

Making the Music Come Alive



Photo: Central Press/Hulton Archive/Getty Images¹

***The strength of a group is each individual member.
The strength of each member is the team. -Phil Jackson***

In the early 1960s, four young musicians from Liverpool—John, Paul, George, and Ringo—came together as The Beatles. Individually talented, they were far from extraordinary, but when they united, their unique chemistry transformed them into a force that changed music forever. Their harmony, collaboration, and shared vision created songs that resonated worldwide, **breaking boundaries and touching hearts.**²

While individual executive coaching can truly unlock a leader's potential, coaching for groups also offers a unique opportunity: the power of harmony. By bringing diverse minds together, group coaching fosters shared insight, mutual support, and the ability to tackle complex issues from multiple perspectives. When individuals align around a common goal, they not only enhance their own performance but also build something far greater than they could achieve alone. Group coaching taps into this synergy, empowering teams to lead with clarity, unity, and strength - likely **breaking boundaries and touching hearts.**

Both individual and group coaching share the core principle of using questions to elicit the best and most authentic responses from participants. However, group coaching introduces unique dynamics and opportunities.

Key actions for effective group coaching include:

Fostering Collaboration, Not Competition: In group coaching, it is essential to create a safe, open environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing ideas and supporting one another. Encouraging collaboration over competition helps build trust and strengthens the group's collective problem-solving ability. To facilitate this, a coach may ask questions such as, "How might we build on each other's ideas to create a stronger solution?" and "What support do you need from the team to achieve our shared goals?"

Challenging the Group to Think Deeper: A coach may use strategic questions to push the group beyond surface-level discussions to encourage them to critically analyze their assumptions, explore alternative perspectives, and challenge conventional thinking. This deepens the group's collective understanding and leads to more innovative and robust solutions. To achieve this, a coach may ask questions such as, "What underlying assumptions are we making that could be limiting our perspective?" and "How might we approach this problem differently if we were starting from scratch?"

Balancing Individual and Group Needs: While coaching a group, it's important to recognize and address individual goals and strengths, while also guiding the group toward a shared vision. Successful group coaching finds harmony between personal growth and the team's collective progress. To support this balance, a coach may present questions such as, "What personal goals do you have that align with our team's objectives, and how can we integrate them into our overall strategy?" and "How can we leverage each member's unique strengths to advance our collective goals?"

Challenging Assumptions: Regularly asking the group to question its own assumptions allows them to uncover deeper insights and innovative solutions. For example, if a team defaults to a familiar approach, a coach may ask, "What if we did the opposite? What might that look like?" or "What assumptions are we making about this approach that might not be true?" Additionally, questions such as the following may be posed, "What are we not considering that could potentially change our direction?" and "How would someone from a completely different industry tackle this problem?" These questions encourage the group to challenge conventional thinking, explore alternative viewpoints, and avoid settling for traditional solutions, leading to more creative and effective outcomes.

Testing the Limits: A coach may encourage the group to explore potential weaknesses or risks in their ideas by asking probing questions like, "What could happen if this approach fails?" or "What are we not considering that could disrupt this plan?" This practice pushes the team to think critically, refine their strategy, and ensure they have addressed possible obstacles before moving forward.

Just as The Beatles' journey demonstrates, individual talent is crucial, but the true power lies in a group working together toward a common goal. Each member of the band brought unique skills and perspectives, yet it was their collective effort and harmony that propelled them to unprecedented heights. This principle holds true in executive coaching as well: when coaching groups, the emphasis on collaboration and synergy can transform a collection of individual talents into a cohesive, high-performing team.

You can't play a hit with just one note.

It takes the whole band to make the music come alive.

Citations:

1. Photo Credit: Central Press/Hulton Archive/Getty Images
2. <https://www.biography.com/musicians/how-the-beatles-formed>