



**COACHING FOR
PERFORMANCE
EXCELLENCE**





Coaching for Performance Excellence

2nd Edition, 2007

The Janus Performance Management system is a major, fully integrated paper-based and online resource package for any individual that is looking to get more out of the process and to achieve better long term results – for themselves, the team and the organisation of which they are a part as a whole.

The Janus Performance Management system offers individuals a full suite of support modules to help each stage of the process flow smoothly from initial motivation to succeed and goal setting, to effective coaching and feedback giving and finally to end of cycle review discussions and career action planning. The Janus system contains a total of 10 guidance resources like this one, further details about which are shown at the back of this booklet.

About the Author

Dr Jon Warner was a professional manager for over 20 years within a number of major multi-national companies in the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States of America and Australia. This experience has included time as a senior staff manager in human resources and a number of line management roles with responsibility for large groups of people.

During the last 10 years Jon has been involved in broad ranging management consultancy and the pursuit of best practice leadership. Now splitting his time between Los Angeles and London, Jon is currently heavily involved in developing e-learning modules mainly in the leadership and management area. This includes the development of new tests and assessments and the creation of skill-building videos (under the brand name Rapid Skill-Builder® Series). Jon has authored literally hundreds of training and related tools and resources (under the imprint of both Team Publications and the Worldwide Centre for Organisational Development or WCOD).





Coaching for Performance Excellence



COACHING is not a specialist occupation reserved for the very few, but a basic way of operating for everyone who is trying to get the best out of the people around them and get people in general to be their best. It is a key skill which helps us to develop people in today's organizations (whether it is part of a formal performance management system or not).





Coaching for Performance Excellence

5.1 Introduction

This module in the Janus Performance Management System is designed to help supervisors and managers to provide effective coaching to employees throughout the entire appraisal cycle. Specifically, this module will therefore help you to:

- Monitor individual progress toward achieving their Performance Objectives and in demonstrating selected Competencies.
- Provide constructive feedback to individuals on their performance (and to help them focus on how improvement can occur in the future).
- Assist in the process of actively involving employees in:
 - Setting Performance Objectives in a collaborative way
 - Agree relevant competencies and then developing them over time.
 - Conducting Periodic Progress Review Discussions using a positive coaching approach
 - Conducting Performance Summary and Development Discussions using coaching interventions

Although effective coaching inevitably encompasses a considerable amount of advice about giving and receiving feedback covered in the previous module, it involves particular features and techniques that have not yet been discussed. We will also therefore look at the practical application of some of these coaching intervention techniques or methods.





5.2 What is Coaching?

Coaching is not a specialist occupation reserved for the very few, but a basic way of operating for everyone who is trying to get the best out of the people around them and get people in general to be their best. It is a key skill which helps us to develop people in today's organizations (whether it is part of a formal performance management system or not).

While the idea of coaching is relatively new in organizations, it's been around for a long time. Think of top sports people like golfers, tennis players and even high jumpers – they all have coaches to help them improve what they do and strive to be the best. Football teams, basketball teams and hockey teams have coaches. There are even coaches in the arts, in things like voice production for singing or drama.

It doesn't matter in what field the coach operates, their key role is to help someone improve what they are doing. They do this by giving the person they are coaching feedback about their performance. They also help them plan their development so that they can improve their skills and do the best they can. To be a good coach you don't have to be an expert in the field, you just need to want to help someone achieve. In sport, many of the best coaches were only ever average performers and top sportspeople often don't make it as coaches.

In business, or in any organization, in the same way as sport, coaching is fundamentally concerned with helping people to learn to develop themselves. The process usually involves them identifying areas for improvement and then developing skills or competencies on the job, undertaking informal or formal "training" sessions or even taking on higher education.

Good coaching is therefore not about doing what the coach suggests or developing other people by telling them what to do, but focusing individuals on their own development goals and helping them to achieve them.

Coaches need to be able to work at three levels:

- **Working closely with people** "one on one", giving feedback, setting goals and tasks which will "stretch" people and supporting them through any difficulties they may experience.
- **Setting up a climate or environment** which encourages people to take the risk to do things differently and to learn from their experience. This can involve getting people to reflect on their experiences and getting them to draw learning out of those experiences, to find ways of learning from others, to challenge themselves and to find opportunities to learn new things.





- **Actively setting up learning opportunities for individuals** by giving them the chance to work with different people, by linking them to others who can help their development, by providing new and challenging work experiences and by giving them access to people and situations that they would not be able to access easily on their own.

Coaching is therefore simply concerned with providing ongoing information to individuals at all levels about their performance. In this instance, coaching therefore includes:

- Giving recognition to encourage and to reward good performance.
- Providing corrective feedback to change performance that needs to be improved.

Coaching is consequently one of the most important managerial skills for improving performance results and for motivating individuals to give of their best.

Of course, it should come as no surprise that to perform effectively, employees need information on “how they’re doing”. They need to know both what they are doing well and what they need to do differently. Coaching helps the supervisor or manager to present feedback to employees in a way that motivates them to perform effectively.

In this sense, coaching motivates individuals to perform more effectively by:

- Letting people know the perception of the coach on how well they are performing their job responsibilities, moving toward achieving their Performance Objectives, and demonstrating particular competencies.
- Developing an individual’s knowledge, skills and behavior to achieve better long term results.

When coaching skills are used effectively throughout the year, any performance problems can usually be corrected before the Annual Performance Review Discussion and even more importantly individuals can be assisted to soar to greater heights than they ever might have dreamed of achieving if left purely to their own devices.





5.3 When to Coach

As we have already suggested, to be effective, a supervisor or manager ideally needs to provide day-to-day informal coaching throughout the year as well as more formal coaching during the **Periodic Performance Update Discussion** and during the **Annual Performance Review Discussion**.

Although coaching can occur frequently on an informal basis, more formally, coaching can be scheduled at least once in the **Periodic Performance Update Discussion** between the **Objective Setting Discussion** and the **Performance Review Discussion**.

In addition to these more formal situations as part of the appraisal cycle, there are a number of other situations in which coaching may be provided.

When the employee:

- Is learning a new skill.
- Is performing a task that you think can be done more effectively if he/she uses a different method.
- Is assigned a large or very different kind of project.
- Is faced with a new career opportunity.
- Is not meeting standards.
- Has difficulty prioritizing work.
- Has just returned from a training program.

Of course to coach employees, you need to gather information about their performance and this is typically done by regular or ongoing monitoring or review. Monitoring will help you to gather the information needed to keep performance on track.

Monitoring is not a passive activity or one that you can only do occasionally. It is therefore much more effective to adopt a particular method (or several methods) to gather the data that you will need. In the context of effective coaching, it should always be remembered that data gathering is not a passive or casual activity but one that needs commitment and effort. A manager consequently needs to get close to the individual they are seeking to coach and make careful observations about what might be worthy of further discussion (and when this discussion might best take place).





METHODS OF GATHERING INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PERFORMANCE

To gather information on performance, you may consider the following:

- Regular scheduled meetings with employees to review how the work is going.
- Checking work progress against pre-established accountabilities statements or Action Plans to see if performance is on target.
- Reviewing reports or target checklists that have been developed at the beginning of the appraisal cycle.
- Walking around to observe how the work is going and holding informal discussions.
- Getting feedback (formally and informally) from other people with whom the individual works.
- Encouraging an individual to engage in 180 degree or 360 degree feedback through competency based questionnaires.
- Inspecting the work output, results or consequences to check on its quality or accuracy.
- Asking individuals to provide progress presentations or updates.
- Following-up after making a request to verify that tasks have been done or if there are problems that you can help an employee resolve.
- Evaluating how well a job responsibility or performance objective was completed by analyzing the results and discussing adjustment.
- Monitoring customer complaints and satisfaction (internal or external) to gauge the success or otherwise of individual performance.

Although it is possible to add other monitoring techniques to the above list, our point is that any coaching intervention that is planned, needs to be made on the basis of sound monitoring processes and data gathering (not guesses and assumptions, or by listening to second or third hand hearsay comments). In other words, effective data gathering methods provide a strong foundation upon which helpful coaching can subsequently take place – we can then look at how this coaching is carried out.

