



In-Service training course for VET professionals

Virtual Team Leaders

Module 5



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Module 5 – Building skills in eWorkers for productivity

Short overview of the module

Module 5 aims to provide virtual team leaders with a compact and comprehensive list of practical activities that can be applied to help eWorkers build new skills to be more productive on the job.

Objectives of the module

A leader who guides his or her team helps the organization to evolve in ways it has never seen before. Leaders who do not do so miss the opportunity to influence others in a meaningful way. Coaching entails a specific set of skills to help employees continuously evolve, transform their ability to produce, support their aspirations and prepare them for the next level. This is essential.

In this course, you will learn the coaching skills you need to be a more influential and productive manager, ready to manage talent. We will look at concrete tools and train you to cope with the most typical mentoring problems. The information in this module will help you to amplify your effect and impact as a leader.

Learning outcomes of the module

For each of the training programmes and each module:

MODULE	After the completion of the training, the participants are expected to ...		
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
MODULE 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the benefits of the coaching Explain proven Benefits of Workplace Coaching Improve your empathy in a remote team Adaptability as a skill of productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop time for coaching and prioritizing skills Set an action plan for workers skills forwards the productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders practice the exercises to foster your empathy Leaders encouraging eWorkers empathy Appreciate the importance of improving a performance

MODULE	After the completion of the training, the participants are expected to ...		
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn to foster your empathy as a leader 		in a productive team

Module Content

Session 1: Defining COACHING

Coaching is about getting others to be productive, helping them to identify and remove obstacles in their career, guiding them to reach their full potential and setting them up for success in their next stage.

Step 1.- Let's look at the 5 elements of coaching for leaders.

- 1. Coaching focuses on the short term** (what we call performance improvement) and the long term (performance development). Performance improvement coaching relates to helping employees become more productive with their current tasks, guiding them to acquire a particular skill they are lacking, addressing behavioral or interpersonal problems that prevent them from achieving their goals, clarifying expectations, and talking about consequences. Developmental coaching is more about preparing employees for the future, knowing their skills and their long-term career ambitions. The leader helps employees to define their goals, and then to acquire the skills and experience necessary for what lies ahead.
- 2. Coaching is a relationship, not an event.** Rather than structuring it as a commitment ("every Tuesday"), good leaders maintain an ongoing, interactive process that is based on sincerity and trust. When we agree to mentor someone, we enter into an extended relationship of ongoing support.
- 3. Mentoring can be formal or informal.** Yes, the manager meets regularly with the employees he or she mentors, but it can also be an informal meeting, in the break room or after a meeting. When the coach feels more comfortable with the process, he or she introduces coaching into any other day-to-day process.

4. **Mentoring is not about giving all the answers.** The leader listens and asks questions. Then, he or she guides the employee to find the answer. A coach starts a conversation, not makes demands. He asks "what if?" and arouses the curiosity of the employees, who are encouraged to invest in the outcome.
5. **Coaching is not for every situation.** It requires an investment of time, and there will be cases where it does not make sense to apply it.

Understanding the definition and context of coaching for leadership will give you advantages and make you more effective in pursuing and integrating this strategy.

Step 2.- Why is coaching worthwhile?

Mentoring has several advantages for all parties:

1. What do the people being mentored gain? The obvious answer is that they broaden their skills, but it is more than that. When you mentor an employee, they feel that you recognize them and respect their potential. It's a great motivator. They think "my boss sees something in me worth caring about, I'm going to try even harder". When mentoring helps them identify their long-term career path, employees work harder and faster to achieve their goal. In other words, mentoring increases job satisfaction.

2. The mentoring relationship brings great benefits to the mentors themselves. Instead of leading, managers can position themselves as partners. Mentoring is the ideal space to build relationships with team members, to give constructive criticism and to support employees with their professional development. This allows managers to reinforce a sense of responsibility. It also allows them to be more creative with their roles as they think of new ways to inspire and motivate others who are at different points in their career.

3. Finally, what are the benefits for the company if it includes mentoring in its culture? Organizations benefit the most. Mentoring has been shown to have many consequences. Statistically, mentored employees exhibit higher productivity and higher levels of commitment. Good team relationships foster motivation. Employees' connection with their managers increases their loyalty to the company, which improves their retention rate and consequently lowers the cost of recruitment and training. The cumulative effect of these factors is higher performance. That is why companies believe in mentoring.

That is why coaching pays off. Companies and leaders who mentor will see lasting benefits.

Watch this video about [The Importance of Coaching in the Workplace](#)

Session 2: Collaborative problem solving and empathy

Empathy is a key component of efficient team working. Distance can make this more difficult since face to face interactions are the best ones to generate empathy. To mind this gap is important to maintain several checkups to maintain the other parts of the team present. As it happens with traditional work, it is also important to mind your eWorkers as a person outside the common projects. Getting to know them a little bit is good for being more productive. Simon Sinek explains about the importance of empathy for a leader in a 3 minute [video](#).

Step 1.- Here you can have 4 tips and 2 exercises to foster your empathy as a leader:

1. Imagine how an empathetic leader would act

This can seem a little bit obvious, but non the less is one of the most important things to do. Once we have got the picture of how an empathetic leader is, we can start acting like one.

2. Keep a journal

We are hardwired to forget past feelings. We can recall quite easily what we were doing in some professional moments, but sometimes we don't recall what we were feeling. Keeping a record of it can be handy for this purpose.

3. Ask better questions

Making the right questions can make us more empathic. Imagine that after a harsh meeting you feel that a colleague seems annoyed. Instead of asking them "are you angry?" you could ask "is this affecting you?". First of all, you won't project your perceptions over the person you asked, and secondly you will seem more careful.

4. Empathic listening

Whenever you are listening to your teammates you should listen, don't interrupt and avoid having fixed preexisting ideas of people and what they are going to say.

5. Trading places exercise.

This exercise will require some time, reflection and paper and a pen. Think about some conflict you had had in the recent days. After that, take a pen and write about all the feelings and reflections you recall. After that imagine that a person with a great wisdom would manage the situation. Write about it if you will.

6. Empathy picture

Empathy makes work much easier and it is a key catalyst in collaborative work. Team work is always collaborative. Each member of a team has some better skills and some areas where they are less proficient. Knowing the strengths and the weaknesses of every person of a team is key for this. In all



these processes digital tools are going to be used, and the interface of those tools is going to shape the interactions. But the main skill of coordinating people in a collaborative way is social. Trying to put the focus just on the tools that make these processes possible in a remote way is not the smartest approach. A good Virtual Team Leader has to know this. Mastering tools that make these collaborative processes is needed but the focus is the people. Understanding them. Knowing their particularities. No team is the same. And in this task empathy is key. Also engaging your team members in these dynamics, it is really important. Working in making these dynamics more flexible and letting people get involved is fundamental.

Step 2.- The way of practice a useful critique

Critiquing employees can be very helpful and important, but many managers are not trained in this area. To improve your critiquing skills and your outreach as a coach, follow these five guidelines.

1. **The critique should be specific.** Instead of general comments such as "This morning, the client spoke very highly of you. That follow-up strategy is working. The employee changed his behavior and the result was customer satisfaction. Be specific and emphasize the importance of the behavior.
2. **Criticism must be timely.** If it is October and the employee has achieved an accomplishment, don't wait until the December appraisal to tell them about it. They need to know that you, the manager and coach, are aware of what is happening. Celebrate with employees or guide them to implement immediate improvements.
3. **Criticism should have a purpose.** The criticism you give should focus on helping the employee evolve, improve or progress. Before making suggestions or constructive criticism. For example, "I am communicating this to you because I want you to improve your sales figures, and I believe that with this adjustment you can achieve this". This approach makes it clear to the employee that you care about them and their goals, and that you want to help them, so they will take on board your message in a very different way.
4. **Be tactful in your criticism.** It is never easy to give negative criticism, but if you don't know what needs to change, the employee is not going to improve. Remember to keep the emphasis on the problem behavior or situation rather than implying that someone is a bad person. Don't let your feelings come out, and watch your choice of words.
5. **Finally, criticisms should be followed up.** For the sake of the counseling relationship, criticism needs to be a regular part of conversations, not a one-off event.

If you give specific, timely and tactful criticism, employees will develop the skills they need to advance their careers more quickly.

Session 3: Adaptability

The traditional Fordist approach to work, where each worker had a concrete profile and repetitive set of predefined tasks has changed forever. This is more evident in remote work eWorkers had to adapt to new



working scenarios. Adapting means learning new things. Four key aspects for fostering your adaptability are the following ones:

1) Learning from others

Learning is always a collective action. We learn from others. Working with someone who excels in some skill is a great opportunity to learn from them. You can take notes of how they make things, or even ask directly to them. This way, you also can mentor people based on your best abilities. Mentoring people in these ways is great to foster your skills as a Team Leader.

2) Finding the silver lining

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies do happen. Mostly with bad ones. Being pessimistic about a task involving skill that we don't master can lend us to failure. If we don't excel a skill we have to go step by step. It can be slow, but being optimistic that we can full fit those skills can help us to make the way steadily. Being optimistic by itself won't do anything, but it can help us go through the process of doing something new.

3) Having the will to make mistakes

Mistakes happen. They are going to happen. Those are planned. Don't be afraid of making mistakes while fostering a new skill.

4) Make questions

Sometimes people are afraid of asking questions. People are afraid to seem doubtful in the workspace. Asking questions, it is always a good way to adapt to new tasks and conditions.

Session 4: Set goals to achieve the eworker's skills development.

The mentoring relationship should be aimed at enhancing the employee's skills, improving his or her performance and preparing him or her to work at a different level of the organization chart. The quantifiable aspect is essential.

Step 1.- To achieve goal setting, here are four strategies you can put into practice:

1. Employees must be involved in the process. If the coach sets goals without the employee's input, it will be difficult for the employee to commit. If the employee is involved in setting goals, he/she will feel a greater sense of responsibility for meeting them. If the employee determines what is possible, sets interim dates and progressive short- and long-term goals, he/she will be more motivated.

2. One of the best techniques for employees to achieve their goals is to relate them to departmental or company goals. Although with exceptions, career goals should bring more value to the organization.

3. Keep the commitment alive. It is tempting to end the goal-setting process and leave it forgotten until the next performance appraisal, but this undermines the benefits of the mentoring relationship. The coach should keep you up to date with employees' progress throughout the year, you can personalize the conversation, help them integrate new findings and analyze the effects of their performance. With this up-to-date coaching, employees get what they need.

4. Be flexible with orientation goals. Situations change and opportunities arise, and it is up to you to determine whether it is relevant or necessary to modify employee goals. Being too rigid with goals that for some reason are no longer realistic or achievable will only create stress and anxiety for the people involved. That said, changing goals should be a collaborative decision.

If your goal-setting model is positive and strategic, you will transform the way your employees think about their commitment to the organization, increase their engagement, their performance, and their potential to contribute at a higher level during their careers.



Source : <https://www.leetsconsortium.com/how-to-set-goals-for-executive-coaching/>

Step 2.- Listen to the podcast: [Goal Setting in Coaching - YouTube](#)

To learn more about how to foster coaching in your organization.



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