



Torch P.O.V.

When and How to Involve a Manager in a Coaching Engagement



Our Quick Take

Involving a manager is most likely to have a positive impact on coaching when managers become accountability partners.

That means they use the Manager Alignment Meeting to:

- Explore how the participant would like to be held accountable, and what this means to them
- Align on goals and objectives
- Build trust with the coaching participant and the coach

After the session, the manager is then equipped to hold the participant accountable for the behavioral changes they want to make.

What the Science Says

Having someone empathetically hold us accountable to what we say we're going to do is key to real, sustainable behavior change.

Coaches can hold coaching participants accountable for change during coaching sessions. Outside of sessions, managers have the opportunity to hold participants accountable for continuing with their coaching and following through on their plans to change their behavior.

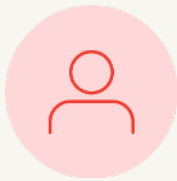
Research suggests that managers in particular can help encourage employee engagement in development opportunities and even facilitate learning, especially when managers take a more supportive and collaborative approach.

The more effective a coaching engagement is, the more an organization will see meaningful organizational and team outcomes (such as increased retention, engagement, and performance), according to additional research on the organizational influence of coaching.

How to Build Manager Alignment Meetings Into Your Program

At Torch, our customer success managers can work with you to integrate manager meetings into your coaching engagement. On the platform, the functionality is simple: coaching participants can invite someone who isn't on the platform to a meeting, generating a unique link that they can use to access a coaching session.

Beyond the technology, there are other things you'll want to consider to ensure these sessions are as effective as possible. As our team works with you to tailor an approach to your unique workplace context, here are best practices distilled from our experience working with hundreds of customers.



For Program Managers

Program managers have an opportunity to make Manager Alignment Meetings more seamless and effective by managing choice, timing and expectations. Here are specific actions to take:

- **Make Manager Alignment Meetings optional for participants:** Allowing participants to choose whether or not they want to have a session is crucial, especially if they feel uncomfortable including their manager.
Note: if you decide that including manager meetings is important for all participants, you can give them a greater sense of agency by letting them choose when they want to have the session.
- **Schedule meetings at the right time:** If you're setting timing guidelines for Manager Alignment Meetings, it's important to give participants enough time to build trust with their coach and create potential development goals before jumping in. This tends to take around four sessions.
- **Clarify expectations with outside stakeholders (like managers):** With the support of the Torch customer success team, it's crucial to make the purpose of manager sessions – both what they are, and what they aren't – clear to all participants (manager, coach, coaching participant) prior to the session.



For Coaching Participants

Coaching participants play a key role in success by setting objectives for the meeting before it takes place. Here are specific actions to take:

- **Set clear objectives for the meeting:** Sometimes managers want to set goals during the session. While this is understandable, Torch firmly believes the participant should drive goal-setting because that's what makes coaching and behavior change successful.

For this session, objectives should be focused on gaining a deeper understanding of what the participant wants to work on, and exploring the best ways to support and hold participants accountable.

Sample objectives could include:

- Getting alignment between a manager, coach and participant on development goals
 - Setting clear expectations for how the manager can hold the participant accountable
 - Aligning on the best ways to give the participant feedback throughout the engagement
- **Clarify objectives ahead of time:** This is not the time for a participant to surprise a stakeholder with feedback they've never shared before, or the time for a manager to spring new feedback on a participant. It's important that all parties know what's going to be discussed prior to the meeting.



For Managers

Managers play a crucial role in these meetings by owning the opportunity to learn and support their employee before, during and after the session. Here are actions to take:

- **Learn about the science of coaching before the meeting:**
Ahead of the session, take time to read even a [short blog](#) about why coaching is an effective tool for behavior change, how it's a worthy use of time for an employee, and the importance of confidentiality in the coaching relationship. This will allow managers to use the meeting as a time to focus on the participant's goals and the opportunity to support and collaborate with them.
- Reminder:** *The manager meeting isn't a performance review! It's a moment to explore how to best support the participant in order to maximize their success.*
- **Align on feedback protocol:** As an accountability partner, it will be important for managers to understand how and when to provide feedback on a coaching participant's progress.



For Coaches

Coaches play an essential role in making sure that the necessary alignment takes place to have a smooth and successful session. Here are the actions to take:

- **Use a separate coaching session to prepare for the Manager Alignment Meeting:** Prior to meeting with a participant and the manager, coaches should prepare with the coaching participant, making sure that they're clear on the objectives, and on what the participant wants to get out of the conversation.
- **Lead when possible:** Though it's crucial for the participant to set objectives and make sure that their invited manager understands and is prepared for the meeting, coach-facilitated sessions tend to be the most effective for all parties.

Do you have more questions about involving a manager in a coaching engagement?

We're here to help!

[We'd love to talk through what's on your mind](#)





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