

A MANAGERS PRACTICAL GUIDE TO COACHING



QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO KNOW TO COACH YOUR STAFF



Selection
PARTNERS

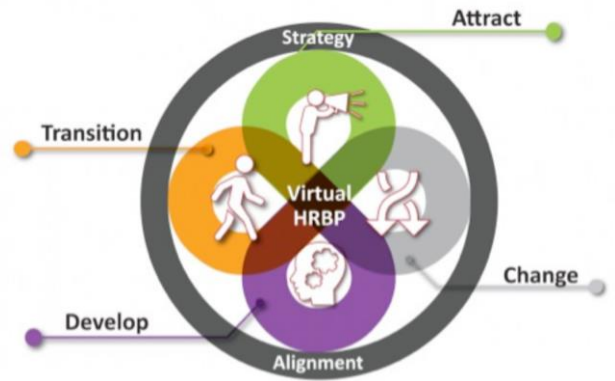
Who is Selection Partners?

We are a talent consultancy, which provides innovative and practical HR Consulting solutions that deliver a positive return on people investments across the whole team member life cycle.

Our consulting focuses on the “*difference that makes the difference*”.

We help organisations through our four service areas:

- **Attract** – securing the best talent
- **Change** – maximising effectiveness
- **Develop** – building competence
- **Transition** – outplacement & managing careers



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About the author

Hi, my name is June Parker. I have worked in Human Resource Consulting and Coaching for over 15 years in a variety of roles. I've also been a General Manager, an Executive and Career Coach and now a business owner of Selection Partners.



In 2012, my business partner and I created Selection Partners, a talent-consulting firm. We comprise of; career coaching, executive coaching, HR consulting, recruitment, and outplacement. Our vision is to positively help those with whom we interact whether they come to us from an organisation or direct as an individual. As a result we have created a variety of free resources based on the questions we get asked and the needs of our clients.

This eBook is one of the resources I have created to help you understand how your role as manager can be a more positive experience for yourself and your team by utilising coaching strategies. The more effective you are as a manager and leader of people, the faster your career will soar and the more joy you will experience. A coaching course is always going to be the best development strategy, however in its absence, this eBook provides advice, strategies and questions to help you start to implement some amazing coaching techniques that truly get results.

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Table of Contents

Coaching as a manager	5
Difference between managing, mentoring and coaching	6
When should I coach my staff?	7
Will I be a good coach?	8
Learning what motivates others	10
What I've learnt, you need to know	11
Steps in the coaching process	12
What to say and do in coaching	13
Coaching example	15
Question types	16
Helping your team members overcome obstacles	18
How do you rate as a coach?	20

Coaching as a manager

‘Coaching is a dialogue that leads to self-awareness and action’

Coaching involves helping another person gain the confidence, motivation and drive to build capability and take action. As managers that’s what we want, isn’t it? Don’t we all want our people motivated, achieving and hitting goals?

Team members respond amazingly well to coaching and generally feel energized and engaged. Even those who have lost their drive can benefit. Coaching can help your staff step up, leave mental slumps behind and even change negative attitudes that block their potential. Let’s face it, team members today expect their organisations to help them develop – and coaching is a great tool for this.

There are many benefits to you as a manager in learning how to coach your team, some of which include;

- You will feel confident and skilled enough to manage the staff challenges that meet you at work and NOT feel stressed or hassled about them.
- You will make a significant and positive impact on your team; staff will be more engaged, productive and motivated.
- You will feel proud about the way you handle people challenges and
- You will be continuously learning and developing your management skills.

Coaching helps build credibility and trust. What you say and do reflects what people think of you. If you want to build your personal brand and reputation, you can use coaching as a great strategy to become known as a listener and someone who empowers others. This is an opportunity to stand up and make a difference to your staff, develop your people and enable high performance.

Difference between managing, mentoring and coaching

As a manager, you will use all three approaches to building capability within your teams. The value comes when you consciously choose one over the other as a strategy to achieve a specific purpose. Below I have outlined the difference between, managing, mentoring and coaching.

Coaching style	What does that mean?
Managing	<p>As a manager, your role is to focus on getting an outcome or to achieve an objective. When you manage your team, you tend to offer a solution or plan of action, the team then follows your advice. Managers therefore typically drive and lead people to achieve results.</p> <p>Good managers are also concerned as much about their staff as they are about getting the job done.</p>
Mentoring	<p>A mentor has typically been in a similar situation before and can advise the team member on the best course of action given their experience. A mentor therefore brings their range of expertise, knowledge and experience, which is passed on to assist and support an team member. A mentor can be internal or external to your organisation.</p>
Coaching	<p>When you take on a coaching approach, you work with your team member to help them achieve a specific goal or outcome in the future. You ask questions, which allows your team member to discover the answers for themselves, learn and progress. When you are coaching you refrain from providing advice (no matter how difficult this might be). Coaching enables people to develop their own ideas, take responsibility and lead.</p> <p>If you adopt coaching in your management role, you need to believe that your team members already know the answers, they simply lack confidence or insight to back their own judgment and take action. By asking insightful questions, you will help your team member discover the answers themselves and get into action.</p>

Coaching for managers is often challenging because we have been successful in our roles by directing, managing and providing advice. As managers we often feel we want to answer the questions our team members pose. However by using a coaching approach, we as managers help our team members to grow and take more ownership and accountability. As a manager, it's important to recognise when it's appropriate to manage, coach or mentor. If you can be flexible to use all strategies you will get better results from your

When should I coach my staff?

Before you launch into coaching, be aware there are times when coaching works well and times when coaching shouldn't be used.

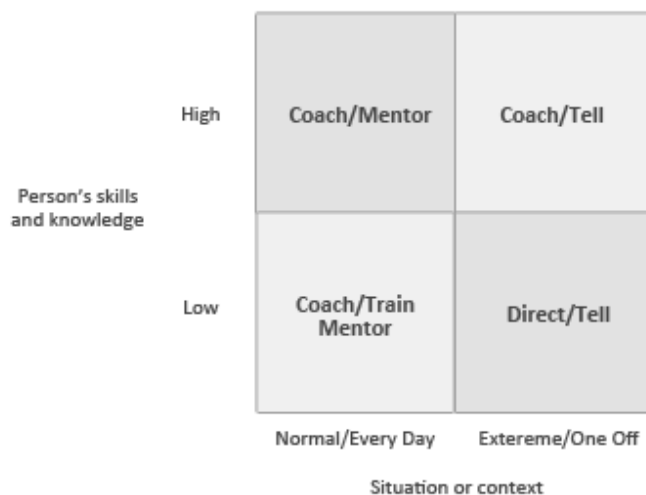
When does coaching work well?

- High performers
- Difficult conversations
- Time management issues
- Conflict management
- Bringing out the best in people
- Improving communication

When does coaching not work?

- Grief
- Trauma
- Substance abuse
- Psychological issue
- When there is a lack of skill or experience in the role

Coaching also depends on the team members motivation, proficiency and urgency.



If someone has either a high or low skill level and they perform the task every day, coaching will help to build their competence. An example could be in interacting more effectively with management, or their team. In situations, where the task is one off or urgent, then sometimes directing or telling (managing) is a more appropriate strategy to use.

Will I be a good coach?

Just like not everyone makes a good manager, not everyone makes a good coach. If you want to add coaching to your management tool kit, then there are seven areas I see as vitally important to assess your suitability to coach people. Assess yourself against these areas and if you feel you are made of the right stuff, then the next section gives you information on what to say and do to coach your staff.

1. Self-awareness

To be able to coach people, you need to know yourself and be honest about your skills and where you personally need to develop. You need to be open to learning and to feedback. Think, do you get defensive or do you want to learn? Do you admit when you are not right? How self-aware and open are you? If you have a high level of self-awareness this is the first step to becoming a good coach.

2. Commitment

How committed are you to being a great coach to your team? As a manager, you will always find reasons not to coach staff, all of which will be legitimate. If you commit to using coaching as a management tool, then you need to practice and give it time.

If you do decide to start using coaching techniques. You don't have to coach everyone. I suggest you start by choosing people who actually want to be coached.

3. Empathy

How empathic are you? Are you able to acknowledge the behaviour and the emotions of your staff? Can you read body language and sense how people are feeling? Do you recognise that people bring their whole self to work?

As a coach it's powerful to comment on the behaviour you see rather than ignore it and hoping it sorts itself out. If you saw someone troubled by a decision you made, you could start questioning what you see. As an example you could simply say, "I can see this is upsetting you, would you like to share with me what's going on for you?"

4. Knowledge of team

How well do you know your team? Do you understand what makes each individual tick? Do you know their career aspirations, what inspires them? Do you know what they like and dislike about their jobs, so you can position opportunities in a way that is appealing to them? Do you know what challenges them in stepping up and seizing opportunities? If not, this is an opportunity to find out!

5. Reliable and trustworthy

How reliable and trustworthy are you? If you organise a time to meet with one of your team, are you on time, or do you reschedule? If you promise to be available are you? Do you keep confidences?

6. Motivate and enthuse

“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)”

How well do you inspire people to achieve more and step up? How well do you help others believe they can achieve more and to clearly articulate their goals? How well do you inspire people to act for themselves based on what you agreed?

7. Active Listening skills

Coaching requires whole body listening. When you are coaching as a manager you need to listen with your ears and your eyes. Observe body language and listen to the tone of voice, as well as the words themselves. Listen also to what is not being said. Use silence to allow people space to think.

Most of us believe we are good listeners, when in fact we aren't. Active listening means being present and listening to a person without thinking about what you want to say next or getting distracted by looking at a text or something else. Active listening is being 100% present for the person.

For your team member, it may even be the first time a person has truly listened to them!

Learning what motivates others

Different things motivate different people. When coaching an team member it is important to understand what motivates your team first so you can inspire them through coaching to achieve the goals or objectives you discuss with them. We all know that what motivates our self, is not necessarily what motivates our team members, however many managers still don't take the time to figure out what this is for their team.

To follow is a list of areas that may motivate your staff. As an example if someone is motivated by balance, offering them an opportunity to take on a project which requires travel and a bigger workload, may actually demotivate the person. However if you offer that opportunity to someone who is motivated by advancement, this will be a massive positive.

- Achievement
- Advancement
- Balance
- Benefits
- Communication
- Compensation
- Corporate Culture
- Recognition and Rewards
- Responsibility
- Teamwork
- Training and Promotions

You might like to use some of the following questions to motivate and enthuse your team members.

- *"If you could achieve more how would you feel?"*
- *"I can see you are uninspired in your role at the moment, what would need to happen for you to feel motivated again?"*
- *"What outcome would make you proud in relation to this project/issue/challenge"
"so what would have to happen for you to set it up that way?"*

What I've learnt, you need to know

I have had the honour of being an external coach for many years now, prior to which I coached my own internal teams. Over this time I have learnt a few things some of which I would like to share with you.

June's six truths

1. Be confident that your team member can improve with coaching. If you approach coaching with this mindset, it is amazing what others can achieve. I am a great believer that you get what you expect, so if you expect people to step up, they will.
2. As a manager, we often feel we know the answers and so it can be challenging to watch someone struggle to find the answer themselves. Don't become too attached or invested in your own ideas or solutions, let your team member discover his or her own truth. In these situations silence really is your friend. At times, I have been known to bite my lip or even dig my index finger into my thumb as a reminder to keep quiet and not give my opinion. For extraverts silence can be a challenge.
3. Make coaching fun. Humour is helpful. Whilst coaching is a serious job, the process doesn't have to be.
4. Recognise that no matter how many coaching models you learn, the process will not work in a linear fashion. It's important to be flexible and focus on the goal or objective. There are many paths to the same outcome.
5. Always remember that your team member must attain self-awareness before they develop an action plan. If the team member doesn't recognise for themselves the need to act, the motivation won't be there.
6. When you ask insightful questions and really listen to people, expect emotion at times. Tears mean the coaching is hitting the mark, so make it safe for the person to let out the emotion.

Steps in the coaching process

Once you have decided who you want to coach, you need to decide what you are going to coach them on. Consider what you want them to achieve, **AND** what they want to achieve?

Think about their potential? What skills do you want them to improve? For example, do you want your team member to come to you with solutions not complaints, sell more, improve presentation skills? Be clear on the goal or objective for the coaching.

Find out how they feel about their ability in the area you think they need to improve and ask if they would like to improve? Notice if the areas they feel they want to work on are the same areas. Are they inspired to develop?

Use a table like the one below to identify who to coach, their areas for coaching and the benefits to them.

Direct Report	Areas to focus on	Coaching Benefits

What to say and do in coaching

If you have read this far, you are now ready to learn a cool coaching model and a whole bunch of coaching questions that will help you on your way to becoming a fabulous coaching manager.

Coaching structures bring a process to the thinking, planning, deciding and doing of coaching! If you can remember the structure, the questions will flow more easily, but remember, don't get hung up on the structure.

The most common coaching model is called the **GROW** model. This model is best suited to practical performance orientated issues. **GROW** stands for:



GOAL

Learn from your team member, why the goal is important.

Set clear goals, which inspire your team member. Make goals specific and measurable. Help the team member to articulate what they can do to step up and seize opportunities.

Questions you can ask:

- What would you like to achieve?
- What skill do you most want to learn?
- What specifically do you want to accomplish?
- How can we make that goal measurable – so we know when you have achieved it?
- What opportunities do you see?
- How will you know when you are successful?

REALITY CHECK

In this step ask your team member to tell you where they are now?

This is the starting point, obtain the facts, not the person's subjective impressions of reality.

Questions you can ask:

- What level are you at right now?
- How many times did you do that last week?
- When was the last time that happened?
- What did you say or do when that happened?
- What have you already tried?
- What events or choices led you to this place?
-

OPTIONS

Next let your team member come up with options to achieve their goal?

Your job as a coach is to enthuse and support your team member. Let them think and do the work. The objective is to help your team member think creatively to develop several potential solutions. Try to push beyond the obvious options. When your team member comes up with an option, get them to elaborate on these options. It is important at this point you don't judge the options. Simply encourage the person to think.

Questions you can ask:

- What do you suggest might work?
- Which of these ideas might work best do you think?
- What could you do about this?
- What else could you think of?
- Lets think of 3 or 4 options.
- If X wasn't a problem, what would you try?
- What have you seen other people do that might work for you?

WILL

This step ensures your team member makes a decision and takes action.

Get your team member to take ownership. Ensure they are committed to follow through on one of the options they discussed.

Questions you can ask:

- Which option do you want to pursue?
- Which idea would work best do you think?
- What are you prepared to commit to doing?
- Turn that into an action step: what will you do by when?
- What's the first step, and when will you do that by?

There you have it, the GROW model and questions to ask. In addition to this, I recommend you also check your team member's motivation. You need to ensure your team member is committed to taking action. If they aren't motivated to take action, they won't and all you have done is have a nice conversation that has led nowhere. As managers, that is not our objective, we want our team to take positive action.

Questions you can ask:

- On a scale of 1-10, how likely is it that this step will get done in the timeframe set?
- Are there any blocks or obstacles we need to address to make sure this gets done?
- Is there any support you need?

After you have set actions and time frames, next put in place a follow up session to ensure your team member is on track and working towards obtaining their goal or objective. This helps keep them accountable.

Questions you can ask:

- When shall we touch base?
- How do you want me to hold you accountable for this?
- What can I do to help you deliver on this?

Coaching example

As a coach, one of the fantastic bonuses is that you don't need to know the answers; all you need to do is ask good questions. Here is a quick example of two approaches to the same question. The first answers the question, the second coaches the person to find the answer.

The scenario; one of your staff asks you:

"Can you give me your advice about how I can handle the team meeting more effectively?"

Option 1	Giving Advice	<p>"Sure, have you tried sending out the agenda earlier?"</p> <p>"I tried that"</p> <p>"Oh tried that, what about scheduling an appointment"</p> <p>"I did that too!"</p> <p>"Tried that too, ok I'll talk to the team!"</p>
Option 2	Coaching	<p>"What have you done so far?"</p> <p>" I've sent out an agenda and scheduled times"</p> <p>"Ok, so you have sent out agendas and scheduled appointments – great, what else have you done?"</p> <p>"Nothing else"</p> <p>"How could you learn what you need to?"</p> <p>"I know Bill runs great meetings, I could ask how he does it, so I have some ideas"</p> <p>"What other options can you think of?"</p> <p>" I could try speaking to the team individually about how they think I can improve the meeting maybe"</p> <p>"Speaking to the individuals to find out what they want, that's a good option. What else might you do?"</p> <p>"I could go on a course or sit in on another meeting to observe how they run theirs"</p> <p>" You've got some great options let's explore these. Which feels best to you"</p> <p>"Asking a couple of the team"</p> <p>"Great, is there anything that will stop you from doing this?"</p> <p>"Nothing"</p> <p>"OK, when will you chat to the team?"</p> <p>"This afternoon"</p> <p>"Great, let me know how it goes"</p> <p>" I will, thanks this has been really helpful"</p>

Coaching does take more time, but it's worth it. Your staff figure things out themselves and you get much better buy in and ownership of the result.

If you feel the need to give advice, that's still Ok, but try framing it as a question. ***"I've got some experience with that, would you like me to share some insights I've discovered?"*** asking permission builds trust.

Question types

Approaching coaching from an open curious perspective is the secret to being a good coach. Whilst it is important to ask good quality questions, some of which I have provided below, if you are really interested in your team member and really listening to what they have to say, the techniques & questions will come naturally.

To follow are some question types which will help you.

1. Open / broad questions

Use questions to explore what is going on. Sometimes the act of exploring and thinking things through in a structured way will bring the solution, without even looking at options. The broader the question the wider the range of options people will think of.

Narrow question	<i>"What did you say?"</i>
Broad question	<i>"How did you respond?"</i>

2. Scaling questions

Scaling questions allow your staff to rate themselves on a scale. For example, you can ask your team member to rate their feelings, comfort levels, intention, commitment, enthusiasm on a scale of 1-10. This enables you to get a sense of their level in the area you are delving into.

Questions you can ask:

- *"On a scale of 1- 10, how confident are you in that decision?"*
- *"On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you with that decision?"*
- *"What needs to happen to increase that level from 6 to 9?"*

3. Explore others view points as a means to question

When someone is stuck, it is often good to get them to think about the issue or problem from another's perspective, in doing so they may see things differently or see solutions previously hidden to them.

Questions you can ask:

- *"What does it look like from their perspective?"*
- *"How do you think my boss / your peers would see this?"*
- *"If you were _____ how would things look?"*
- *"If you were _____ what would you think?"*

4. Laser questions

These are short sharp questions that capture a key word or phrase used by the speaker. A laser question can also be used to cut through the discussion to the core of the issue.

Questions you can ask:

- *"What is the truth here?"*
- *"What are you making it mean?"*
- *"What are you not saying?"*
- *"What is it going to take?"*
- *"How is this affecting you?"*
- *"How is this really working for you?"*
- *"What do you really believe?"*
- *"What are you willing to let go of?"*
- *"What are the payoffs you are receiving?"*

5. When you don't know what to ask, use these simple questions**Questions you can ask:**

- *"Say more about that..."*
- *"Keep going"*
- *"Tell me more"*
- *"What else?"*
- *"And?"*
- *"What's behind that?"*
- *"You mentioned _____, tell me more about that"* (observation and question technique)

Questions to avoid:

- Try to avoid 'Why' questions. Why questions create defensiveness, reasons and excuses.
- Try and avoid 'Closed' questions as they often lead to a feeling of being interrogated rather than having a conversation.

Helping your team members overcome obstacles

As a manager you know your team members often want you to fix their problems. You now know that when you are coaching them, your goal is to help them fix their own problems.

The process to unsticking your team members

The first thing you need to do is help your team member to identify if the obstacles are external obstacles or internal obstacles.

External obstacles tend to be practical obstacles - like time, skills and money. Internal obstacles, are fears, beliefs or needs.

You can identify external obstacles by asking the following;

Questions you can ask:

- *"What's stopping you?"*
- *"What do you need that you don't have to reach your objective?"*
- *"When you have tried something like this in the past, what got in your way?"*
- *"What one resource or tool would make all the difference if you had it?"*

You can identify internal obstacles by asking the following;

Questions you can ask:

- *"What goes on inside when you think of launching into this? Feel free to name an emotion, a physical sensation, a memory, anything."*
- *"You have found it hard to make this change. What do you gain from not changing?"*
- *"What's driving your response?"*
- *"What belief is behind your response? How well is that belief serving you?"*

Overcoming Obstacles

Once you have uncovered the obstacle getting in the way of your team member reaching their goal or objective, you need to help them to overcome the obstacles. There are many options or questioning styles you can use. I have listed six below.

1. Imagine the obstacle isn't there

- *"Let's just remove the obstacle for a moment, how does that change things?"*
- *"If you couldn't fail – what would you do?"*

2. Find out what worked in the past

- *"When you have faced this kind of obstacle in the past, how did you overcome it?"*

3. **Bring the inside out** – when we bring our internal obstacles out, name them and talk about them, they lose much of their intensity.

- *"Can you name what you are afraid of? What's the worst thing you don't want to happen?"*
- *"What's going on inside, when you attempt to tackle this? Can you describe it?"*

4. **Hypotheticals** – Used when people hang on to a response pattern that may have helped them in the past, but doesn't serve them at work. This is often called a limiting belief.

- “The belief I am hearing is that you can't possibly present at the next management meeting in case you sound stupid. Imagine for a moment that you didn't sound stupid and that in fact, you presented eloquently and confidently. How would that change the way you worked and feel about yourself?”

5. **Find the underlying reason** – People have a good reason for what they do. Even if the belief or behaviour seems irrational, it makes sense within the rationality of the person who chose it. If you can find the reason, and bring it to the surface, you can often change the behaviour.

- “What led you to respond in that way? Walk me through the reasoning behind it”
- “You are saying there is no point standing up for yourself, that conflict is a no win situation. Can you identify where that belief comes from? Where did you learn to see conflict in that way?”

6. **Reframing** - This shifts the focus of the discussion to exploring in a positive way the team members underlying interests and how they can be met. (Often used to challenge underlying limiting beliefs). This moves the person from a negative mindset to a positive exploration of the person's real concerns.

I love reframing; it's an easy and powerful tool to use. Here are some examples.

Your staff say (negative)	You help them reframe this to a positive
“We've tried that already ...”	“So we'll be able to avoid those problems this time – what should we do differently now?” “What would we need to do to make it work this time?”
“I don't want to talk about it with him/her ...”	“So what would be more useful for you to talk about?” “What would need to happen to make you willing to talk?”
“It's been a total stuff up ...”	“Yes, we've done well to deal with this problem, and there are things we can learn from this – what do you think a key lesson is?” “What exactly is a stuff up?”

The next page has a questionnaire which allows you to rate yourself as a coach against 'coaching good practice'. Assess yourself honestly, then use this a guide to build your coaching competence.

How do you rate as a coach?

Coaching skills	How often practiced?			
	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I am empathic				
I am assertive				
I check that I am addressing the <i>real</i> issues of the coaching need				
I <i>refer</i> people with major personal problems to appropriate professional support				
I am a <i>positive</i> role model for those whom I coach				
I <i>listen</i> carefully (both verbally and non-verbally), and respond appropriately to the coachee				
I <i>facilitate</i> discovery, and ask questions rather than giving all the answers				
I encourage coachees to take appropriate <i>risks</i> and get out of their comfort zones				
I give coachees strong <i>encouragement</i> when coaching them, even with setbacks				
I give <i>specific</i> constructive feedback (<i>not</i> vague responses)				
I show a genuine <i>interest</i> in others when coaching them				
I demonstrate considerable <i>patience</i> when coaching people				
I am <i>positive</i> and <i>enthusiastic</i> when coaching others				
I focus on <i>their needs</i> when coaching, rather than wanting to display my knowledge and skills				
I provide ample opportunity for reinforced <i>skills practice</i>				
I provide <i>meaning</i> as needed when coaching - how it fits in with the big picture				
I am <i>honest</i> with coachees when coaching and giving feedback				
I spend appropriate time coaching and giving constructive feedback to <i>all</i> those needing it (i.e. not playing favourites)				
I am <i>approachable</i> and make time to provide coaching				
I have a good <i>emotional intelligence</i> (EQ) - i.e. I am aware of my own and others' feelings, how I impact on others				

Based on the above responses, think where you might improve your coaching practices?

I hope this information helps you with your coaching success. I think coaching is a lot like yoga. Like yoga, coaching is a practice, you need to keep trying and practicing to improve. Knowledge alone will not enhance your skill. The more you practice, the better and more flexible you will become in your approach and technique.

If you would like more information on coaching or would like to hire a coach for yourself or someone in your team, I invite you to contact me directly for a confidential discussion.

Selection Partners provides coaching in all states in Australia through our team of highly skilled executive coaches.

My email is June@selectionpartners.com.au or call 03 9832 8100.