

Coaching Tips for Corporate Guides

This reference guide contains general principles for coaching and suggested topics/questions for each coaching session. Included are:

- Role of Corporate Guide as Coach
- Coaching Communication Frameworks
- Nine-month Coaching Roadmap

Role of Corporate Guide as Coach

As a corporate guide you will serve as an anchor and coach for a CII Fellow (early career professional) in addition to pursuing your own professional development. The Fellow you are matched with should be an individual who is not within your direct reporting relationship. In the role of coach, you will be asked to:

- Commit to monthly coaching meetings (e.g., one hour) with your assigned Fellow for a nine-month timeframe
- Provide a safe haven for open and candid conversations
- Provide insight and guidance on adapting to organizational culture and the unwritten rules
- Help the Fellow think through ways to apply learnings from the assessments, academic sessions and workshops to the workplace.

Coaching Communication Frameworks

This section provides general approaches for communicating with your assigned Fellow during your coaching partnership. The frameworks provided foster active participation from the Fellow and will help you and the Fellow develop greater self-awareness and collectively hone your problem solving skills. The frameworks can be blended or used singularly depending on the discussion at hand.



Process Consultation

Process consultation is a method proposed by Edgar Schein (social psychologist and Professor Emeritus – MIT, Sloan School of Management) that assumes that an individual or client has, within them, the knowledge needed to solve their problems. The coach's role is to help draw this knowledge from them. Overarching principles associated with process consultation include:

1. Focus on being helpful.
2. Stay in touch with the Fellow's current reality.
3. Seek information from the Fellow to fill in the gaps.
4. Remember, it is the Fellow who owns the problem and the solution – not you.
5. Go with the flow in your discussions.
6. Be mindful of the opportune time during the discussion to confront, probe, or offer constructive guidance.
7. Remember your humanness. Errors, wrong assumptions are inevitable – learn from them.

“Unless clients learn to see problems for themselves and think through their own remedies, they will be less likely to implement the solution and less likely to learn how to fix such problems in the future.”

-Edgar Schein

Balancing Inquiry with Providing Advice

Effective coaching involves balancing inquiry (or asking questions) with sharing insights and advice. Knowing how to traverse these two dialogue techniques will enable you to help the Fellow learn as well as become more confident and competent in their problem solving capabilities. Things for you, as coach, to keep in mind include:

- Keep the discussion focused
- Stimulate the discussion with probing questions. Remember to:
 - Ask questions to clarify what happened in a specific situation
 - Explore the Fellow’s emotional response and feelings about the situation
 - Ask questions that help you understand the Fellow’s reasoning or rationale for action taken
- Periodically summarize what has and what has not been dealt with and/or resolved
- Keep the Fellow actively engaged in the discussion (remember they should be talking at least half of the time you have together)
- Know when to balance questioning with providing examples and your insights

Outcome Focused Framework

The outcome focused framework is especially useful when the Fellow has brought a complicated or delicate situation to your attention or appears to be stuck on venting and rehashing a problem. Using this approach you would ask the Fellow questions that help them envision and focus on the desired outcome or results they would like to achieve, such as:

- How have they tried to resolve the situation?
- Have they discussed it with anyone?
- Have they approached their manager/team member?
- What would they like the outcome to be?
- What do they actually have control over?
- What would happen if ___?
- What insights or assistance does the Fellow want from you?

Storytelling

You can use storytelling, where appropriate, to share some of your past or present experiences that relate to your assigned Fellow’s challenges or aspirations. Remember to discuss the things you learned when you took a particular approach to a challenge (e.g., confronting a difficult situation) versus implying that your approach is the best approach for the Fellow. Providing personal examples of your lessons learned will also create an opening for the Fellow to share things about which they may feel somewhat vulnerable.

Role-play Framework

In certain situations, the Fellow may inform you of their concern with an upcoming meeting, conversation, or presentation. It might be beneficial to engage the Fellow in role-playing so that they can rehearse a conversation or approach for a specific situation and obtain feedback from you.

This section provides ways to think about the coaching relationship and how it will evolve. Suggested discussion topics and sample questions are also provided in the Coaching Roadmap.

Milestones in the Coaching Relationship



Coaching Roadmap

Time Period	Milestone	Objectives	Suggested Topics and Sample Questions
Month 1	Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching partners introduced and become acquainted Partners share professional background and relevant personal experiences 	<p>Sample Questions</p> <p><u>Background Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell me about yourself. How long have you been with the organization? What is your role and major responsibilities? Who do you interact with (report to, supervise, engage)? Who are your actions most visible to? What do you consider to be your strengths? Areas for Improvement? What in your life are you most proud of? What other things can you tell me about your professional background? <p><u>Work/Role Specific Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of things motivate you to want to improve/evolve? What do you like most about your work environment? What type of projects are you working on now?

Time Period	Milestone	Objectives	Suggested Topics and Sample Questions
	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners are establishing objectives Partners define how the relationship will be structured for the next 9 months (e.g., when and where to meet; who will schedule meetings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you like least or feel you are tolerating? What kind of stress or pressure are you under right now, and what is causing it? What has been the biggest thing you have had to overcome? <p>Sample Questions</p> <p><u>Clarify Expectations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you like to schedule our monthly meetings? If there is a critical issue, how will we communicate in between meetings? What are the two to three things you would most like to get out of the CII Program? What is your vision for what will be different in a year from now? What are you expecting from our coaching partnership? What do you need most from me today? What resources/support do you need from others? What questions do you have for me, either about me or about our coaching partnership?
Months 2 - 8	Cultivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners develop rapport Partners develop trust Coaching activities are ongoing 	<p>Sample Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would you like to discuss today? What did you find most useful from the last classroom session/workshop?

Time Period	Milestone	Objectives	Suggested Topics and Sample Questions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways were you able to apply this on your job? How is this reflected in your action plan? • What kind of progress are you making on your action plan? • What kind of feedback are you seeking/getting from your co-workers or manager? • What are the three most important things that you have learned about yourself in the past month? • Did you have to deal with any challenges in conducting your work? • How did you address them? • In hindsight, what could you have done differently?
On-going	Evaluation	Partners observe and reflect on coaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the goals you established for the coaching relationship • Provide feedback and suggestions to partner about ways to enhance the coaching relationship • Provide feedback to CII Program Director when solicited
Month 9	Transition/ Redefinition	Partners end the structured coaching relationship and redefine how they want to continue their relationship (e.g., informally)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go out (e.g., lunch/dinner) for final meeting • Share perspectives on how the coaching relationship worked • Express appreciation for each other's time • Discuss options for keeping connected (e.g., coffee/lunch touch base once a quarter, etc.) <p>Sample Questions</p> <p><u>Updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the past year like for you at work?

Time Period	Milestone	Objectives	Suggested Topics and Sample Questions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you find most useful from the last classroom session/workshop? • What kind of progress have you made in the past year on your action plans? • What else would you like to discuss today? <p><u>Reflection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the last year, what aspects of the CII program were most valuable for you? • What have you learned about yourself? • What additional things have you learned about your organization and co-workers? • How will you continue with your professional and personal development? • Do you feel you are adding greater contribution? • Reflecting on our coaching partnership, what was most helpful? What would you have liked to have done differently? <p><u>Expectations Moving Forward</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving forward, how would you like to stay connected?

Recap - General Discussion Topics

- Ask Fellow what they would like to talk about.
- Share activities that both of you have been involved in since your last meeting.
- Ask Fellow to describe how things are going – what’s going well, what’s not going so well.
- Discuss your take-aways from the most recent learning sessions.
- Ask Fellow to discuss their action plans and how they have incorporated assessment results. Share your action plans.
- Compare and contrast perspectives on:
 - Organization or industry culture
 - What contributions are valued
 - How success is measured
- Ask Fellow to describe a specific challenge they are encountering and how they are addressing it.
- Talk about how you have dealt with personal or professional challenges during the course of your career.
- Share your insights on career advancement strategies.
- Share how you have balanced personal life and career and what to expect in your organization or industry.