight to the point. Be sure to gain consent from your client to communicate with them outside of your formal sessions.

2. Use a Trusted Framework

An effective framework sets the scene for compassionate and constructive conversations. From goal setting skills to session guidelines, effective coaches utilise evidence based frameworks to ground their conversations. Choose a framework that matches your personal style as a coach and considers the goals and preferences of your coachee. Set your own professional development goals by learning and trying best coaching practices. New to coaching? Start by exploring our learning hub for more practical insights and interventions, or connect with a coaching expert here on TEX.inc to deepen your own learning and development.

3. Ask Meaningful Questions

Perhaps the most crucial part of coaching is asking questions. Questions have the power to elicit a process of reflection that sparks meaningful insight and begs action. A coach who asks a question is not interested in establish the 'right answer' but in provoking 'an answer that is right for the coachee'. Ask open questions that encourage the other person to start talking, not just answering, to elicit 'aha' moments that motivate your coachee to design solutions for their challenges. Adopt a curious mindset and be sincere in your desire to understand the challenge from your coachee's perspective.

Getting to know your Coachee

A guide to useful questions for your first session.

During your first session, it is important to allocate time to getting to know your coachee. This not only helps you in establishing an effective coaching relationship, but is useful in building goals and a framework for your future sessions. Here are some guiding questions you may find useful in getting to know your coachee:

- Have you worked with a coach before? If so, what worked well?
- What brought you onto the TEX.inc platform initially?
- Tell me a little about your work, responsibilities and organisation.
- Tell me a little about what you'd like to gain from coaching.
- Do you have existing goals you are working towards? If so, what are they and how do you see that I may be able to assist you in working towards them?
- What do you consider your existing strengths in your work?
- What areas of your work are you interested in improving?
- What drives your motivation in the work you do?
- What do you find most exciting about your work?
- What's your least favourite aspect of your work?
- What do you find most challenging about your work or work environment?
- How do you tend to respond to feedback?
- What works well and what should be avoided?
- How do you best manage stressful times?
- What else would you like to share with me?

TIPS:

- While it is useful to ask some of these questions, try to integrate them naturally to avoid the session turning into an intimidating interrogation!
- Take notes. You might like to use a physical journal or consider suitable software. Remember the need for confidentiality and privacy online when considering these options.
- You don't need to learn everything in the first session. Pick a few things you'd like to know upfront, remembering there'll be opportunity to get to know each other more as the coaching sessions evolve.

Taking a Solutions Focus

A productive approach to change and growth.

It is human nature to want to focus on the development of our weaknesses as an approach to growth and development. We call this a problem-centric approach.

Research suggests, however, that we are more likely to handle change better and grow faster when we focus on what's working well and build from there. This is what is known as a solution-focused approach, and is a popular approach to coaching due to its positive track record in accelerating client progress. So, let's have a look at how you can develop a solutions-focused coaching approach.

What is solutions-focused coaching?

In a nutshell, a solutions-focused coach will:

- Guide the coachee towards solutions rather than problems
- Build on strengths rather than weaknesses
- Prompt the coachee to consider what can be done differently rather than analyse what went wrong

Here are some common coaching topics, comparing a problem-centric approach with a solutions-focused approach:

Topic	Problem-Centric	Solutions-Focused
Didn't hit sales targets for the month	What do you think went wrong this month?	Let's look at the sales you made last month. What went well here? How could you do more of this going into this month?
Unsuccessful in a job interview	What do you find most challenging in interviews?	Let's suppose you could wave a magic wand and re-do your interview. What might you do differently this time?
Poor results in one section of a performance review	Why do you think you might have done badly in this section?	What skills and strengths do you think you displayed that led to positive results in other sections? How might you translate these into this section moving forward?

As you will hopefully see in the above examples, a solutions-focus does not ignore a problem, it simply reframes it into something actionable and productive. It can take time to master this approach, but we encourage you to try and see what works well!

Spotting Strengths

Understanding and leading with strengths

Just as a solution-focused approach to coaching has been seen to be more productive, helping your coachee to identify and foster their core strengths has similar results. Studies show that when we can identify and use our core strengths, the qualities that come most naturally to us, we're more engaged and satisfied in our work, more productive, more likely to be consistently thriving, happier, less stressed, more confident, faster to learn new skills, more creative and agile, feel a greater sense of meaning in our work, and provide a higher level of customer service resulting in greater profitability. Whoa! A pretty long list, and that only scratches the surface of the benefits!

So, what can you do to start fostering strengths in your coachee? Here are a few activities to get you kick-started.

Know their strengths

There are a number of ways to identify your core character strengths, and many inventories and surveys available. We like to use the VIA survey as it has been rigorously tested and it's free! It takes approximately 10 minutes and is available at www.viacharacter.org (we encourage you to take it to find your strengths too!).

Incorporate strengths-based language into your coaching sessions

Once you know your coachee's strengths, you can start spotting them in their work and making reference to them during coaching. For example, your coachee may come to you celebrating a big win on a project that's been dragging out all year. You might praise them on their perseverance (one of the VIA strengths) in sticking by the project despite its lag time.

Know the shadow-side to strengths

Ever heard the saying, 'curiosity killed the cat'? While leading with strengths has proven a great way to accelerate success, it is still possible to have too much of a good thing, or to use it out of context. The character strength of 'zest' is great to bring energy into the office on a Monday morning, but not so great when it takes over the productivity levels of a weekly scrum meeting. Knowing the shadow side of each strength (how it can be overused or misused) is an important part of using the strength as, well, just that...a strength! Encourage your coachee to get curious about how to use their core strengths effectively, and provide feedback and coaching on what can be done differently if a strength starts to get a little out of hand. With a dash of 'curiosity', a spot of 'kindness' and a whack of 'love of learning', you'll be a strength-spotting master coach in no time!

Goals, Goals, Goals

How to set goals & inspire motivation to achieve them. As a coach, your role will not only be to help your coachee set effective goals, but to support them in overcoming obstacles along the way to achieving them. Here are a few goal setting tips to help you guide your coachee to success!

Setting the Goal

There are a few key ingredients to ensuring a goal is useful and effective. You may have come across the SMART goal acronym before. Let's refresh our memories with a snapshot of its approach. An effective goal should be:

Specific - it is clear and well defined

Measurable - to judge whether or not you've succeeded, and to what extent

Attainable - it may stretch you, but it should still be in the realm of possibility

Relevant - the 'why' behind is understood, there is a clear purpose

Timely - there are checkpoints and deadlines to help measure and keep on track

While SMART goals are useful goals, they are a little lacking when it comes to unexpected bumps in the road or dips in motivation. So, it is useful to add a few extra ingredients to ensure goal setting has the best chance of leading to goal attainment.

1. Consider the possible obstacles

While we generally set goals with the best of intentions, life and work can be unpredictable at times and things can get in the way. A productivity goal centred around email batching can be ruined when a request comes through for an urgent response, and a wellbeing goal of taking a lunchtime walk each day can be spoilt by a meeting running overtime or pressure of deadlines looming overhead. Taking time to consider possible obstacles can help us in better preparing and brainstorming alternate solutions, which leads into the next ingredient...

2. Decide on a Plan B

Unpredicted obstacles can get in the way of even the best laid plans. So, having a Plan B helps us to see that goal setting doesn't need to be 'all or nothing'. If something gets in the way of achieving the original goal, what can we alter slightly so we're still heading in the right direction? Perhaps that urgent email needs to be responded to outside of batch time, but we can make a Plan B to only action that email and leave the rest of the inbox until the allocated email batch time. And the interrupted lunch walk can be shortened rather than given up on altogether.

"Each person holds so much power within themselves that needs to be let out. Sometimes they just need a little nudge, a little direction, a little support, a little coaching, and the greatest things can happen."
Pete Carroll

Checklist

Use this checklist before jumping into your first coaching gig to ensure you're ready to go!

- I am clear on the role of a TEX.inc Coach, and have read and agree with the TEX.inc Way
- I am confident in the skills/knowledge I can use to drive successful coaching sessions
- I know how to set effective goals and support a coachee in working towards goal attainment
- I have considered who I might turn to after a session to grow my own coaching potential if I find myself stuck
- I have a toolbox of varying coaching activities to keep sessions interesting, engaging and productive
- I have tested my audio and video equipment
- I have tested the video conferencing equipment
- I have recorded a practise session to consider my online presence and check my communication skills
- I know to schedule an additional 15 mins prior to coaching sessions to account for set up time and issues in logging in
- I have a short bio and list of key topics I am confident in delivering
- I am feeling confident and ready to go!

A Final Thought

Remember, this e-book provides just a simple template to get you started, and it's important to take into consideration your context, field of study, your coachee's goals and your own personal style when developing your coaching approach.

Finding your personal style takes time and practice. If you're serious about growing as a preferred TEX.inc coach, spend time doing your research into effective coaching methodology, seek opportunities to learn from professional speakers, practise on friends and family, and maintain a growth mindset, always seeking opportunities to learn and develop.

Along the way, it's expected you'll hit some roadblocks. We're here to support your commitment to TEX.inc and help you with your own growth goals. Dip into our online resource library, and reach out to us if you wish to contribute to its growth. We're excited to see TEX.inc organically grow as we share our lessons as a community. Foster your own professional development by reaching out to a TEX.inc coach yourself who displays some of the skills you're looking to foster, or by booking in a super coach session today.

Got concerns or questions? Our friendly team are here to help. You can reach us by info@tex.inc