

Organizational Coaching Refresher #5

Keep coaching sessions on target.

Coaching sessions can drift off topic for a variety of reasons. Organizational Coaches have some unique challenges which make staying on topic particularly difficult. Here are a few ways to keep your sessions on track.

All **trained coaches** support clients as they work through challenges, identify opportunities and move towards the change they see for themselves. **Organizational coaches** have the added complexity of holding these conversations within the context of organizational growth. Organizational coaches elevate an individual's strength so that it serves the whole of the organization. When we fail to align the personal coaching agenda with organizational goals, we miss the mark.

Is there a clear Agenda? Not all conversations are coaching sessions. If you draw upon your coaching skills during ad-hoc conversations, you are not likely to clearly define an **AGENDA**. "What would you like to take away from our conversation today?" When there is a lack of clarity, clients meander aimlessly. When there is no focal point to anchor the discussion, the conversation drifts. Ad-hoc coaching conversations are vulnerable to drifting off topic because no specific agenda is defined.

Ad-Hoc Coaching Tip- If you engage in INFORMAL (ad-hoc) coaching, at least try to clarify the goal or purpose of the conversation. Both the coach and the team member should be clear on why the conversation is happening. The team member may want to discuss a particular leadership goal or they may just want to vent. Regardless of the general topic, the coach and team member can at least establish a boundary in which to frame their conversation. Formally declare the conversation boundary and reiterate the purpose of the conversation. The team member will continue to drift around but, ideally, stay within the general topic boundary. You may have to remind team members of the mutually agreed upon discussion boundary.

Is the Agenda Relevant? If you are engaged in a FORMAL coaching conversation, ask team members, "How does your AGENDA relate to leadership or organizational goals." If a link between the two is not apparent, exploring the topic more broadly may be necessary before clarifying the agenda. If the AGENDA does not tie into either of these, acknowledge the disconnect. Coach and team member may decide to proceed with the conversation anyway. Alternatively, Organizational Coaches may suggest the team member reconsider and bring a more relevant Agenda. As a reminder, organizational coaching serves both the individual and the parent organization. Reviewing team member professional goals, KAs and organizational goals may be helpful.