

Behavioural Contracting

by

Gladeana McMahon



Copyright © 2010, Gladeana McMahon

The moral right of Gladeana McMahon to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Requests for permission should be addressed to the author.

The author and publisher have used their best efforts in preparing this book and disclaim liability arising directly and indirectly from the use and application of this book.

All reasonable efforts have been made to obtain necessary copyright permissions. Any omissions or errors are unintentional and will, if brought to the attention of the publisher, be corrected in future printings.

In coaching, there are a variety of professional issues that have to be taken into account and the most important of these is often seen as that of contracting.

For those coaches who work in a life/personal coaching context a coaching contract simply means setting out clearly the terms and conditions relevant to the coaching offered, the client's personal agenda for coaching, types of review and evaluation or outcome measures to be used.

Working in an organisational coaching context means that contracting has to take into account the needs of the organisation as well as of the individual being coached. The sponsoring organisation is paying and, understandably, wants to know that the coaching work will add to the productivity and profitability of both the individual and organisation.¹

When working for organisations, a coach will usually be approached by:

The line manager

A Human Resource representative

The individual, if he or she has sufficient authority to authorise such an activity

Prior to using any form of contracting process it is in the interests of all parties to clearly set out the terms and conditions relating to the coaching and the kind of outcomes desired by all parties.² This can best be achieved by compiling a simple terms and conditions information sheet covering details such as, your cancellation policy, pricing, professional issues such as confidentiality, supervision, membership of professional bodies and relevant codes of ethics and practice as well as any other information the coach believes is essential for the client to know.

The Behavioural Contract

Those who use a Behavioural Contract do so because of the conviction that it is in the best interests of all parties to ensure the desired coaching outcomes are agreed at the beginning of the coaching process.

Once the contract has been agreed the coach and client design the journey to be taken to reach the agreed outcomes. Transparency is the key to this part of the process as the more explicit matters are made the less likely the chances of disappointment for the client. When working in an organisational context a behavioural contract is a protective mechanism for the coach as it protects the coach and the client from being scape-goated for political reasons.

The purpose of a Behavioural Contract is to ensure that the overall objectives of the coaching work are stated clearly in behavioural terms and measurable outcomes.³

Key Learning Points

Behavioural Contracting helps ensure that the coach, client and other third parties are clear about the outcomes required from the coaching process.

All aspects of human emotion can be turned into a clear behavioural outcome

A written contract is also a useful tool when undertaking a Behavioural Contract.

Setting the Scene

Whether the coach is meeting an individual client for the first session or whether the first meeting is with both the client and the organisational representative sponsoring the coaching it is important to make sure an understanding of the process.

In a three-way organisational scoping meeting the coach may take on more than one role by acting as a facilitator or mediator if appropriate. It is therefore important that the coach is clear and comfortable with the variation that can occur during the first meeting – which you could call an “assessment of needs” meeting.⁴

If working with an individual client the coach may state:

“By the end of this meeting we will have agreed the overall objectives of the coaching process as well as the specific outcome measurements to be used to evaluate the success of the coaching programme”.

However, when meeting with the client and his or her manager the coach may state:

“The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that we will have agreed the overall objectives of the coaching process as well as the specific outcome measurements to be used to evaluate the success of the coaching programme. These outcomes will be those that will be worked on in the one-to-one coaching sessions and it is therefore important that all parties are clear and comfortable with what we agree”.

Part One - Administration

The first part of the contract outlines who is involved and the date of the initial where the outcomes were agreed.

Examples of individual and organisational contracting follow.

Organisational information

Organisation name: Joe Bloggs and Company

Corporate sponsor name: John Anybody

Corporate sponsor position: Chairman

Individual client information

Client name: Jackie Smith

Coach: Julie Wouldliketohelp

Date of initial meeting: 10.1.10

Part Two – Objective Setting

This part of the process sees the coach asking those present what is wanted from the coaching process?

A coaching objective is an overall statement or goal and is characterised with more general statements such as, “*I would like to be more effective with my communication*” or, “*I would like to feel more assertive*”. This part of the discussion is aimed at gaining information about the overall perspective of the client and his or her situation.

Coaching Objectives / Required Outcomes:

Be a better communicator that can influence others

Feel more confident in myself

Part Three – Specific Outcome Measurements

The next step is to help the client to identify those specific behavioural changes that would need to take place to achieve the overall objective.

The coach might use questions such as *“You said you would like to be a better communicator – if you were what would you be doing differently?”*.

In behavioural contracting the key is to get clearly identifiable outcomes, as “be a better communicator” could mean anything from getting better at email correspondence to being more assertive with people. It is here that those coaches used to the SMART goal-setting model will see similarities. A behavioural model sets out to turn all general objectives into measurable outcomes.

For those who work in a behavioural way all objectives can be turned into specific outcomes as even the most subjectively emotional terminology such as *“I want to feel happier”* can be turned into a measurable outcome with questions like *“If you were happier what would you be doing, feeling or thinking that is different to now?”*

In a behavioural model it is crucial to get this part of the process clearly right, as it is these outcomes that will be measured at the end of the coaching.

There will always be instances where additional information comes to the fore later in the coaching process that has an impact on the overall outcome. No method of working can

Behavioural Contracting

provide a one hundred per cent hit rate and, in such cases, the contract can be modified at a later date.

If the contract has to be amended then the amendments also need to be agreed by all parties. Having said that, it is more likely that any changes will be in addition to rather than in place of what has been agreed.

Example of specific outcome measurements:

Outcome Measurements

To be able to identify the skills associated with effective speaking and to demonstrate the use of these with colleagues and senior people in the organisation.

To identify and implement more formal communication systems in the department such as email correspondence and its use and weekly staff meetings.

Part Four – Confidentiality, Feedback and Reviews

The challenge of coaching in organisations is the need for those sponsoring the coaching to have some feedback about the coaching process and the need for client confidentiality.

Therefore agreeing what feedback is required and how it will be delivered is essential. When working with individual clients the need is only for the client and coach to be clear about what confidentiality means and to agree the kind of review process that will take place.

Example of how feedback structure might be agreed in with an organisational sponsor:

Feedback Procedures

To provide a written report at the end of the coaching process.

Behavioural Contracting

(It is also useful to keep a record of the number of sessions agreed and the price of the coaching contract)

Example of a review structure that might be agreed with an individual client:

Review Procedures

To undertake a formal review of work at session three, halfway through the agreed six sessions.

Confidentiality

It is essential that all parties take into account all aspects relating to the law and duty of care.

Additional agreements/details (if any)

If there are any aspects that affect or amend the normal confidentiality process then these should be clearly stated. This section is more likely to be of use within an Executive or Business coaching scenario.

Example of such information:

Whilst recognising the need for confidentiality and discretion, all parties take into account all aspects relating to law and duty of care.

Additional agreements/details (if any)

.....

.....

.....

Part Five – Signing off

The final part of the behavioural contracting process is simply to sign off the agreement. In organisational settings the coach will need to take the form away for typing sending copies to all relevant parties for signature once this has been done.

However, if the coach is using a behavioural contract with an individual client this may not be the case and the contract could be signed off at the end of the first session. The coach would need to ensure that he or she could photocopy the document so that both the client and the coach would have a copy.

Some coaches want the client to take the form, or a copy of the form, away after the first session to consider the points raised and then ask the client to sign off at the next meeting once he or she has had time to reflect on the contents.

Organisational sign-off

Corporate Sponsor Name: *Date*

Coaching Client Name: *Date*

Coach Name: *Date*

Individual client sign-off

Client Name: *Date*

Coach Name: *Date*

Summary

A behavioural contract aims to ensure that everyone involved in the coaching process is clear about expectations, outcomes and delivery. Many coaches find behavioural contracting a challenge and this may be due more to a lack of practice than through any fault of the process itself.

Fully completed behavioural contract for an individual

Client Name: Sue Joseph
Coach Name: Jane Helper
Date of initial meeting: 10.1.10

Coaching Objectives

1. To feel more confident in myself
2. To be more assertive with others

Outcome Measurements

1. To identify my negative thinking style, the ways in which this holds me back and to be able to demonstrate identifiable counter measures that I am able to apply to a variety of situations at work and in my personal life.
2. By the end of the coaching I will be able to identify and use a range of assertiveness techniques and demonstrate situations that I have used these techniques in.

Number of sessions agreed: 6
Contract value: £3,000.00
Additional Information: None

Feedback Procedures

1. A formal review will take place during session 3

Confidentiality

Whilst recognising the need for discretion and confidentiality, all parties agree to take into account all aspects relating to the law and duty of care.

Additional agreements/details (if any)

Not applicable

The signatures below indicate:

Agreement to abide by the terms and conditions supplied by Gladeana McMahon Associates

Client Name: Sue Joseph Date: 10.1.10
Coach Name: Jane Helper Date: 10.1.10

References:

1. Caplan, J, 2003, Coaching for the Future, CIPD, London, UK.
2. Skiffington, X, Zeus, P, 2003, Behavioral Coaching: How to build sustainable personal and organisational strength, McGraw Hill, New South Wales, Australia.
3. Neenan, M, Dryden, W, 2002, Life Coaching, A Cognitive-Behavioural Approach, Brunner-Routledge, Sussex, UK.
4. Chapman, T, Best, B, Van Casteren, P, 2003, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK.

About the Author

Gladeana McMahon is an award winning coach, listed as one of the UK's top ten coaches by the Independent and Observer on Sunday. She is an accredited coach, counsellor and



cognitive-behavioural psychotherapist, who is UKCP and UKRC registered.

Gladeana is also an NLP Master Practitioner and Chair of the Association for Coaching UK. She is a Fellow of the Association for Coaching, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, Institute of Management Studies and Royal Society of Arts. She is an internationally published author, broadcaster and trainer of coaches who works as an Executive Transformational and Personal Development Coach.