

# 3 employee coaching styles and how they can benefit your business

 By Lyndy van den Barselaar

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Navigating the way through a changing world of work is challenging for employees and organisations. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation at a rapid pace, requiring new IT skills overnight. At the same time, people reassessed their priorities and the role of work in their lives. With this new perspective, companies need to adapt to the needs of the changing workforce and reflect on what employees want.



Image source: Getty Images

To find out what employees want, employee coaching can provide valuable insight into employees' skills, work aspirations and help to align employees' skills to the needs of the organisation. As such, coaching, which was previously seen to be a valuable tool for top leadership in an organisation, is now starting to be recognised as a valuable tool for organisations to invest in their workforce and better engage and retain key talent at varying stages of their careers across their organisations to minimise the impact of the changing world of work.

According to the International Coaching Federation, coaching is defined as “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process, that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential.” As such, by providing employees with access to a range of coaching options, organisations are better positioned to retain, engage and support their workforce at a time when so many businesses are struggling to find the skills needed for sustained success.

This is supported by a ManpowerGroup research survey of 4,000 employees, which revealed that 67% of [workers who have received training and skills coaching](#) say it has improved their overall job performance. Further, with coaching support often resulting in an [ROI of nearly seven times the initial investment](#), many businesses are in agreement about the value of coaching.

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However, while the value of coaching is understood, often there is confusion about the type of coaching employees need and who should conduct this coaching. HR leaders need to understand the variety of coaching options available, and how each one can benefit their workforce.

## Coaching styles to benefit your workforce and organisation

**Traditional coaching:** This form of coaching often takes place face-to-face and on a one-to-one basis, and offers employees the opportunity to explore individual and organisational long-term development goals and challenges, in a safe and confidential space. With the programme of support usually running over an extended period, the employee can build a foundation of trust with their coach where the sessions are highly attuned to their individual wants and needs – generally focused around developing skills to progress to leadership roles within the business.

Before investing in traditional coaching sessions for their workforce, businesses should utilise assessment practices to identify the areas where their organisation is underperforming. This information can then be used to steer coaching sessions and ensure they provide insight into ways of addressing any short-fallings. Employees can then use these learnings to become more effective in a role and to influence change in relation to wider cultural and organisational performance issues.

**Peer coaching:** Today's workforce has identified interactive communication, ongoing feedback, networking and constructive dialogue as enablers for professional development. And peer coaching has been proven to drive professional growth by providing employees with a focused space to network with, learn from, feedback to and be coached by their peers – empowering them to identify solutions to personal and team development areas, in a supportive and collaborative environment.



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Peer coaching can then act as a vector of knowledge and expertise whereby key behaviours and skills are systematically shared and filtered throughout the workforce, as a result of these sessions. This will then help to reinforce a supportive workplace culture, improve team dynamics and performance, and empower employees to learn new skills – all of which will directly contribute towards sustained organisational success.

**Digital coaching:** A key driver in the democratisation of coaching, digital platforms, have made coaching more accessible than ever. Highly-qualified coaches are available at exceptionally short notice, making the support increasingly responsive to challenges being faced at the moment. Employees can then tackle workplace issues as and when they arise, preventing them from becoming long-term blockers of success and productivity.

When an entire workforce is provided with access to a digital coaching platform, the historically elitist perception of coaching is removed, and employees at all levels will begin to feel encouraged to engage with the support. This can help individuals to take greater accountability for their own development and enable them to proactively advance their careers within the organisation – resulting in higher levels of performance, productivity and employee retention.

Coaching is quickly becoming one of the most versatile and essential tools in an organisation's talent management strategy, ensuring all types of learners can utilise the support best suited to their needs and learning style.

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