

Libraries Build Business

Peer-to-Peer Coaching Guide



American Library Association

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries Build Business is a national initiative of the American Library Association (ALA), supported by Google.org, to build capacity in libraries offering programming or services to local entrepreneurs and the small business community. Thirteen public libraries from around the country were identified to participate in the cohort while implementing small business and entrepreneurship programs tailored to the needs of their local community.

In phase one, the project sought to answer the question: *What library-led entrepreneurship models will best help low-income and/or underrepresented entrepreneurs start and grow small businesses?*

Libraries engaged in a peer learning cohort and built capacity in measurement and evaluation as they implemented their program and service models.

In phase two, LBB expanded the peer learning component to build the capacity of libraries offering small business development initiatives and to scale the LBB community. Six LBB libraries were selected to serve as peer coaches to interested library colleagues. These library workers received customized coaching aimed at enhancing performance and achieving short-term and long-term program development goals.

By creating a robust community for discussion and resource-sharing about small business development programming, coaches will sustain LBB's work and ultimately bolster the role of libraries in small business development in communities across the country.

WORKING THE GUIDE

Welcome to the LBB Coaching Guide. This guide aims to provide new coaches with a variety of tools, insights, and strategies to develop and strengthen their coaching practice and have a greater impact on their mentees. Please, feel at liberty to make this guide your own. Jot down new ideas in the notes section, highlight new strategies, revise the tools, or add new resources and case studies.

WHY COACHING?

Coaching is a strategy utilized by many organizations to help identify organizational and individual strengths and development opportunities. Coaching offers strategic guidance on how the LBB community can achieve their small business and entrepreneurship goals.

Coaching can have a transformational impact on the coach and mentee alike. As you build your coaching practice and culture, you will observe higher productivity levels and better performance at work, improved decision-making and communication processes, increased engagement and confidence of coaching partnerships and a better understanding of roles and alignment with intended outcomes. Essentially, coaching will help LBB partners understand what they're doing well and what they need to improve in order to help advance their small business ventures. It is a win-win for all.

Watch this community discussion below, Demystifying Coaching, to gain greater insights into the dynamics of the coaching role:

https://alawash.sharepoint.com/:v:/s/PPAAllStaff/EbW4C4tES6xJmUUWrcqA_ekBZw3fZBmPjfQ074kC6luhtw?e=Kvo3VK

SETTING THE FOUNDATION

Coaching is an inquiry-based process that leads to changes in practice and behaviors and encourages new ways of achieving self-selected goals. LBB's coaching model includes a combination of the following activities:

- The LBB Community: An asynchronous discussion board on Slack
- Individualized coaching plans with each mentee to set up clear expectations for one-to-one appointment schedule and understand needs and goals
- Host regular one-to-one appointments based on mentee's needs
- Host interactive peer networking mixers and/or targeted webinars or trainings
- Check-ins with the coaches' group for support & resource sharing

Trust is the foundation for establishing successful coaching relationships. As a coach, you must engage mentees in a positive and authentic relationship. The quality of the coaching experience depends on your interactions and positive relationship building.

Keep in mind that every point of contact should feel relational rather than transactional.

Consider these tips to guide you, as you cultivate meaningful and productive coaching engagements:

- Demonstrate a sincere curiosity and interest
- Maintain confidentiality
- Listen with empathy
- Build rapport through body language and compassion
- Be 100% mindful
- Be reliable and accountable
- Establish your credibility

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE COACHING SESSION

By now, you are probably wondering what makes an effective coaching session. For starters, you must tailor your sessions to meet the needs and opportunities of each mentee. A one-size fits-all approach doesn't work effectively. Overly general coaching and unfocused conversations can create resistance rather than openness to move forward in the coaching process.

Coaching is about listening with intent to clarify the mentee's personal and communal context, vision, and goals. Effective coaching is always personalized and aims to unlock a mentee's potential to achieve small business development initiatives.

Here are a few coaching strategies to establish rapport and achieve results. Refer to the resource section for more details.

- Give Constructive Feedback and Encouragement
- Focus on Personalization
- Engage Collaboratively
- Remain Respectful
- Active Listening
- Ask Open-Ended Questions
- Effective Goal-Setting
- Encourage an Outcome-Based Focus
- Foster Engagement with Goals
- Provide Support on the Development Journey
- Give Constructive Feedback

THE COACHING ROLE

A coach creates a safe space for mentees to explore new ways of learning to reach self-selected goals. Coaches engage mentees in a series of intentional conversations that empower them to challenge themselves and maximize their performance. Coaches are responsible for reviewing resources and materials, talking through ideas, offering feedback or advice on program start-up and implementation, and connecting the mentee to resources and others in the field.

Guiding principles for LBB Peer Coaches:

- Aim to get the best performance out of an individual or team
- Keep discussions focused on a clear goal
- Work with the mentee to identify the goal
- Encourage new ways of thinking, exploring lots of different possibilities
- Provide constructive feedback
- Ask relevant questions and listen to the responses
- Gently and effectively tease out the best from your mentee
- Actively listen in a non-judgmental stance

LBB Peer Coaches can:

- Review materials and provide feedback
- Listen to ideas or challenges
- Connect to resources and other colleagues
- Offer advice and suggestions based on your former experience(s)

LBB Peer Coaches should not:

- Create materials for a program
- Share private documents from their programs
- Broker relationships with partners or funders
- Officially represent the Libraries Build Business program, the American Library Association, or Google.org

Whether you are new to coaching or a seasoned coach, reflecting on your practice and identifying growth opportunities, will foster a culture of coaching in your library and strengthen the core competencies needed to be an effective coach.

Take a moment to assess your coaching competencies by completing the following [Coaching Self-Assessment and Checklist](#).

VISION FOR SUCCESS

Having a clear vision for each coaching engagement helps to provide clarity of roles, mutual expectations, and what can be expected to move toward the desired goal. It helps to answer these questions:

Where are you now? Where do you want to be? How do you get there?



Check out the 5 Ways Coaches Can Inspire a Vision with Skill:

- **Use metaphors** – Metaphors are perhaps the fastest way to share an idea. Metaphors can also help engage emotions and bring EQ into the equation. A metaphor for big projects can be seen as “like an epic adventure.” This can connect to our coaching values- adventure and big impact-to the work before us.
- **Paint the story** – What is the current state? What is the desired future state? *The challenge is the opportunity for change, and value is in the change.* The better you grasp the current state, your mentees will believe your suggestions for a future state.
- **Draw your vision** – Make it a simple picture. Seriously, think “What would the headline be?”, or “What would the movie poster be?” If you can’t draw your vision, mentees may have a tough time trying to “see” where you’re going.
- **Paint the ecosystem** – Who are the players in the system and the “centers of gravity”? What are the key levers we can pull? What are the inputs and outputs as we walk the ecosystem? This is how we can amplify our impact, and build a platform for optimum success.
- **Paint the story over time** — How does time change things? Can you chunk up the vision and tell a story of incremental value? What will it look like in 1 month? 6 months? 1 year? It’s one thing to have a great picture of the future, but a lot of people will need to understand how you can make this story unfold.

Use the [Vision Board Tool](#) to engage your mentee in envisioning their desired future and success.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN COACHING AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

When it comes to coaching, emotional intelligence is essential. When both parties have a high degree of self-awareness and self-regulation, communication flows smoothly, allowing coaching to be facilitated successfully. On the other hand, low emotional intelligence can serve as an inhibitor to those receiving coaching if they lack self-awareness or are highly resistant and disruptive.

When you consider your coaching relationships, being able to manage emotions is critical when giving and receiving feedback, listening with empathy, and dealing with challenging situations or conflicts. Coaches that are more fluent in understanding emotions, listening with empathy, create a coaching culture where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to collaborate.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is the building block for emotional intelligence. SEL is a process through which adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Based on the CASEL research, there are five SEL competencies:

Self-Awareness: The ability to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.

Self-Management: The ability to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.

Social Awareness: The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.

Relationship Skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.

Responsible Decision-Making: The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

Do you know your EQ?

Take a moment to complete the [Adult-SEL-Self-Assessment](#). Keep in mind that competencies in the “rarely” category are your areas of opportunity for growth and competencies in the “often” area are your strengths.

Read each statement in light of your coaching role and rate yourself accordingly. If a statement does not apply to you, draw a line through the rating box. As you review your scores, search for patterns of strengths and growth opportunities.

Reflections:

- Were there things that surprised you?
- Were there things that confirmed what you already knew about yourself?
- Select one or two areas you believe would help you better support your social-emotional learning?

Refer to the strategies below to support your growth in these areas.

Here are 10 [EQ Strategies](#).

COACHING PROFILE

The client profile provides LBB's coaches with an understanding of the mentee's talents, personality, and emotional intelligence factors to leverage their strengths and help them to achieve their goals. Use this [Coaching Client Profile](#) tool to capture this vital information. You can also use this edited tool, developed by LBB coaches, [LBB Coaching Engagement Guide](#).

ARE YOU AN ACTIVE LISTENER?

Coaches who listen actively tend to get the most out of their coaching discussions and tend to be better coaches overall.

Use this [Active Listening Self-Assessment](#) to think about how actively you listen. Check the box next to the number in the column that best describes your listening habits.

ACTIVE LISTENING TIPS:

- Paraphrase what the speaker says without interpreting his/her words.
- Be cautious not to parrot what the speaker has said.
- Follow up by inviting the speaker to clarify anything you might not have understood or that you missed.

*Remember: Active listening is about **EMPATHY!***

Active Listening can help you understand, clarify and/or de-escalate a conflict. Check the [Active Listening Guidelines](#) and [Active Listening in Virtual Spaces](#) for additional strategies.

COACHING ENGAGEMENT PLAN

At the beginning of the coaching engagement, it is important to understand the mentee's strengths, areas of growth, and anticipated coaching goals. Use the [Coaching Goals Planning Sheet](#) to document this information.

After a coaching session, you may feel great because it went well. Debriefing and following up after each coaching session will help reinforce improved habits and behaviors, as your mentee moves closer to their goal.

as your mentee moves closer to their goal. Use this coaching session **Exit Ticket** to help you keep track of progress, strategies that are effective and what tweaks need to be made to the coaching work scope.

Consider the following questions after each coaching session:

- What can I do to support the mentee's development between now and our next coaching meeting?
- What did I learn from this meeting that I didn't know going in?
- What did the mentee learn? What key messages were reinforced in the meeting?

RESOURCES

The resources listed below will help enhance your coaching practice and effectiveness. Explore these helpful websites, recommended readings, and tools to support transformational coaching partnerships and emotionally intelligent conversations:

- [Development Without Limits](#)
- [Coaching Questions: A Coach's Guide to Powerful Asking Skills](#)
- [The Heart of Coaching: Using Transformational Coaching to Create a High-Performance Coaching Culture](#)
- [How to Change Your Social Brain](#)
- [The Collaborate for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning](#)

NOTES

