50+ INNOVATIVE COACHING

MANUAL

50⁺

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The project 50 + Innovative Coaching is a European project set up by partners LEVANTO (Belgium), BFI Wien (Austria) Promente (Austria) Central College Nottingham (UK), CIS (Italy), ITSC (Romania) and EUROMASC (Norway).

The base of the project is the development of an ECVET-matrix[1] on coaching skills. The European Commission is promoting the development of ECVET-matrices in order to describe and identify competences needed for professions in different sectors. EU's Leonardo da Vinci Programme for vocational training is funding projects that realise ECVET-matrices.
50+ Innovative Coaching is one of those projects.
The 50+ IC project has developed a complete ECVET based qualification matrix covering the criteria for a coach 50+.
The training 50+ IC is based on the learning outcome descriptions of the matrix. This will secure that training targets and course content are in compliance with the qualification criteria.

Pdf
ECVET matrix for a coach 50+

You can find the ECVET matrix for a coach 50+ on the website www.ic50plus.eu.

1 The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a technical framework for the transfer and recognition of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification.

Situation on the labour market

The European countries are facing an ageing population without precedent. This has its consequences for the labour market. The amount of employees who leave the labour market is increasing at a fast pace. In addition entry of young workers is decreasing, with the implication that people have to work longer to keep the labour market in balance. Therefore it is necessary to increase the low participation rate of older employees.

The project started with a research into the situation of the 50+ workforce in the different countries. The general research with facts and statistics was complemented with interviews in SME's to have an insight into the reality of the workplace. In general there were similarities in the employment rate and in the perception of workers 50+ in the SME's. Promoting the employability of older workers and keeping them in work for longer is a central issue. Although countries take measures to increase the participation rate, the existing culture towards older employees – in the political environment, in society as well as in companies – is still conservative. This affects the attitude, prejudices and thoughts regarding working longer.

The 50+ Innovative Coaching project

The scope of the European 50+ IC project is to create innovative ways of supporting people 50+ in the workplace. Supporting this group will help them to develop further and retain the skills, knowledge and history they bring to the business. Coaching is an effective way of doing so.

The partners in the project developed a programme to train participants to become a coach 50+. The objective of the training is to give the participants the necessary information, tools and methods to sharpen their competences as a coach. In a solution focused way they learn to coach employees aged 50+ in order to reach the perspective of a new, positive turn in their careers. The coach acts within the context of the company and is aware of the consequences for the colleagues, for the content of the function, for possible adjustments to the workplace…

We would like to point out that supporting older employees by introducing coaches 50+ will only have results when it is included in an age-related policy and an openness towards 50+ employees. In Module 1 this topic will be discussed.
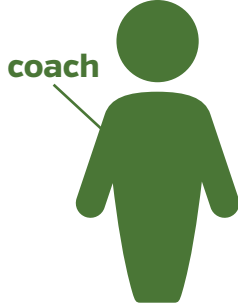
coach

Target group

The training is intended for participants who already have a general basis or a practical experience in coaching people and have built up coaching skills whether on a formal or an informal way. Essentially we are targeting participants who have experiences of working with groups. Depending on the job or position of the coach there will be a different starting point:

- **Manager**: has a leadership role and is in this point of view not necessarily neutral. This can mean that coachees will not speak entirely freely especially when they are stuck on items in their career. Trust is essential to fulfill the role as a coach. This will be part of the 50+IC training, particular in the practice of the solution focused coaching method.

- **HR-manager or mentor**: monitoring the competences of employees is inherent to the job and this makes a neutral role more evident.

- **External coach**: is a professional and the neutral role is more obvious. Other factors such as insight into the culture of the company, the relationships between colleagues and career possibilities can be barriers to achieve a good result.

The results of the project 50+ Innovative Coaching are on the website.

Set up of the manual

The manual has been produced to give an overview of the content of the training. It is in the first place meant for trainers 50+ IC but also the participants of the training or companies can find it useful.

The 5 modules of the training can be used in a flexible way depending on the knowledge and the experience of the participants.

In every module we give a short background section followed by the approach and the tools that can be used.

50+

TRAINING PROGRAM

Structure

hours

Module 1
The Company coach

Explanation and discussion	3,5
Practice	4

Module 2
Solution focused coaching

Explanation and discussion	3,5
Practice	4

Module 3
Lifelong learning

Explanation and discussion	3,5
Practice	4

Module 4
The employee in balance

Explanation and discussion	3,5
Practice	4

Module 5
Evaluation & monitoring

Explanation and discussion	3,5
Practice	4

Total	**37,5**

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the training programme participants will be able to...

...articulate what coaching is

...understand the challenges for the 50+ age group

...define the benefits of coaching and how it positively affects organisations

...structure a coaching session

...identify and train key coaching skills

...use different approaches, tools and techniques

...practice a solution focused coaching conversation
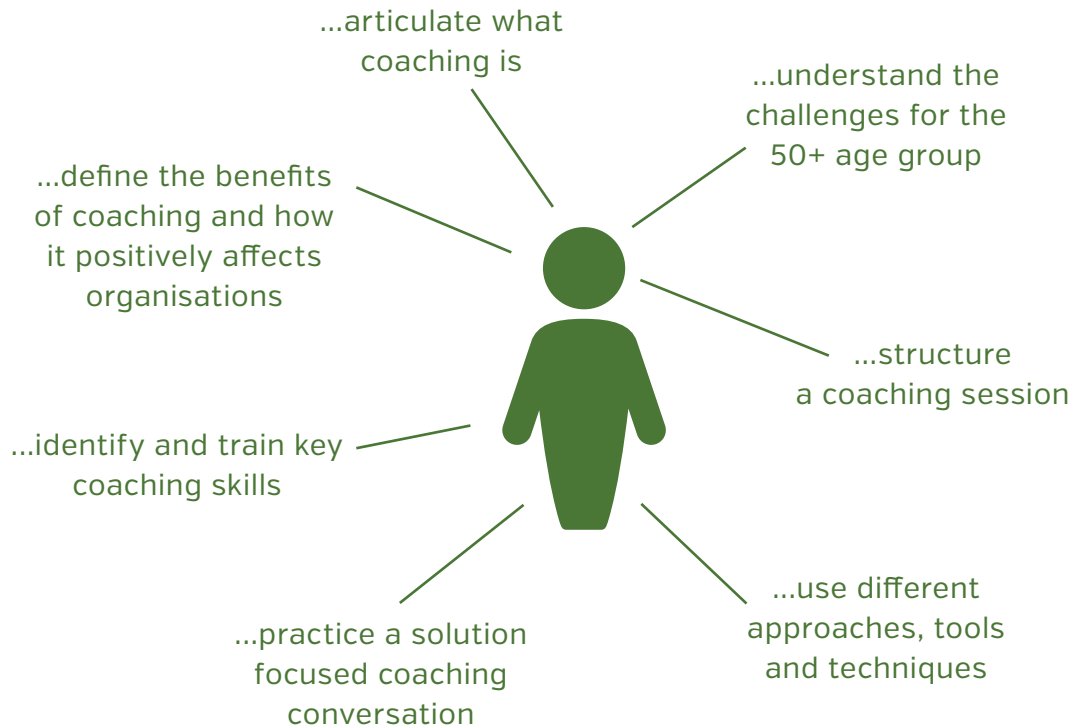
Training methods

Within a pleasant learning environment, the training alternates between the following methods:

Time

Discussion and reflection: 30% of the time.

Exercises by participants in pairs or small groups and feedback on the exercises: 50% of the time.

30%

50%

20%

Explanation (theory, model, principle or technique): 20% of the time.
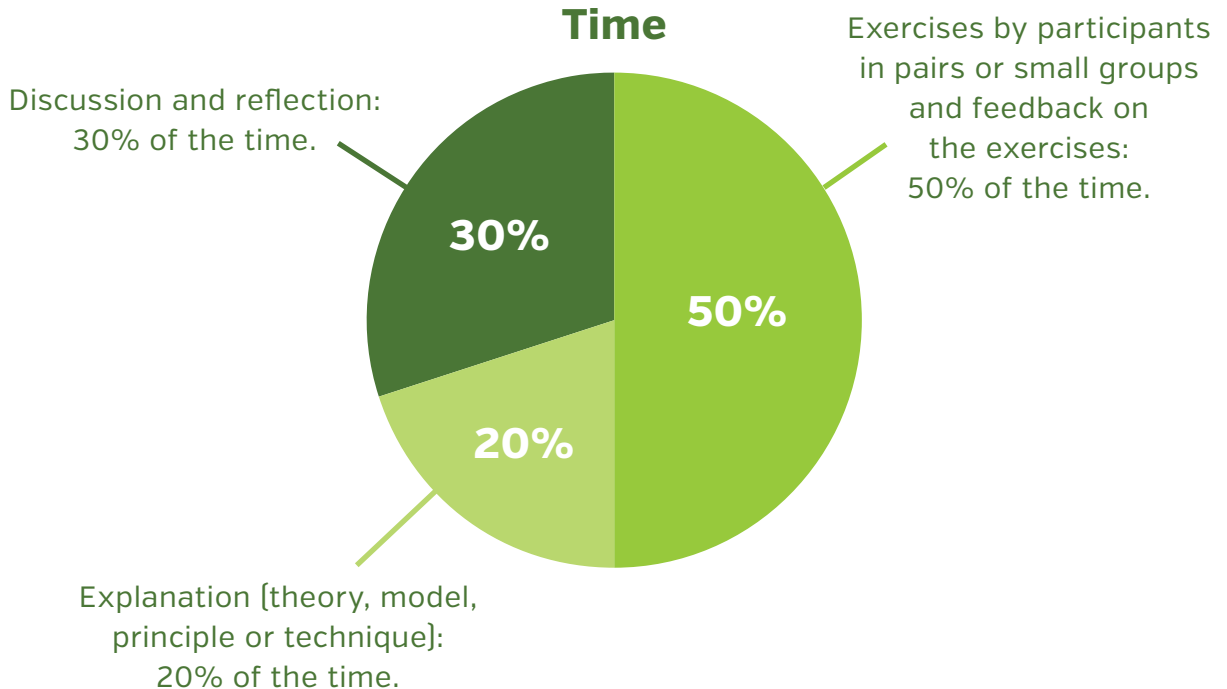
Coaching skills will be practiced using role plays. Case studies of participants may be included and discussed.

Expectations of the trainees

Beforehand the trainees will be asked about their expectations. During the programme the participants will be addressed and they will be coached in the skills and development they wish to work on.
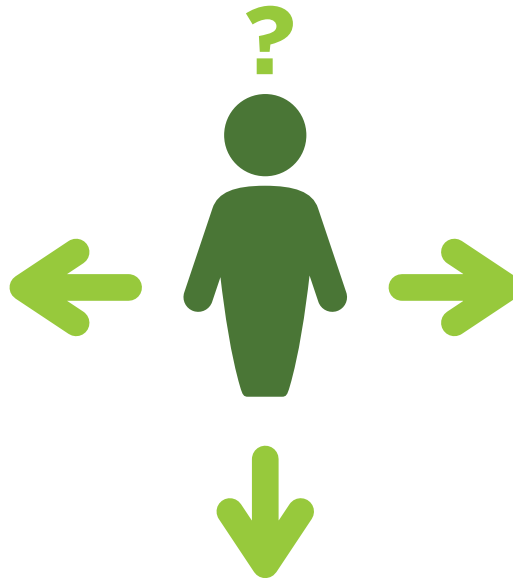
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MODULE 1

THE COMPANY COACH

Objectives

- Have a balanced idea of the situation and perception of employees 50+.

- Explore the benefits and challenges of employing and retaining staff aged 50+ as part of the workforce.

- Get the essence of an age related policy and the connection with the tool coaching 50+.

- Have a profound idea of the meaning and the necessary skills of coaching.

Employment of 50+ workforce (part 1)

Background information

As a background, the trainer gives information, facts and statistics on employment of 50+ workforce in a national and European context.

Reinforce a positive image of people 50+ in a company

1. Stereotypes and prejudices reduced

The negative image of workers aged 50+ in society and companies often prevents the recruitment and retention of these persons. Prejudices as "older workers don't fit in an energetic and fast-paced workplace", "they can't keep up and don't want to work as hard as is required" or "older workers are unwilling to share job knowledge and skills" are deeply embedded in the fabric of society.

Nevertheless there is evidence that older workers exhibit greater motivation and engagement in a stimulating environment than younger workers. They may require somewhat more time to learn a new skill or process, evidence indicates they have greater retention, higher learning achievement and are far more likely to complete their field of study.

Article
Older worker stereotypes

Perhaps we need to re-examine if we are confusing activity and motion with efficiency and results. Continued reliance on the characterization of a workplace as fast-paced and constantly changing is no basis for excluding older job seekers.

Older workers are also essential in 'knowledge transfer' to their younger colleagues. Observation indicates that older workers are exceptionally effective at sharing information and guiding younger colleagues.

2. Stimuli to keep on working
At a national level: to keep older workforce engaged, most European countries have introduced measures to reduce labour costs for employers.

At company level: companies, especial SME's, see the technical competences, the familiarity with the company and the acquired expertise as stimulating factors in order to retain older workers.

At the level of the employee: besides the financial aspect, employees see the recognition and appreciation of their skills and knowledge as stimulating factors as well as enjoying the social contacts with their colleagues.

3. Age related policy

To avoid that a great deal of knowledge and experience is lost from the organization, the employer has to invest in the careers of (older) workers and has to support them to maintain an active and interesting career. He should antici-pate the natural aging process of people and pay attention to the relationship between person's stages of life and their career phases. The balance between workload and capacity is an important aspect to keep the employees 50+ fit until they draw their pension.

Research shows that employers need to manage and develop their employees aged 50+ more effectively. This can be organised by introducing an age-related policy into the company.
The age-related policy aims to retain and optimize com-petences, knowledge and experience of employees, taking into account changing needs and abilities of every employee. This HR policy is not only directed towards 'older' employees, but covers all ages and therefore all life stages.

Evidence has shown that age-related policy leads to more appreciation and a stronger motivation of the employees. 50+ Innovative Coaching is meant to be a tool to enhance the employability of workers aged 50+ by coaching in a solution focused way.

Article
Waiting for age related HR policies support employability

pdf
Age diversity practices in Belgian organisations

Coaching 50+ (part 2)

What is coaching?

Coaching is supporting the coachee in setting appropriate goals. The coach facilitates the exploration of needs, motivations, desires, skills and thought processes in order to assist the individual in making real, lasting change. It's the art of asking good questions, knowing when and how to ask them and actively listen to the answer. Focused questions raise awareness and awareness is the start of someone choosing to take responsibility for change.

How?

- Observe, listen and ask questions to understand the situation

- Use questioning techniques to facilitate own thought processes in order to identify solutions and actions (see module 2, Solution Focused coaching)

- Creatively apply coaching tools and techniques

- Encourage a commitment to action and the development of lasting personal growth and change

- Maintain an appreciative, positive regard for the coachee: be at all times supportive and non-judgmental of the views, lifestyle and aspirations of the coachee

- Encourage the coachee to take responsibility for his/her own professional development

- Evaluate the process and the outcomes of the coaching trajectory and ensure the coachee is achieving his/her personal goals

Competences:

- Ask effective questions

- Listen actively without judgment

- Ask for clarification

- Have sensory acuity

- Raise awareness and responsibility

- Give and receive feedback

- Handle information with integrity

- Be able to build a good rapport

- Have outstanding observational skills (self-aware and aware of others)

- Have an understanding of the specific work situation and the opportunities of employers 50+

- Be able to assess the balance between workload and capacity

- Be able to deal with reluctance

The training

This module gives the necessary background to the future coach to start the coaching's process. By discussion and exercise the participant will be able to detect the necessary skills to become a coach 50+ and what it needs to sharpen them.
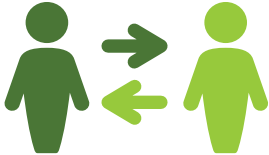
Approach

Presentation of information with facts and statistics
Interactive exercises and discussions: participants generate ideas in small groups or pairs. The trainer leads the plenary discussion to top up ideas and ensure the main points of the theory are covered.
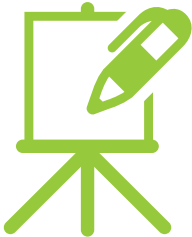
Tools

Power point presentation and hand-outs
Flip chart, post it notes
Exercises in pairs

50[+]

MODULE 2

SOLUTION FOCUSED COACHING

Objectives

- To introduce the solution focused approach
- To explain and to practice solution focused techniques and tools
- To offer techniques in order to develop win-win solutions by mediation

Solution Focused Coaching (SFC)

The solution focused approach was developed in the early 1980s by a research group in the USA. They began to experiment with 'what might work' instead of finding 'what caused the problem'. In coaching it has turned out as a powerful technique in helping the coachee exploring the world of possibilities, seeing new solutions and perspectives.

Starting from the desired target, focusing on what is already going right helps the coachee in designing the 'possible future' and to identify small steps to reach the goal.

The method seems simple in theory. Because we are not used to it, the difficulty lies in staying focused on the positive. To train your solution focused skills demands a lot of practice.

A SFC conversation consists of six main steps:

1. **Defining the goal**: what do you want to achieve?

2. **Preferred future**: how would it be once your goal is achieved?

3. **Positive experiences**: What has worked? What has helped you so far?

4. **Scale question**: on a scale of 1 to 10 where do you stand now? What has brought you here?

5. **Concrete action**: if you are one step further on the scale, how would this be? Which concrete step can you take?

6. **Conclusion**: what can you take with you from this conversation? How will you proceed?

Desired situation

10

How would you like your situation to become?

9

8

Past succes

When were things already better?

7

6

One step forward

5

Visualizing one step higher on the scale

Current position
Where are you now on the scale?

4

3

What is there between 0 and your current position? What has worked: solutions, recourses, successes, useful circumstances.

2

1

0

The scaling question © Coert Visser

Mediation

When a person 50+ is stuck due to a conflict in the workplace, the use of the mediation technique is advised. A mediator is the neutral and impartial third party who helps participants (either individuals or teams) to discuss difficult issues and negotiating mutually agreeable solutions to a conflict.

In solution focused mediation the goal is to develop win-win solutions, which encourages collaboration instead of conflict like the win-lose solutions.
Trust, collaboration and responsibility are the main assets to achieve win-win solutions.

The training

The solution focused approach is especially useful for the employees 50+, as it can be more difficult for them to see a professional future with 'possibilities'. It can be that they stay focused on the past experiences and expertise without knowing how to cope with changes in the job and the company. The language of solutions helps the employees to open themselves to new perspectives, new possibilities and opportunities to change the way they act. This can motivate them 'to move' from their comfort zone and take a new step in their career.

In the practical sessions the participants – especially when they are managers – are trained to be a neutral coach with a focus on observation and listening abilities. The role of the coach is to stimulate ownership by the coachee and to refrain from giving solutions.
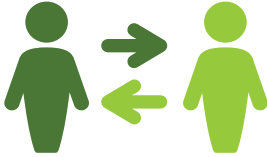
Approach

Each participant brings a case from their own company with a focus on 50+ situations.

For the role play each participant assumes different roles:

- Coachee: experiences the power of the solution focused approach

- Coach: practices the solution focused approach, techniques and tools

- Observer: gives feedback on how the solution focused technique is used during the exercises

Timetable for each coaching session is:

- coaching session 30 minutes

- feedback 10 minutes

The trainer supervises the groups answering questions, supporting the coach during the session with the coachee and giving feedback to the coach.
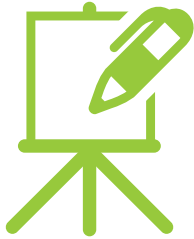
Tools

For the coach: 'Solution Focused Questions' as a reference set of questions
For the observer: 'Observer Sheet' to organise his/her feedback.

Article
Solution-focused Coaching:
Simply Effective

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MODULE 3

LIFELONG LEARNING

Objectives

- To emphasize the importance of Lifelong Learning and its role in our society.
- To know how to stimulate Lifelong Learning for 50+
- To be able to test, identify and discuss learning styles.

Lifelong Learning

For decades Lifelong Learning has been an important instrument to implement in companies as a human resource development strategy. Within the EU a strategic framework has been developed as a basis for European cooperation in education and training.

Nowadays Lifelong Learning is becoming more and more important in our careers: employees have to cope with new technological approaches and IT-applications, they have more responsibility and autonomy in their jobs and the workload can be higher than before. Moreover a career is not as uniform as it was before especially because people have to work for longer. Therefore employees have to become more flexible and need to be open to learn at all times and in different ways.

Lifelong Learning is the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge and skills for either personal or professional reasons. For companies it is important to monitor the acquired knowledge of their employees either by formal or informal learning and to stimulate opportunities to sharpen their skills.
Regarding the 50+ workforce the company has to be aware that people aged 50+ are a heterogeneous group with a variety of accumulated job experiences, life topics and learning experiences. This makes an individual approach necessary.

The training

Specifically for employees aged 50 + continuing to learn is important. Throughout their life and career these people have gained a lot of skills and expertise. Nevertheless it is necessary to update these skills on a regular basis to keep up with rapidly changing techniques and working methods. Providing learning opportunities tailored to the individual is important to increase enthusiasm and motivation.

The role of the coach is to stimulate and motivate the coachee to evolve competences and to take responsibility for their career. The coach helps the coachee to identify his/her learning needs, depending on the goal the coachee wants to achieve. The learning style test helps to find out what

the suited learning methods are. Coach and coachee can explore how the company can provide appropriate learning opportunities and what is needed to realize them.
This way of coaching can open up future perspectives and overcome possible resistance towards continuous learning.
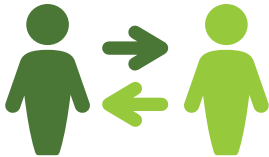
Approach

- Input and presentation of the background of Lifelong Learning
- Exchange of business experiences among the participants
- Apply the learning style test
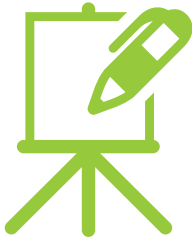
Tools

Learning style test: can be found on various education and psychological platforms. Interesting tests are for example the test elaborated by Honey and Mumford, Halb and Kolb.

Go to the test

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MODULE 4

IN BALANCE:
CAPACITY AND
STRENGTH

Objectives

- To understand the importance of good working conditions
- To know how to analyse the workplace
- To know how to analyse the personal energy balance
- To explore jobcrafting as a possible solution

The importance of good working conditions

Creating good working conditions is a basis to motivate employees and to use and evolve resources. It is important that companies analyse the working conditions of the employees on a regular base to monitor their performance. The analysis should be done in different areas:

Analysis of the workplace

The analysis of the workplace refers to the working environment such as physical load and factors such as the quantity of light, noise and space that can influence the work. On the other hand it also includes working conditions, such as workflow, participation, team spirit and development options. A tool for the analysis of the workplace is the 'Impulse – Test': It is a document with a standardized questionnaire that evaluates the burdens and resources of the workplace.

Analysis of the job performance

The analysis of the job performance is a description of the daily work with a focus on the workload and the work capacity, on the tasks the employee enjoys and the tasks which are harder to carry out. It is important to explore strengths, good cooperation with colleagues and the (line) manager, professional success and development opportunities.

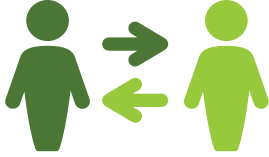## Analysis of personal energy balance

The energy balance shows how much time the coachee uses for everyday activities and if s/he gains or loses energy by doing these activities. Health coaching can be an important method to work on this. It refers mainly to health subjects like stress, work-life-balance, physical exercises, nutrition, recreation, sleep, …

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The training

The obstacles for 50+ workers may lie in different areas. Physical or psychological barriers, need for additional training to catch up with changing ways of working and a lack of perspectives that can cause decreasing motivation. The barriers can be detected by analysis of the workplace and the personal situation. Based on the results of the analysis coach and coachee are able to define the steps that can be taken to improve the situation and overcome possible barriers.
There are different ways to do this. The Solution focused way helps to visualise the 'perfect situation' and to open up the way to get there. Also other tools help to analyse barriers and go for a solution.

Approach

The exercises are organized as follows:

- analysis of the workplace: individual
- analysis of the competences, skills and knowledge: role-play coach and coachee
- analysis energy balance: coach, coachee and observer
- health coaching: coach, coachee and observer
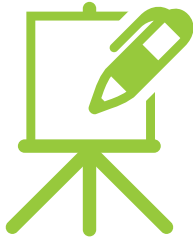
Tools

Analysis of the workplace: Impulse test
Analysis energy balance: Line chart
Health coaching: Spider chart

Go to the impulse test
(German website)

50+

MODULE 5

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Objectives

- To get an insight in evaluation types

- To get an insight in monitoring and feedback

- To improve the skill of feedback conversations

Monitoring the coaching process

During the solution focused conversations the coach can get an insight in the specific work situation and individual background of the coachee s/he guides. The coach will monitor the ongoing professional development of the coachee and keep track of his/her progress and performance trend. This is a chance for the coach to identify opportunities for continuing the coaching.

Monitoring the development of the coachee contains different elements:

Feedback

Basically feedback is information about how we are doing in our efforts to reach a goal. Constructive feedback is delivered with respect and a genuine desire to assist an individual to improve. Giving and receiving feedback is a crucial coaching skill. The coach gets to know the coachee and vice-versa and understands what kind of feedback works best. The coach supports the coachee to link the feedback as much as possible to the preconceived goals. By monitoring the process and the evolution of the coachee, the coach can respond appropriately.

Self-assessment

Through self-assessment the coachee gradually gets more self-insight and understanding of his/her own abilities and performance. We must not forget a person often is well aware of the own strengths and weaknesses. The focus of the self-assessment is gaining ownership. To make this possible it is important the coach creates an open and confidential atmosphere.

Formative evaluation

Formative evaluation is an on-going process that allows given feedback to be implemented during a coaching cycle. It facilitates a continual improvement of the coaching process and helps to achieve the goals and benefits both for the coachee and the company.
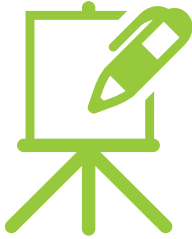
The training

In general the coaching process of employees 50 + requires a specific approach. Being coached, receiving feedback and monitoring are HR-tools that 50+ workers are not necessarily used to in their early careers. It is only in the last decade(s) these methods have been introduced so widely in companies. Being coached and gaining self-insight might evoke some reluctance. The skill of the coach lies in building confidence and making the conversations open and trustful. The coach tries to grow belief in opportunities and new perspectives regardless of age so the coachee can progress step by step towards a renewing career.
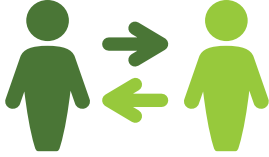
Approach

- Discussion and exchange of evaluation types used.

- Brainstorm on key questions for self-assessment of a 50+ employee

- Role-play self-assessment

- Discussion about effective feedback on reality based experiences

- Role-play: training in the skill of giving and receiving feedback

Tools

Pdf
Facts about feedback

Colophon

Links see the digital version of the manual **www.ic50plus.eu/category/results/**

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pro mente | oö

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