

How to Market Gap Assessments Before Buying

Where to Begin...

If you are relatively new to coaching, you are still discovering the array of tools and coaching methods you can employ to support your clients and grow your practice.

This is a short primer to assist you with offering and providing gap assessments before you buy a package for use.

Our library of gap assessments was created to help you and your client leaders to quickly ascertain if they are missing something obvious (or not-so-obvious) within their organization.

The insight gained from a gap assessment gives you, the coach, a huge differentiating advantage and a big jump-start with identifying where best to begin working with a client who is not sure where to start.

If you have any questions regarding the use or application of our gap assessments, please let us know.

We want you and your clients to succeed!

Marketing and Selling Gap Assessments

Leaders don't always know what's happening in their organizations. Many times, some glaring challenges are in plain sight, but leaders won't see them because they are working hard to make things happen in their organizations. In other words, they can't be everywhere.

The entire process of using assessments to close gaps begins with the leader intending to and wanting to walk in the shoes of employees. They do this to better understand what employees and customers are really going through. The ideal response from a leader about a discovered gap goes something like, "*Why do employees see things this way?*" or, "*What are we not providing or doing that causes employees to see things this way?*"

A gap assessment is designed to be nonintrusive. Hence its anonymity, ease-of-execution, and absence of questions. This allows a gap assessment to become a catalyst for discovery and illumination so the coach can quickly begin assisting the client.

One way to learn if a gap assessment is the right tool for a new or potential client is to ask a general, open-ended question like, "*How are things going overall?*"

You can always progress to deeper questions after this, but first, listen closely to what's conveyed in their response and what's not expressed. Additionally, be aware of the amount of energy attached to the reply.

You're digging deeper but not prying. Remember, it's a conversation, not an interrogation. They will either share, or not. If they respond by sharing a big problem or a list of problems, ask them to share more. This way, you can more fully understand the nature of the challenge and if a gap assessment is the appropriate instrument for them at this time.

If they respond with a general "*things are well,*" with a curt "*Good!*" consider moving the conversation over to teamwork. Teamwork is at the very foundation of all gap assessments.

As you begin this line of conversation, keep in mind you are not looking for problems. Anyone can begin a conversation by simply asking, "Tell me your problems," because every organization has them. But you're not there just to solve problems. As the coach, you are looking to enhance your client's ability to bring his or her team closer together.

Asking the right questions allows you to get to know a new or prospective client. As a coach, you know that the art in asking questions and evoking responses is knowing when to keep quiet.

A typical conversation about teamwork might sound something like this:

1. Ask them to share what's working and what's not working in their organization with regard to teamwork.

2. Listen for how much emphasis is placed on the positive things versus the not so positive.
3. Also, listen for what's not being said or mentioned. Sometimes it's very obvious.
4. What do they feel needs immediate attention? And what are they willing to do to make this happen?
5. At this point you could introduce a gap assessment into the conversation as a tool you believe might help them, and their organization, to quickly identify the largest disconnects that may exist within their teams.

If you want to offer an example of what a gap assessment might reveal, share this one statement: *"Despite the current situation, we are pulling together as a team."* (Yes or No)

Then ask, *"If you asked your team to respond to the above statement, how would they respond?"*

"Would employees respond differently than managers?"

- *"How do you know if your employees are not afraid to speak up?"*
- *"What areas would you like to see your team most aligned in? Communications, relating, trust and respect, team spirit, collaboration, cooperation, values, safety?"*

Additional Team-Related Questions:

If you feel more conversation is needed on the subject of teamwork, these additional questions may help.

- *"How connected do you feel with your employees and managers?"*
- *"How connected are your employees and managers with one another?"*
- *"On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do they communicate with each other?"*
- *"Are they on the same page with one another?"*
- *"How do you know for sure?"*

General Questions:

It's important to discover a client's knowledge and/or feelings about surveys or assessments. This is not to find out their likes or dislikes about them but rather to understand what experiences or assumptions they have about themselves.

Asking questions like the following can be good starting points:

Have you used surveys or assessments in the past to discover and/or address employee concerns in the organization?

Were you satisfied with the results?

What did you learn that was most helpful?

Was anything from the experience not so helpful?

If you perceive they might be open to the possibility, then it's worth asking if they would be open to a new approach to discover and address the disconnects that might exist between managers and team members in their organization.

General Marketing Questions:

Many times, you discover clients through simple conversations that occur throughout your day in pre-meeting conference calls and virtual meetings, as well as waiting rooms and restaurants.

Often, these conversations begin with sharing what people do for a living. Coaching, by nature, is an intriguing profession to many people. So, as a part of sharing a story, you can share a few of the sample questions you typically would ask organizations when helping them gain a clearer picture of themselves.

Some of those questions include:

How do you know what your team is really seeing in the workplace?

How are challenges and issues addressed in your organization?

How does your organization know that a challenge or issue has been effectively closed?

What are your (or your team's) biggest areas of concern?

How have you addressed these areas of concern in the past?

How effective was that process?

Would you follow the same process again?

Next Steps:

The best approach to begin using gap assessments is to go about marketing your coaching practice as you normally would. In the course of conversation, opportunities to introduce a gap assessment will become apparent.

In other words, don't force it.

Using gap assessments is a great way for coaches to quickly ascertain where their clients could best focus their attention.

Gap assessments are not designed to look for problems.

Gaps revealed using a gap assessment are not problems that need to be fixed.

Gaps are opportunities for leaders connect with their team and bring them closer together.

Lastly...

Ensure Your Clients Are Ready for a Gap Assessment:

Your clients must be onboard with you...and you with them!

Take the time to understand what your clients are really thinking and feeling:

Why do they want to conduct the assessment?

What is their expectation after the assessment is completed?

The gap assessment process is not science, it is teambuilding and relationship-building 101.

Once you begin the process of administering a gap assessment, you will want to keep the process of closing gaps as simple as the tool.

Continually encourage your clients to have conversations, and not meetings, to close any gaps that are revealed.