

Why REACH is the new GROW in Coaching.

 by Linley Watson

Coaching is now considered a core skill for leaders at all levels.

Defined by Sir John Whitmore as “Unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their own performance,” coaching emerged in the ‘80’s and ‘90’s as a means to empower individuals and teams to reach their goals in the workplace. Good coaches work with individuals using a variety of tools, skills and frameworks to inspire and motivate people to draw on the resources and competencies they have within themselves.

Unlike in the sporting arena, where the coach is often seen as an expert who guides and directs the behaviour of the athlete or team, pure business coaching is an equal partnership where the coach asks powerful questions, actively listens and avoids giving advice, instead encouraging the coachee to solve their own issues and devise their own actions to achieve what they want.

One of the original coaching models is GROW which has endured to become the world’s most popular coaching framework. Born out of the need to understand and leverage what makes a successful coaching conversation, the GROW model which stands for Goal, Reality, Options and Wrap-Up, has guided coaching conversations for close to thirty years.

A new evidence based approach to coaching

Beyond traditional coaching, the current research challenges organisations to embrace evidence based coaching as a new approach to capability management. Evidence based coaching draws from the social sciences and considers how humans learn and develop over their life span, intellectually, emotionally, socially and in life as well as in organisational contexts.

Today’s professional coaches understand how to develop human potential and have an approach that fosters building not just individual but organisational capability. This has required continual development of tools to enable and support practitioners to have deeply transformational conversations.

One of the contemporary tools gaining traction is the REACH[©] coaching model. Built to address some of the perceived shortcomings of other tools, REACH[©] is now well-established and replacing the GROW model in a wide range of organisations across Australasia and beyond.

A healthy start for REACH[©]

The REACH coaching model was developed in 2008 by Kathy McKenzie, CEO of Fire

Up Coaching, to meet the needs of a large client in the health sector. Coaching was still in its infancy in Australia and they needed a holistic model for having coaching conversations that was sophisticated enough to enable the depth of conversations that arise in the health context, but practical enough to roll out on a large scale. Evidence based coaching was also gaining momentum and REACH provided a more robust approach to supporting capability development.

When they looked at the popular GROW coaching framework the client noted that the model jumps straight into goal setting without acknowledging how critical rapport is to the success of a coaching relationship. They wanted to really emphasise the building of rapport and trust to help people open up and engage fully in the process.

Effective coaching is results focused and action oriented.

Another key aspect perceived as missing in GROW was around the coachee internalising the value and importance of achieving their goal. Ensuring they could clarify and articulate the reason or the benefits of getting their desired outcome McKenzie believed made it more likely that they would take the actions they had identified to achieve it. This was also validated by the research coming from the International Coach Federation.



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| <p>Often people get very little validation and acknowledgement for their efforts. McKenzie and colleagues had long since realised that concluding a coaching conversation by authentically honouring the coachee meant they left the session energised, believing that they can achieve what is important to them and feeling good about who they are - something the client also saw as critical for developing and embedding a successful coaching culture.</p> <p>In response to customer demand, the REACH© Coaching Conversation Model was born. The REACH acronym stands for Rapport, Explore, Action, Clarify and Honour.</p> | <p>REACH in Practice</p> <p>Any model is only useful if it works in practice. A Learning and Organisation Development Manager at a public sector agency attests to the benefits of REACH at an organisational level.</p> <p>“We have recently decided to adopt the REACH coaching model in our organisation. One of the key reasons is that I think the Rapport and Honour steps add more of the ‘human side’ to the coaching conversation. In my last role we had a development centre where leaders would practise coaching skills using a different coaching model. Our feedback would often</p> | <p>be that leaders needed to spend more time building rapport into their coaching, and encouraging their team members to take on challenges. I often wondered why those steps weren’t themselves part of other models.”</p> <p>Business Consultant and Coach Julie Keating says that “Having used both the GROW and REACH methods, for a Coach I see REACH as providing a better basis for building a long term relationship with a client. While both include the basics, REACH starts with the building of Rapport which for me introduced my awareness of the ‘love and empathy’ that needs to exist between a coach and their client, to provide the safe space for</p> |
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| <p>Rapport</p> | <p>Building rapport is essential to get coachees engaged and in the space of trusting and opening up, prior to gaining agreement on what a successful coaching conversation topic or outcome would be.</p> |
| <p>Explore</p> | <p>Most of the conversation is questioning and exploring the topic at deeper and deeper levels. Various tools and techniques can be applied to access the sub conscious. The key to quality answers is asking quality questions that are solution oriented and focused on possibilities not problems.</p> |
| <p>Action</p> | <p>An effective coaching conversation leads to action steps that are stated as SMART goals which can be measured and monitored.</p> |
| <p>Clarify</p> | <p>Clarifying the value in achieving the outcome cements the importance of realising each goal and builds the desire to make it happen.</p> |
| <p>Honour</p> | <p>Reflecting on the value of the coaching conversation and authentically validating and honouring the coachee means they leave the session feeling good about who they are and believing they can achieve their goals.</p> |



a client to really delve below their conscious level.

GROW is great for a workplace situation; it is a model that could be used by any manager or by others to analyse any situation. For me it's more of an analysis tool for a specific situation rather than a coaching process that helps people understand what drives them. “

As a pragmatic business owner and CEO, Justine Teggelove has worked with a coach a couple of times over the years and has found it a valuable process. “Having now been on the receiving end of both GROW and REACH coaching conversations as a coachee, I feel that the subtle but important ‘relationship’ differences in REACH have been instrumental in keeping me energised, motivated and encouraged to achieve the outcomes I want. I find that the REACH coaching conversation

flows naturally and I am now using it when coaching my own team”.

Coaching for a greater return on intelligence

To become a skilled coach requires training and practice. REACH is now the core of a Diploma in Leadership, Coaching and Mentoring offered by FIREUP Coaching which is endorsed by the International Coach Federation (ICF), the body taking the lead in defining coaching and setting professional and ethical standards for coaches.

Coaching is now becoming a main stream approach for business. A recent whitepaper by Korn Ferry on the impact of leadership styles on organisational climate found that a coaching style enhanced a positive, engaged organisation culture by 50%. Developing a coaching culture has been shown to improve communication by 63%, team effectiveness by 68%, self-

esteem by 29% and performance management by 77%.

The proof is in – it is no longer just about return on investment but return on intelligence and coaching is a great method for fostering that emotionally, socially and mentally.

Find out more about REACH at www.fireup.com.au

About the author

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