

The future of behavioural coaching - understanding what it can bring to the table



OIM Consulting MD Arjen de Bruin discusses the difference between behavioural coaching vs. training, unpacking the trends we can expect to see in 2023

It was former Colorado football coach Bill McCartney who said, “*all coaching is, is taking a player where he can’t take himself.*” And McCartney would know. In his 13-year tenure, he won just shy of 100 games, three Big 8s and a National Championship, earning him a well-deserved place in the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame.

Yet, within an organisational or business context, how can coaching take people where they are unable to go on their own?

Training vs. Coaching

Arjen de Bruin, Managing Director at OIM Consulting says that firstly, it is important to understand the difference between ‘coaching’ (specifically behavioural) and ‘training’. “These terms are often used interchangeably, yet there is a significant distinction between the two.

De Bruin references an article on learning innovation company Maestro Learning, which depicts the output of training as achieving knowledge transfer at scale, while “*coaching, on the other hand, is a development strategy that relies on having one-on-one access to a person with experience—in other words, a coach.*”

Expands De Bruin, “Training is typically more theoretical, and once the trainee leaves the classroom or exits the virtual session, they may be required to reinforce their learnings through assignments. The

knowledge is imparted, but there is very little emphasis on the day-to-day application. Thus the success of the training programme is reliant on the individual consistently putting what they've learned into practice, under a range of real-life conditions that the programme may or may not have simulated." He adds that all too often, as soon as people walk away from the training environment and return to their daily reality, this new knowledge loses its 'stickiness' and they soon revert to their former habits and behaviours.

"In contrast, behavioural coaching aims to reinforce training or classroom knowledge through a more intimate personal interaction in a real-life environment so that the individual becomes confident in applying these learned skills in their role." He adds that for coaching to be successful, the coach must deeply understand the challenges and nuances of their trainee's environment and accompany them on their application journey.

De Bruin shares the top trends we can expect to see across the behavioural coaching landscape in 2023.

Coaching model agility

There are currently several commonly-used behavioural coaching types and methods. "In 2023, we anticipate that there will be less rigidity in how these models are applied. Rather, coaches will draw on key principles and practices of different models, customising these to meet their client's needs and realities."

De Bruin says that for example, there are several well-known and established models across the industry, such as the GROW model (*goal, reality, options/obstacles and will/way forward*), but OIM Consulting felt that these didn't quite serve the needs of its clients. Therefore, OIM adapted and used these as a basis to create its own IMPROVE model, which stands for *initiate, manage expectations, purpose, reality, options, validate and evaluate progress*.

"Model agility is the understanding that you can apply core elements of different behavioural and neurological models to the benefit of your clients," he says.

Classroom learning sees a renaissance

Last year, just about every industry think piece anticipated that learning would become increasingly virtual, thanks to the pandemic and the subsequent shift in the workplace paradigm. Yet De Bruin says that while certain components have moved online, there was actually a renaissance in classroom learning in 2022, which he expects will continue into this year and beyond.

"Having experienced the challenges of remote learning, there's a deeper appreciation for the value that real-life interaction offers, and we have seen renewed interest from clients for in-person classroom learning - which, in our programmes, is always followed by an on-the-floor coaching component."

Yet De Bruin says that with this reinvigoration, gone are the days of *death by PowerPoint*. "Classroom sessions are becoming far more collaborative, interspersed with bite-size learning techniques, scenario

simulations, gamification and more.”

The redefinition of learning, enabled by technology

While technology can never substitute or replace the value that in-person behavioural coaching offers, it has a key role to play in 2023.

De Bruin references Dr Ruben Puentedura’s ‘SAMR’ (*substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition*) model, which talks to the role that technology can play in redefining the classroom learning journey. Dr Puentedura’s work suggests that to exploit the full potential of tech, we need to move beyond the first two pillars of the framework, ‘substitution’ and ‘augmentation’, to ‘modification’ and ‘redefinition’, which are where true transformation takes place.

“This might incorporate a hybrid approach that sees an in-person lesson integrated with a gamified practical session where trainees are required to complete an interactive assignment on their mobile devices, explains De Bruin. “This year, we expect to see the industry increasingly explore this pillar, unlocking new learning opportunities while increasing knowledge retention.”

He adds that tech is also particularly helpful when it comes to conducting assessments, as it enables rapid access to deeper and more consistently applied data. “This allows coaches to focus on what they do best while delivering more detailed assessments and reports.”