



LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Unlocking Performance: Maturity and Coachability Matter Most

The universal truth about performance reviews is that everyone experiences unease about assessments and feedback. The real goal of performance assessment is to help each person identify areas for improvement, close skill gaps, and prepare to confidently tackle new challenges in their career in a systematic way. However, the collateral damage the process can create to morale in the organization can be significant and debilitating to teams in the pursuit of delivering business value. To recognize and address the intent versus outcomes challenge, it becomes crucial to focus on qualities that foster growth and resilience within teams.

When considering performance differentiation, two qualities stand out: **Maturity** and **Coachability**. Let us explore what these mean and why they matter. In this document, I am reflecting on my own experiences, hard learnings, and insights from mentors to outline variables that can help overcome the fear, deliver consistently differentiated performance and skill growth while maximizing business value.

MATURITY

Maturity is about seeing the bigger picture - understanding business goals, recognizing priorities, and contributing thoughtfully to outcomes. It is not just about age or years in the workplace, it is about showing sound judgment, making clear decisions, and aligning your actions with organizational objectives.

COACHABILITY

Coachability is the willingness and ability to accept guidance, adapt to new directions, and actively grow from feedback. It is about listening, learning, and converting insight into action and demonstrating the humility to evolve.

Maturity and Coachability Matter at Every Career Stage

Maturity and coachability are qualities you can build at every stage of your career and are not relevant only to early-career professionals. Early-career professionals are building technical skill mastery and may not fully appreciate how their work fits into the business strategy. Meanwhile, seasoned experts and managers can become indifferent to how their expertise translates to effectiveness in business outcomes.

Gaps in coachability show up through several diverse symptoms. Imagine an employee who receives feedback but reacts defensively. The conversation stalls, trust erodes, and performance plateaus and imperils an opportunity to grow. On the other hand, a professional who listens with curiosity, reflects, and adapts turns feedback into momentum. Over time, that openness compounds - improving collaboration, sharpening judgment, and accelerating results.

In short, maturity and coachability are ongoing journeys. By staying open to feedback, seeking context, and learning from every experience, professionals can keep developing these skills. No matter where you are in your professional journey, embracing growth will help you thrive. Take time this week to ask for feedback from a colleague or reflect on a recent challenge—these small actions can accelerate your development and set you apart.

Self-Awareness, Leadership, and Modeling Behavior: A Bridge for Growth

Supervisors and team leads are key to nurturing maturity and coachability in their teams. They encourage curiosity, guide new hires to ask “what, why, and how” questions, and help bridge the gap between technical skills and business impact – independent of career stage. Leaders who regularly discuss project priorities with their team ensures everyone understands how their work fits into the larger goals, building both competence and confidence. As employees develop self-awareness, you also lay the foundation for leadership. Leaders who model maturity and coachability set a powerful example for their teams. Let us connect these ideas with stories that may resonate.

Relatable Scenarios: Everyday Examples

- **Early career employee seeking growth:** An early career engineer actively worked with customers to understand their workflows and how recommendations impacted business operations. They used this input to suggest improvements to the workflow and reports to be more outcome oriented. This is an example of emerging maturity through inquisitiveness and should be celebrated. It is important to stay curious while meeting commitments, ensuring youthful ambition does not compromise work quality or productivity.
- **Team lead connecting work to goals:** A team lead observed that an employee was task-oriented but seemed unconcerned with the purpose or impact of their work. The lead scheduled weekly check-ins to discuss how each assignment contributed to the team goals, and how these connected to the company’s mission, helping the employee gain perspective and motivation – An example of fostering maturity, effective coaching, and leadership. The key in this example is for leaders to balance the time spent explaining the context with accountability to deliver on the work goals.
- **Manager adapting to feedback:** A manager was told their emails were unclear about action items. Rather than ignoring feedback, they requested examples, recognized patterns, and pledged to review their communication. Over time, they simplified structure, clarified intent, and became more explicit about expectations. The impact: fewer follow-up questions, faster decisions, and a team no longer guessing at meaning. It is a clear example of coachability in action - a leader mature enough to own a gap and model the behavior they expect from others. That kind of openness becomes a multiplier for trust, alignment, and team effectiveness. The cautionary tale here is to ensure that leaders are honest, credible and not playing to the galleries - else the loss of trust and buy-in from the team will be significant and erode team effectiveness permanently.

Empower Yourself and Your Team to Grow

Cultivating maturity and coachability is a lifelong journey—and everyone has the power to take the next step. By actively seeking feedback, reflecting on your actions, and connecting your work to bigger goals, you not only boost your own performance but strengthen your team and organization.

The path to improvement is open to all. Start today and watch your impact grow.

Cultivating Maturity and Coachability: Actionable Recommendations

Building maturity and coachability takes intention, practice, and a willingness to step outside your comfort zone. Here are some insights to frame how to strengthen them in your daily work, no matter what your role.

- **Seek and use feedback actively to set improvement goals** — Ask for input from supervisors, peers, and clients, and offer feedback in return. Treat it as an ongoing cycle rather than something reserved for annual reviews. Engage leaders for guidance and calibration. Identify specific skills to strengthen (communication, prioritization, collaboration) and create short, measurable goals you can revisit regularly.
- **Reflect and translate insights into action, connect it to business priorities** — Pause to consider what you’ve heard, capture key takeaways, and outline how you will apply them. Use notes or a journal to track patterns and progress. Before starting a task or project, clarify how it supports team or organizational objectives. Bring this perspective into discussions to stay aligned on impact.