

Structuring a Coaching Cadence

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Leaders set the tone for a positive culture. The best leaders create a dynamic where their direct reports grow through self-reflection. Coaching is a type of leadership that involves asking questions to help others achieve their potential.

Asking the right coaching questions creates a learning session. It gives someone who is busy yet skillful the space to examine themselves and see their actions from a different perspective. They are often able to envision a new solution to an old problem.

Begin by planning out what you'll focus on during the coaching session. Showing you have prepared and have specific objectives in mind will show your team that they should also come prepared to maximize time and learning opportunities.

The goal of coaching is to identify:

- 1) Motivation
- 2) Skill level
- 3) Current developmental level and goals
- 4) Process to help achieve those goals

This blueprint will teach you the four key steps to structuring a coaching cadence.

STEP 1

Adopt a modern coaching mindset

Historic Style of Leadership
Opinion-Based

Modern Style of Leadership
Lead by Example

Emotional

That sounded awful.

Judgmental feedback is often rejected. Your first reaction may not be the most helpful thing to share.

Qualitative

You have low confidence.

High-level descriptors are hard to interpret.

Specific

Your speed of talking was faster than your client.

Focus on the process first. Pick just one thing they can improve that will have the most impact.

Intent over Execution

The goal of your opening was correct, but wordy.

Humans are extremely perceptive to intent; focus on developing positive intent even if execution is slightly off.

STEP 2

Use different coaching models to increase engagement

The historic coaching model was based on the teacher/coach/leader having all the knowledge and information. Today, the information is on the internet, and the primary role of the coach is to guide the process.

The 8 different coaching models:

Coaching 1
Training



Explaining key concepts behind the exercise and what needs to be achieved.

Coaching 2
Team Roleplay



Roleplay situations where the coach is also included so the team can "figure it out together."

Coaching 3
Coached Roleplay



Let the team coach each other and ensure they focus on mastering the process.

Coaching 4
Peer-to-Peer Roleplay



Set up your team to practice with each other using specific exercises; perform several sessions until the skill is mastered.

Coaching 5
Study



Provide a write-up on the materials to be tested, like WbD blueprints, but also TED videos. Study and test.

Coaching 6
Simulate



Let the team listen to recordings of calls, critique, use a questionnaire, or have top-of-class reviews.

Coaching 7
1:1 Roleplay



Roleplay out a 1:1 situation; make small adjustments and improve one skill at a time.

Coaching 8
Real-Time Coaching



Coach during the call; control pace, do not overwhelm, and use a WbD real-time coaching card.

Coaching models 1-4 above are all focused on group coaching, whereas coaching models 5-8 are one-on-one work.

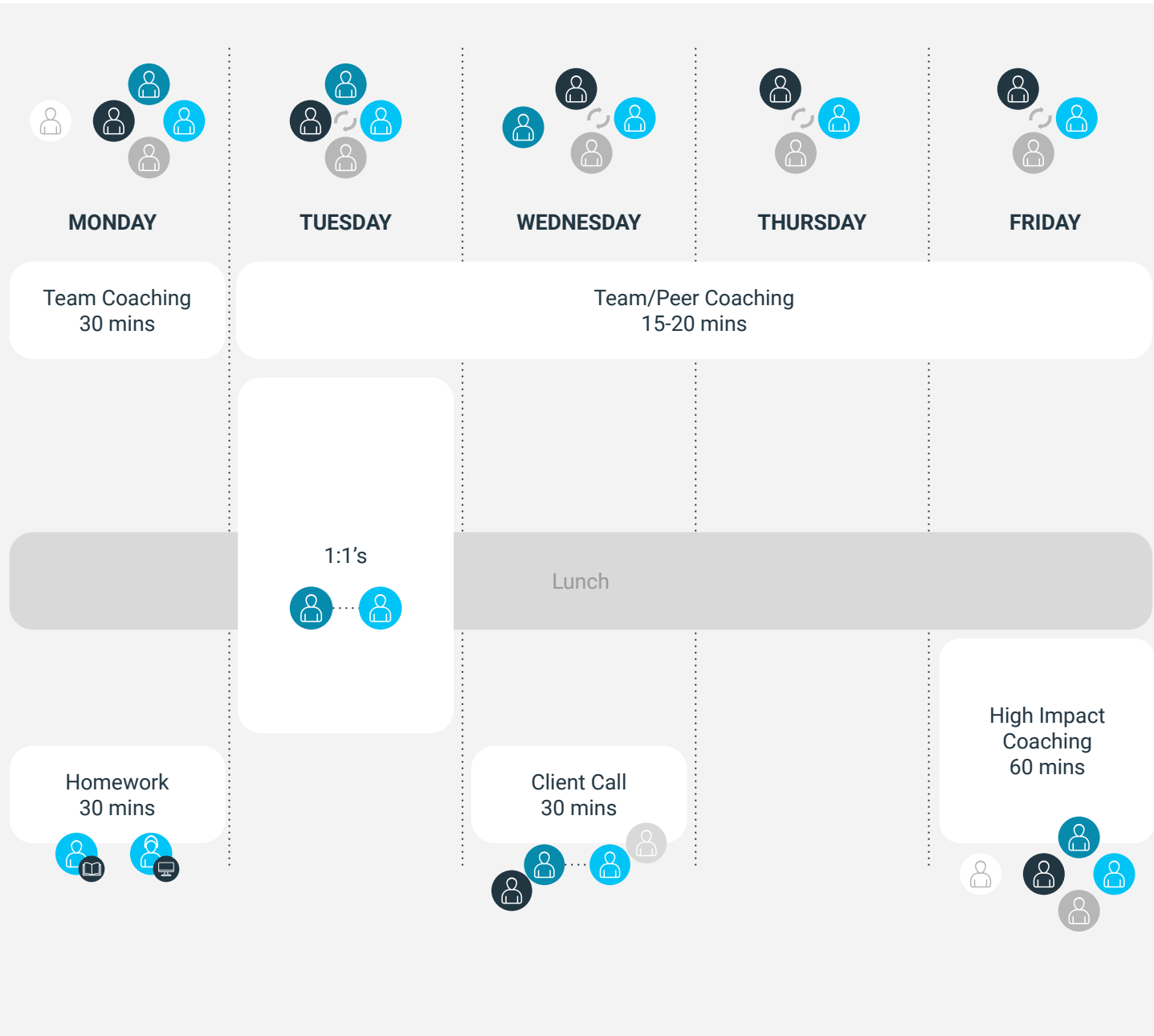
By implementing several coaching scenarios, your team will be able to optimize their mastery of skills by learning from mentors, peers, and deliberate practice.

Not all learning needs to be manager-led. Make sure the team is set up for success to practice on their own and with peers. By teaching your team how to give feedback and leading by example, you will create a positive coaching culture that will exist even when you're not in the room.

STEP 3

Build a coaching schedule and apply the coaching models

Repurpose some of your existing team meetings to try out new coaching meetings. Below is an example of how to leverage different types of meetings throughout the week.



 **STEP 4**

Map out your Quarterly/Monthly/Weekly plan

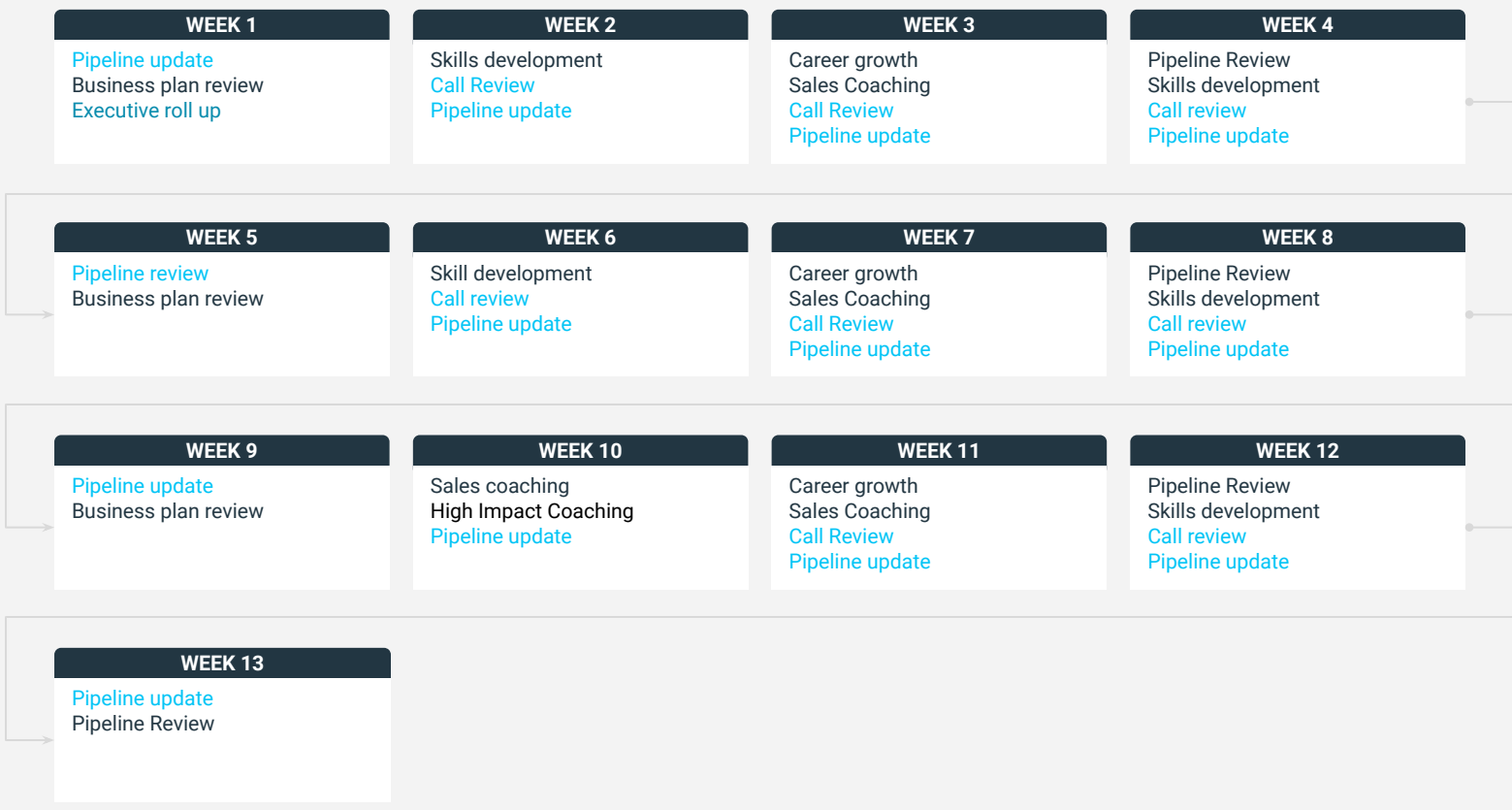
With a strong understanding of your ideal time to sell, schedule your weekly meetings on a calendar for review and allocate sales rep tasks for peer-led coaching exercises.

UCLA Coach John Wooden won 10 out of 12 years of NCAA basketball championships by implementing a philosophy of being extraordinary at executing the basics. Every season, he would start out with how to wear your socks and tie your shoes.

His reasoning was based on his principles of success – if you get a blister on your foot, it's not just that you're taken out of the game, but you let the team down.

But he also knew that practicing the basics in the same way over and over would lead to a plateau. According to the science of learning, the key to engaging learners is through novelty. John Wooden “tricked” his team into practicing the basics by spacing out coaching drills that would build on different skills, and practicing them in various scenarios.

The best coaches plan their skill development training over time with a path that everyone is aware of.



With a higher velocity team, consider a plan with shorter but more frequent meetings. An SDR making 20 calls a day will have lots of practice with customers to implement new skills. But a strategic AE with only one discovery call every two weeks may benefit from more infrequent but deeper case-study review sessions to help strategize.

▶ Conclusion

Communication with your team is key to ensuring the success of any coaching/meeting cadence. Clearly identify the objectives, agenda, responsibilities, and expectations for each meeting.

The effort of planning ahead and maximizing your training time will result in a more engaged team of salespeople that are able to help each other stay on target and grow together.

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