

# Coaching – Applying the GROW Model

The *GROW* model is a simple yet effective coaching model designed to be collaborative and intentional.

- **G**oal
- (Current) **R**eality
- **O**ptions (or Obstacles)
- **W**ill (or Way Forward)

When leaders coach their team members, or act as mentors to them, it's most powerful for the employee to draw conclusions for themselves, rather than having these conclusions thrust upon them. On the other hand, as a team leader, you'll often have expert knowledge to offer. It's your job to guide team members to make decisions that are best for your organization.

## How to Use the Tool

To structure a coaching session using the *GROW* Model, take the following steps:

### 1. Establish the Goal

First, you and your team member need to look at the behaviour that you want to change, and then structure this change as a **goal** that they want to achieve. Make sure that this is a *SMART* goal (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound).

When doing this, it is useful to ask questions like:

- How will you know that your team member has achieved this goal? How will you know that the problem or issue is solved?
- Does this goal fit with her overall career objectives? And does it fit with the team's objectives?

### 2. Examine the Current Reality

Next, ask your team member to describe their current reality.

This is an important step. Too often, people try to solve a problem or reach a goal without fully considering their starting point, and often they are missing some information that they need in order to reach their goal effectively.

As your team member tells you about their current reality, the solution may start to emerge. Useful coaching questions in this step include:

- What is happening now (what, who, when, and how often)? What is the effect or result of this?
- Have you already taken any steps towards your goal?
- Does this goal conflict with any other goals or objectives?

### 3. Explore the Options

Once you and your team member have explored the current reality, it's time to determine what is possible – meaning all of the possible options for reaching their objective. Help them brainstorm as many good options as possible. Then, discuss these and help them decide on the best ones.

Feel free to offer your own suggestions in this step, but let your team member offer suggestions first and let them do most of the talking. It's important to guide them in the right direction without actually making decisions for them.

Typical questions that you can use to explore options include:

- What else could you do?
- What if this or that constraint were removed? Would that change things?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?
- What factors or considerations will you use to weigh the options?
- What do you need to stop doing in order to achieve this goal?
- What obstacles stand in your way?

### 4. Establish the Will

By examining the current reality and exploring the options, your team member will now have a good idea of how they can achieve their goal. The final step is for your team member to commit to specific actions in order to move forward towards their goal.

Useful questions to ask here include:

- What will you do now, and when? What else will you do?
- What could stop you from moving forward? How will you overcome this?
- How can you keep yourself motivated?
- When do you need to review progress? Daily, weekly, monthly?

Finally, decide on a date when you both will review progress. This will provide some accountability and allow your team member to change their approach if the original plan is not working.

**TIPS:** A great way to practice using the model is to address your own challenges and issues. By practicing on your own and getting yourself “unstuck”, you will learn how to ask the most helpful questions. Then, write down some stock questions as prompts for future coaching sessions.

The two most important skills for a coach are the ability to **ASK GOOD QUESTIONS** and **LISTEN EFFECTIVELY**.

Don't ask closed questions that call for a yes or no answer (such as “Did that cause a problem?”). Instead, ask open questions such as “What effect did that have?”. Be prepared with a list of questions for each stage of the *GROW* process.

**Reference:** The GROW Model: A Simple Process for Coaching and Mentoring  
[http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_89.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_89.htm)