

Andy Bounds

# Coaching best-practices – how to get the best from your team



Coaching is like running a race. For both, you have:

1. Start
2. Finish
3. Track
4. Hurdles

In other words...

1. Start: know where you're starting from. If you begin from the wrong place, you'll run the wrong race
2. Finish: know where the finish line is, or you'll sprint off in the wrong direction. And, as the saying goes: "if you don't know where you're going, you'll end up somewhere else"
3. Track: know the path you're taking, to take you from start to finish. What's happening first, second, third...?
4. Hurdles: know – in advance – any hurdles you'll encounter, and how you plan to overcome them. This is much more effective/pleasant than being surprised by a hurdle and having to deal with it with no prior planning

So, to become a great Coach, you have to master all four. And each requires a combination of:

- Asking the other person good questions – like "what are you looking to achieve?"; and/or
- Guiding their thinking – like "in my experience, in situations like this, people are often thinking X or Y. Does that sound like you?"

For example:

1. **Start – find out where they are now**
    - Know your *first* questions, to start them speaking – "Are you having fun at work?", "How can I help you?" etc.
    - Know your *second* questions, to uncover more detail – "Tell me more?", "Why's that exciting/worrying?", "How do you know that this is the case?" etc.
  2. **Finish – find out where they want to get to**
    - What are looking to achieve?
    - How will you know you've achieved it?
    - What value will it bring when you have achieved it?
  3. **Track – help them find the best path to take, to achieve their goals**
    - What's the best way to achieve these goals, in your opinion?
    - I've seen others achieve this by doing X or Y.
- Would either of these work for you?
4. **Hurdles**
    - What obstacles will you face, in achieving this?
    - How will you overcome these?
    - One thing I've seen work is X. Is that worth trying here?

If you already have some good questions – ones that uncover the answers you need – great: keep using them.

But if not, invest time developing them, and practising them until they feel natural. Both you and your colleagues will be delighted you did.

#### Action point

For your next coaching conversations, think *in advance* what questions you'll ask, to find what you need to know.

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#### About the Author

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain's Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world's largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him '... more about effective communicating than a lady who'd taught two American Presidents'.

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#### Co-ordinates

E-mail: [andy@andybounds.com](mailto:andy@andybounds.com)  
Web: [www.andybounds.com/tips](http://www.andybounds.com/tips)



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