

FUEL vs GROW

FUEL is a conversation framework adaptable to both behavioral and philosophical coaching needs designed to achieve behavioral outcomes, challenge assumptions, and strengthen the relationship between the coach and coachee.

GROW is a behavior-based model for simple goal setting and problem solving. It was used extensively in the late 1980s and 1990s as a coaching process, and is particularly applicable to sport psychology and certain types of goal-centric business needs.

KEY DIFFERENCES & FEATURES

STEP 1

FUEL – FRAME THE CONVERSATION

- Frame the Conversation creates a safe atmosphere for the coach and coachee to outline the purpose, process, and expected outcomes of the conversation. The process can also be used for delivering redirecting or reinforcing feedback, development plans, and performance appraisals. In this way, FUEL is used for more ways than just goal setting.

GROW – GOAL

Starting a coaching conversation with the desired goal can be problematic:

- It assumes that the stated goal is the right goal—the one most likely to lead to the desired result(s). Starting with the “solution” discounts the opportunity to validate and vet the problem further.
- It sidesteps the opportunity for the coaching conversation to strengthen the relationship and create shared ownership between the coach and coachee, which increases accountability. Research indicates that the best leaders do more than just drive for results—they invest in mentoring and motivating others.

STEP 2

FUEL – UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT STATE

- Understand the Current State challenges the assumptions of both coach and coachee, revealing any underlying patterns or beliefs that may drive the coachee’s behavior and get in the way of results.

GROW – REALITY

Failing to understand both the circumstance and the motivations of the coachee promotes an incomplete view of what constitutes “reality”:

- Without investing in a Socratic (question driven) coaching dialogue, the coach must settle for the “facts on hand” in order to assess the situation, discounting the deeper emotions, beliefs, and underlying patterns often hidden beneath the surface.
- Reality is subjective. Within the context of a coaching conversation, one’s perception of a situation is arguably as important as the facts. This applies to both the coach and the coachee, and requires a model that accounts for individual differences.

STEP 3

FUEL – EXPLORE THE DESIRED STATE

- Explore the Desired State creates a vision of success from the coachee's perspective. Once the Current State has been uncovered, it provides a framework for the coach to lead the coachee to consider his or her desired state.
- Exploring also addresses the issue of change as a likely requirement for the desired state, and provides a framework consistent with many change models.

GROW – OPTIONS

Moving to Options without laying the groundwork with the coachee can be problematic in two ways:

- This phase may be inefficient and even wasted if the stated goal is not the right goal or is simply prescriptive. The coachee may simply “go through the motions” and lose his or her's personal investment in the solution.
- Often the coach must address change that is disruptive, resisted, or unexpected. Failure to adequately prepare the coachee can lead to poor results and even risk damaging the relationship.
- Emphasizing obstacles at this stage of the process (rather than as one component of a success plan) risks giving unnecessary weight to potential barriers, often at the expense of the “ideal” or aspirational objective.

STEP 4

FUEL – LAYOUT A SUCCESS PLAN vs GROW – WAY FORWARD

- These two phases are closely linked. Both models recognize the importance of arriving at a plan, identifying roadblocks, and articulating the future desired state.
- GROW is most effective at offering novice coaches a starter process, but does not adapt well to more complex situations and needs.
- FUEL is both structured enough to provide novices a powerful framework, while remaining flexible and open for more challenging and nuanced coaching conversations.

ADDITIONAL DIFFERENCES

- FUEL is applicable to a wide variety of interactions: manager-initiated, employee-initiated, performance coaching, career coaching, reinforcing feedback, redirecting feedback, etc. Whereas GROW is more oriented to coachee-initiated coaching conversations, and therefore limited in its applicability.
- FUEL avoids the risk of directing a conversation to a misplaced or misdirected goal because it inserts the Understanding stage before exploring options.