

## Coachable Moments: Identifying Factors that Influence Managers to take Advantage of Coachable Moments in Day-to-Day Management (Turner & McCarthy, 2015)

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### Aim of study

Recent research has explored the potential benefits of managerial coaching in organisations. This study aims to identify the factors that influence managers to take advantage of “coachable moments” in day-to-day management. Results suggest that time, skills, relationships and physical environment or location were key factors considered by managers in their decision to coach. In addition these factors were considered within the context of a “risk” assessment process conducted by managers

### Background

#### 1. How are "Coachable Moments" defined?

- A coachable moment is an informal, usually unplanned or unexpected opportunity for a manager to have a conversation with an employee aimed at facilitating the employee to problem solve or learn from a work experience
- It is aimed at helping employees to learn rather than instructing, directing or teaching them

#### 2. What are the benefits of managerial coaching according to previous research?

- Clutterbuck & Megginson, 2001 suggest that informal coaching conducted by managers can play a key role in the development of a “coaching culture”
- Frisch 2001 indicates that an internal coach is on-the-spot and can observe the behaviours and learning of a coachee and communicate these in a timely manner

#### 3. What are some of the barriers faced by internal coaches according to previous research?

- Hunt & Weintraub, 2011 suggest that employees’ willingness to learn impacts on managers’ decision to coach. They also found that perceptions of micro-managing inhibit informal coaching
- Joo, 2005 identifies employees’ receptiveness to feedback as a key factor influencing the frequency of managerial coaching
- McCarthy & Ahrens, 2011 emphasize the role of trust in coaching conversations between managers and coachees
- Ferrar, 2006 argues for the incompatibility of the manager-coach role, and presents evidence showing a breakdown of the psychological contract as a result of managerial coaching
- Goleman, 2000 and Daniel, 2011 present similar arguments, highlighting the confidentiality and power issues that arise in this type of coaching engagement

### Methodology

Researchers used a qualitative approach interviewing 10 managers in a single university. The research design was originally piloted with one participant. The final 10 participants (out of a pool of 24 managers) had leadership experience and had also attended coaching awareness training.

## Key Findings

Results indicate that the following **6 factors** are key in influencing managers' decisions to take advantage of a coachable moment:

<b>Coach awareness</b>	Quotes from coaches suggest that they weigh up the risk and consequences of capitalising on a coaching opportunity as they feel that not all employees would welcome a coaching approach
<b>Type of employee</b>	Results also suggest that managers don't view all employees as coachable – junior, aggressive, difficult to relate to, or unwilling to learn employees were considered more risky to coach. On the other hand employees actively asking for feedback were considered more coachable
<b>Relationship</b>	Unless an established relationship was in place between manager and coachee, managers were unlikely to utilize a coachable moment. As seen in previous research trust and mutual respect between parties were essential in initiating coaching
<b>The situation presenting</b>	Managers highlighted that having more time and less ambiguity about the learning opportunity made it more likely for them to take advantage of the coachable moment.
<b>Physical environment or location</b>	A situation with less formal / hierarchical connotations was seen as more beneficial for coaching
<b>Coach's skills</b>	Manager/coach competence was key in determining whether they would utilize a coachable moment. Attending coaching training increased manager's confidence in dealing with more challenging issues

## Limitations / Questions

- The research is limited (as stated by the researchers themselves) by sample size and pre-conditions in the sample pool. All participants were employed in the same institution and in non-academic roles
- The authors acknowledge that further research using alternative methodologies with a larger cross-sectional design would help validate the current results
- Are we satisfied with how coachability is defined by the authors? Should we be talking about coachable moments or coachable people?