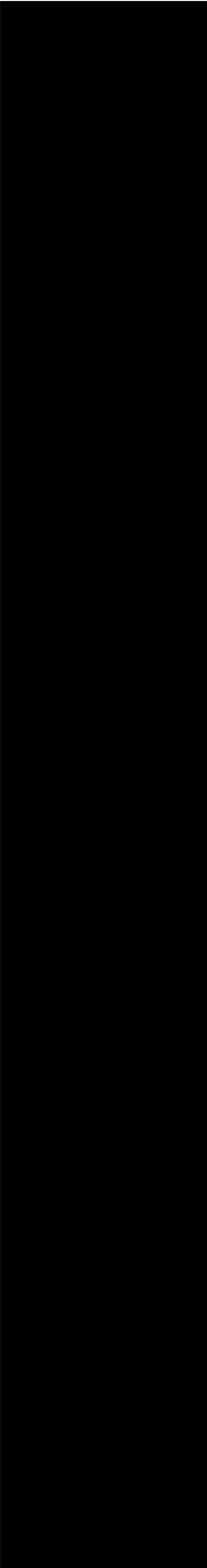


# 50

# *Activities*

## FOR COACHING/MENTORING

**Donna Berry**  
**Charles Cadwell**  
**Joe Fehrmann**



# **50 Activities for Coaching/Mentoring**

Donna Berry  
Charles Cadwell  
Joe Fehrmann

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# Preface

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Everyone wants to write a book, but very few people do. We wanted to write a book too, but not a whole book. So we each wrote one-third of a book. They say two heads are better than one. For us, three heads were just the number we needed.

Although we're not that old (in our own minds at least), among the three of us we have nearly 60 years of experience in education and training. Coming up with 50 activities meant less than one activity for each year of experience. The hard part was remembering back through all those years and then finding the best ones. We think we've succeeded.

You *can* teach old dogs new tricks—and for that we're grateful. We appreciate the input we received from several members of the Sunflower Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) who attended our pre-publishing party and helped us fine tune many of these exercises (and eliminate some that didn't quite hit the mark).

If you have tricks you would like to share with these “old dogs,” we'd be glad to hear from you. In the meantime, we hope you'll enjoy using these activities as much as we enjoyed putting them together.

Donna Berry  
Charles Cadwell  
Joe Fehrmann



# Introduction

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## About Us

All three of us started out in an academic environment and later switched to the business world. It was there that we began to learn how important active involvement was in adult education. We soon realized what most trainers now take for granted—adults want to be actively involved in the learning process.

As trainers in the corporate world we also learned the difference between “active learning” and “having a good time” in class. That was the signal that we needed to develop our own specialized activities that related directly to the performance that management expected when our participants returned to their jobs.

We subscribe to Robert F. Mager’s belief that training is only a means to an end—and that the end is performance. Unless the people who attend training can perform their jobs in a way to help their organizations accomplish their goals and objectives, we might as well not bother conducting training in the first place. That belief has led us to strive for continuous improvement of our training activities so that the people who attend our sessions can apply what they learn on the job.

## About Course Participants

Experience tells us that the more involved participants are in the process, the more they will learn. We know that the simple act of asking questions and getting people involved in a discussion increases their retention.

We also know that some people are hesitant to get involved in a large group activity, but will do fine in a smaller group. That knowledge has helped us remember that no matter what size group you are working with, you can have active involvement of all participants if you break down larger groups into smaller subgroups. That’s why you’ll find that a majority of the activities in this book can easily be adapted to participant groups of 3 to 300.

We also know that participants often learn more from each other than they do from us. This revelation has led us to stop thinking of ourselves as trainers and to start thinking of ourselves as learning facilitators. The activities in this book will encourage your participants to interact more with each other than with you. Don’t feel left out—that’s a good sign. Remember your job is to facilitate their learning, not to be the all-knowing trainer.

## 50 Activities for Coaching/Mentoring

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### About You

Being a facilitator may sound like less work than being a trainer, but it's really harder work. Effective facilitators are always looking for ways to help their participants learn as much as possible from their experiences in the classroom. While activities are in progress, facilitators circulate through the groups to provide help and assistance to ensure that learning objectives are met.

The best facilitators are constantly learning right along with their participants. They learn new ways of looking at things and are willing to admit they don't have all the answers. They learn what works and what doesn't work and make necessary modifications for future participant groups. The best facilitators are true practitioners of excellent customer service and do whatever it takes to satisfy their customers' (participants') need to learn.

The activities in this book are designed to help your participants learn through active involvement. Whether you are an experienced veteran of the classroom or are new to the task, this volume will enable you to provide your participants with a wide variety of interactive exercises that will enhance their on-the-job performance of coaching/mentoring skills.

### About This Volume

Although the activities in this volume are commonly referred to as training activities, we consider them to be performance improvement exercises. We chose this approach because, as stated earlier, we understand that the real purpose of training is to improve performance. Anyone can be a trainer and conduct activities, but improving performance is about facilitating learning.

Improving performance requires being able to connect the classroom activity to the learner's job. Improving performance means answering the often unspoken participant question, "What's in it for me?" With this in mind, each activity is organized in a user friendly format that, when followed, will guide you through the following process:

- Establishing the objectives
- Conducting the activity
- Reviewing participant experience
- Discussing key learning points
- Considering application to job performance

This process will ensure that learners do more than just participate in an activity. The proper execution of the total learning experience will provide learners with proven methods of improving their job performance—which means successful facilitation for you.

This volume contains a wide variety of activities. They range from the simple and lighthearted to the complex and risky. Some take only a few minutes, while others take longer. Some will provide an obvious “ah-ha” to the learner, while others will require more contemplation and analysis. Many different learning methods are employed. You will find questionnaires, physical activities, games, role plays, and simulations. This mix reflects our belief that different approaches are required to achieve different learning objectives.

Use the *Index to Activities* to identify the various coaching/mentoring skill areas covered in this volume. Then select the appropriate activity to develop the skill and performance of your learners.

### About the Activities

Each activity is presented in a uniform way. The facilitator is provided with the following:

- *Activity number and title.*
- *Description.* A short outline of the activity.
- *Objectives.* What the participants should be able to do after they experience the activity.
- *Skill areas.* A summary of the skills that can be developed by using this particular exercise.
- *Participants.* Guidance on size and type of group.
- *Time.* This is an estimate only. Timing will depend on group size and the depth to which you wish to pursue learning points.
- *Resources.* The materials you’ll need to prepare to facilitate learning.
- *Method and note.* A step-by-step, at-a-glance guide to conducting the activity. Provides guidance on timing, how to best use the activity, background information, and suggested discussion points. In order to initiate the discussion, we have often provided a list of suggested questions to ask.
- *Exercises.* These are designed to increase participant involvement. They are ready to be photocopied for use during the activity.
- *Handouts.* Again, these are ready to be photocopied. They provide a means for communicating some of the key learning points or background information about the exercise.
- *Observer sheets.* These are used in conjunction with some of the exercises and are also in a form that can be photocopied.
- *Trainer’s notes.* These notes, when given, provide either further background information or precise details of materials required for the activity. They are not intended for distribution and are found in only some of the activities.



# Developing Coaching/Mentoring Skills —

## Importance of Coaching/Mentoring

We have developed and assembled this collection of activities because we believe that the role of the coach/mentor is critical in today's organizations. Organizations are changing. They are getting smaller and flatter. Middle managers are expected to do more with less. One of the keys to the success of today's supervisors will be their ability to lead and coach their people.

## Coaching and Mentoring Roles

We define coaching as “the process of developing employees by providing them with opportunities to develop their skills and experience while ensuring they receive continuous feedback, counseling, and follow up.” Closely associated with coaching is the concept of mentoring. The two terms are often used interchangeably and indeed they have very similar meanings.

One distinction that can be drawn is to think of coaching in terms of the boss-employee relationship. A mentor, on the other hand, may be a peer or another person in the organization, but does not necessarily involve a direct reporting relationship. The mentor's role is to provide guidance, answer questions, and help develop the individual's skills and experience. The mentor has to rely on his/her ability to influence the other person without benefit of a supervisory relationship.

Regardless of the term you prefer, the successful coach/mentor has to be able to help the people they are working with to

- better appreciate their own strengths and weaknesses;
- encourage them to establish goals or targets for further performance improvement;
- monitor and review progress in achieving their goals;
- identify problems that may be adversely affecting progress;
- generate alternatives and an action plan for dealing with identified problems;
- improve their understanding of the work environment; and
- realize their full potential.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pareek, V., & Venkateswara, R. (1990). Performance coaching, *The 1990 Annual: Developing Human Resources* (San Diego, CA: University Associates).

## 50 Activities for Coaching/Mentoring

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### Coaching Characteristics

Successful coaches/mentors have to possess a variety of skills in order to succeed in their roles with those assigned to them. Dennis C. Kinlaw, Ed.D., in his book *Coaching for Commitment: Managerial Strategies for Obtaining Superior Performance*, has suggested that successful coaches have to possess the following characteristics:

- **Contact and core communication skills.** The role of coaching is largely undertaken in a variety of informal conversations. Thus, the coach must have regular and easy contact with those they are supposed to coach.
- **Counseling.** This consists of helping other people solve their own problems rather than providing solutions.
- **Mentoring.** Kinlaw suggests this is the process of developing in others such things as political savvy, sensitivity to the organization's culture, and proactively managing their own careers.
- **Tutoring.** Success is measured by the degree to which a person helps others to obtain the knowledge and expertise needed in their work.
- **Confronting and challenging.** These skills are needed to help the less-than-successful performers to become successful and to challenge the successful employees to become superior performers.<sup>2</sup>

The confronting and challenging skills require the use of a coaching model to deal with performance problems.

### Coaching Model

When the performance of their people does not meet expectations or developmental goals are missed because of performance deficiencies, effective coaches use a four-step process to solve performance problems:

1. Get agreement that a problem exists.
2. Decide on a solution.
3. Follow up.
4. Give recognition when the problem is solved.

This coaching model is explained in detail in Activity 39, *What Are You Gonna Do?* This activity also gives participants the opportunity to apply the coaching method in both a simulated and real work situation.

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<sup>2</sup> Kinlaw, D. C. (1991). *Coaching for commitment: managerial strategies for obtaining superior performance* (San Diego, CA: University Associates).

### **The 50 Activities**

Developing the skills and characteristics necessary to be effective and using the coaching model in a positive manner requires providing the would-be coach/mentor with a variety of learning experiences. This volume is designed to do just that.

We have included activities that address such skills as building trust, collaboration, counseling, goal setting, listening, and setting expectations. These and other skills areas are identified in the *Index to Activities*.

We are confident, as you select and use the appropriate activities for your learning environments, the coaches and mentors you work with will be able to develop the skills they need to be successful and to lead their organizations.



# Developing Coaching/Mentoring Skills

## Index to Activities

Page Number	Icebreakers	Analyzing Performance Problems	Assertiveness	Building Trust	Collaboration	Communication	Counseling	Delegating	Evaluation	Goal Setting	Listening	Networking	Nonverbal Communication	Nurturing	Orientation	Questioning	Recognition and Reward	Role of Coach/Mentor	Setting Expectations	Training	Course Closures
17				●	●													●			
25		●			●	●				●			●					●	●		
31	●											●						●			●
35	●					●					●					●					
39									●						●			●			
47	●								●										●		
49									●	●		●						●			●
53				●						●		●						●	●		
57									●			●									●
59		●	●						●										●		
65									●					●			●				
67								●												●	
71				●								●									
75						●	●		●		●			●							●
77										●									●		●

# 50 Activities for Coaching/Mentoring

## Index to Activities

Page Number	Icebreakers	Analyzing Performance Problems	Assertiveness	Building Trust	Collaboration	Communication	Counseling	Delegating	Evaluation	Goal Setting	Listening	Networking	Nonverbal Communication	Nurturing	Orientation	Questioning	Recognition and Reward	Role of Coach/Mentor	Setting Expectations	Training	Course Closures
85	●	●			●	●												●			
89		●			●													●			
93		●			●													●			
97	●						●	●		●									●	●	●
99																		●	●		
103																		●			●
107							●				●						●				
117																		●			●
119			●						●											●	●
125																			●		●
131																		●			●
137	●							●											●		
139						●					●										
149	●																				●
151									●	●				●				●			



# 50 Activities for Coaching/Mentoring

## Index to Activities

	Page Number	Icebreakers	Analyzing Performance Problems	Assertiveness	Building Trust	Collaboration	Communication	Counseling	Delegating	Evaluation	Goal Setting	Listening	Networking	Nonverbal Communication	Nurturing	Orientation	Questioning	Recognition and Reward	Role of Coach/Mentor	Setting Expectations	Training	Course Closures		
46. Listen up!	253											●		●					●					
47. "Just Thought I'd Ask"	255			●	●							●												
48. "Say what?"	265											●												
49. Tearing up Communication	271				●							●		●							●			
50. You want me to do what?	277											●												

# Time Checklist

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This checklist gives an approximate indication of the minimum time necessary to conduct each activity. The actual time will depend on size of group, length of time allowed for discussion, and other variables that can occur during any course.

## **One-half hour or less**

Strike Three, You're Out  
Card Exchange  
Picture That  
How do you rate?  
String Toss  
Wanna BET?  
Chair Walking  
Positive Feedback  
Construction  
Origami  
Card Houses  
Idea Exchange  
Reel Movies  
Trivia Quiz  
Coaching Challenge  
Opposite Poles  
Fishbowl  
Word Search  
Finish the Sentence  
Say what you mean!  
Three-Element Messages  
Proxemics  
Translation, Please  
Listen up!  
"Say what?"

## **Between one-half hour and one hour**

Rock, Paper, Scissors  
Who am I?  
Attitudes or Attributes?  
Focus on Coaching Skills  
Let's Have a BEER  
Making a Sandwich  
Coaches Bowl  
How am I doing?  
Dueling Families  
Concentrate on. . .  
Theory X/Theory Y Assumptions