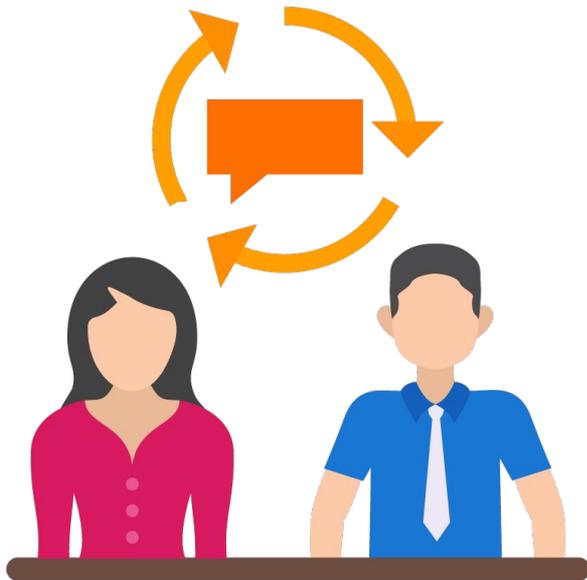


John Zenger and Kathleen Stinnett's

FUEL Model of Coaching



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Background

The FUEL Model of coaching was developed by **John Zenger** and **Kathleen Stinnett**. It was introduced in their renowned 2010 book **The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow**.



What does **FUEL** stand for?

Frame the Conversation

Understand the Current State

Explore the Desired State

Lay out a Success Plan

Overview of the **FUEL** Model

Frame the Conversation



Set the context and focus for conversation.
Agree on purpose, process, and desired outcomes for the discussion.

Understand the Current State



Help the individual gain awareness about their current situation to determine their perspective.

Explore the Desired State



Help the individual to think about and determine their desired state. Generate multiple alternative paths to achieve that desired state.

Lay out a Success Plan



Help the individual create a detailed action plan with specific, time-bound steps to be taken to achieve the goal.

1. **Frame** the Conversation

Set the context and the focus for the conversation

If coach initiates the conversation

Identify the behavior or opportunity

- I would like to talk about.....[the issue]

Determine the purpose or outcomes of the conversation

- By the end of the conversation I would like to accomplish...
- What else would you like to make sure that we address?

Agree on the process for the conversation.

- Here's how I thought we might proceed...
- How does that sound?

If coachee initiates the conversation

Identify the behavior or opportunity

- What is the most important thing for us to focus on?

Determine the purpose or outcomes of the conversation

- What would you like to accomplish in this conversation?
- How might I help you with this issue?

2. Understand the Current State

Explore the individual's point-of-view before sharing your own

Understand the coachee's point of view

Determine the consequences of continuing on the current path

Offer your perspective, *if appropriate*

- How do you see this situation?
- What is happening?
- What is working well?
- What makes this challenging?
- How might you have contributed to this situation?
- How might others see the situation?

- What impact is this having on you? On others?
- What are the consequences if the situation doesn't change?
- How does this influence your goals and what you are trying to accomplish?
- What are the long-term implications?

- Could I share some observations I have made?
- Could I offer some other consequences to consider?

3. Explore the Desired State

Identify the target and generate multiple paths to achieve the end state

Understand the vision for success

- What would you like to see happen here?
- What would the ideal state look like?

Set goals and performance expectations

- What are your goals? What would you like to accomplish?
- Here's how I see it...

Explore alternative paths of action

- What might be some approaches you can take?
- What else might work?
- Could I offer you a couple of thoughts? You might want to consider...

Explore possible barriers or resistance

- What are the major barriers preventing this change from happening?
- Where would the biggest resistance to this change come from?

4. Lay out a Success Plan

Create the detailed, actionable plan and follow-through that will lead to goal attainment

Develop and agree on an action plan and timelines

Enlist support from others

Set milestones for follow-up and accountability

- What specific actions will help you achieve your goal?
- What will your first steps be? When will you start?
- Who can help hold you accountable?
- How will you stay focused on your goals and plans?

- Who can support you moving forward?
- How can I support you in moving forward?
- How can I support you? (Here's how I see my role...)

- Let's review our plans...
- When should we touch base on this again?

“It is a framework, not a cage” - A friend and colleague of Zenger and Stinnett,

upon hearing a conversation about the FUEL Model

“Because it is a framework and not a cage, you may find that you don’t follow it in a linear fashion or utilize every step of the process. In fact, you may utilize only one or two key parts of the overall process when time is of the essence and you have just moments to talk with a colleague” (Zenger and Stinnett, 2010, Kindle Edition).

The **FUEL** Model in Action

Ideas for utilizing this coaching model in real-life applications.

Joseph Abraham recommends the FUEL Model be used when:

1. Providing a **tough performance feedback**
2. Helping your team-member **assess continuous learning and development** by asking about what's working and what's not working
3. Specific **skill development**
4. **Career planning** conversation
5. Solving a **performance issue** that's related to relationship or a task problem

Abraham, J. (2015). [How to use the FUEL model of Coaching – A Step by Step Guide for Leaders](#)

The **FUEL** Model in Action

Ideas for utilizing this coaching model in real-life applications.

Tim Hawkes, managing director of coaching firm Unlimited Potential on the FUEL Model:

1. It is “best suited to the **more experienced coach**; someone who is comfortable with their ability to avoid leading their coachee or asking closed and ‘shopping list’ questions”
2. It is “a great model for senior people within an organization to use (as opposed to say an outsider contracted as coach).”

The **FUEL** Model in Practice

Start with the What:

- Think of a challenging conversation that you either a) need to have with someone, or b) that you have had with someone that may not have gone as well as you would have liked. In this exercise you will either develop a plan to address this challenging conversation, or reflect and develop a “better case scenario” using the FUEL Model of coaching
- What are the unique challenges to having this conversation?
 - Personal or professional relationships?
 - Difficult feedback?
 - Feeling underprepared or inexperienced in this scenario?
 - What if it goes terribly? What is the worst case scenario?
 - Have you attempted to address this previously and have not seen change?
 - You don't know where to start
- Start by jotting down some of the challenges that you see/feel as you prepare to facilitate this conversation.

Frame the Conversation

Identify the behavior or opportunity

- For your chosen scenario take some time to reflect on the following questions
 - What is bringing this situation to your forefront?
 - Why is this coming up now?
 - Think of some examples of the challenge
 - What impact is this situation or behavior having on the learning/work environment?

Determine Purpose or outcomes

- What are you hoping to accomplish by having this conversation?
 - Ensure the outcome is realistic
 - Ensure it is specific and measurable
 - Determine time frame for improvement

Process for Conversation

- When should this conversation take place
- Where should the conversation take place
- How are you going to initiate the conversation
- Do you need anything from the coachee prior to the meeting?
- What does the coachee need from you prior to the conversation?
 - Heads up
 - Context
 - Preparation
- Take some time to jot down or practice your approach- where and how to begin this conversation
 - Avoid false starts
 - Acknowledge discomfort if it exists
 - Give time/space for them to respond
 - Let them know they will be part of the process, not just feedback, but collaboration

Understand the Current State

- **Understand the Coachee's Perspective**

- Write down 2-3 questions that you might ask about the current situation to learn how the coachee sees the situation.
 - How do you see the situation?
 - What is working well?
 - What could be working better?
 - Do you see this as a situation needing to be addressed?
 - What is your perspective?

- **Determine Consequences of continuing Current Path**

- Prepare some talking points for this stage of the conversation that you can refer to if the conversation isn't moving in a productive direction
 - What impact is this having on the learning/work environment?
 - Who else may be impacted by this?
 - What is your plan if this does not improve?

- **Offer your perspective**

- Write 2-3 things that you would like to share with the coachee if they do not come up through their observations
 - Has there been a change in performance/behavior that you have observed?
 - What do you think is causing the concern/behavior?
 - Have you tried to address this differently with the coachee in the past?

Explore the Desired State

Continue to think about your chosen conversation and think about the Desired State you are hoping to achieve beginning with this conversation

- **Understand the Vision for Success**
 - What does the ideal scenario look like for you?
 - What are specific behaviors or targets you would like to see from the coachee
- **Set Goals and Performance Expectations**
 - Think of 3-5 indicators of success for your situation
 - What is the time frame for the desired improvement
- **Explore Alternative Paths of Action**
 - Think of 2-3 questions that you might use to engage the coachee in the goal development
 - Think of at least one alternative path forward to offer if the coachee is struggling to come up with ideas.
- **Explore Possible Barriers or Resistance**
 - Think of at least two potential barriers that may prevent the coachee from achieving the defined outcomes
 - Think of one question that you could ask the coachee to explore barriers to goal achievement.

Lay out a Success Plan

Now let's develop a plan for success!

- **Develop and agree on an action plan and timelines**

Think about and write down some ways that you as the coach can support the success of the coachee.

- Develop 2-3 questions that will help you facilitate this stage of the conversation with your coachee
 - What is step #1 in achieving these goals
 - If you need to, narrow the focus on one aspect of the desired outcomes
 - How can your conversation create buy-in and/or ownership from the coachee

- **Enlist support from others**

Think about who might be able to help with this: are there other coachees/employees who may be able to help the coachee accomplish these outcomes?

- What is your role as the coach in supporting the coachee?
 - Think of at least one question that you might use to solicit this from the coachee
- Prepare some talking points to help the coachee if they are having trouble with coming up with ideas

- **Set milestones for follow-up and accountability**

Now that you have an framework for developing an action plan with your coachee let's think about how you can create accountability and work with the coachee to develop a timeline and milestones to measure improvement

- Think about what your ideal timeline is, prepare some notes for use in your conversation
 - What is realistic from your point of view
 - What is an ideal timeframe for check-ins and feedback
 - What is your last resort time frame, what is your maximum time frame you will allow

Reflection

1. What was the most challenging aspect of preparing for this conversation?
2. What questions do you have after going through this activity?
3. Is this a model that you could see yourself utilizing for this conversation?
If so why?
If not why not?
4. What additional resources would be helpful in preparing for this conversation?
5. Can you think of other scenarios or situations where this model might be helpful?
6. What questions can we help to answer regarding this model of coaching?

References

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