

7 Common Myths About Digital Coaching Debunked





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Summary

Digitalization affects our personal and professional lives daily. From groceries to meetings, from networking to e-learning, when it comes to people development and employee well-being, the trend is equally strong. Although digital coaching is becoming more popular, there are still some myths around it.

This article debunks the common myths about digital coaching, while unveiling the real benefits that it can bring to your organization.



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01

Digital coaching is not personal enough

Gone are the days when digital services aren't personal, and coaching online is no different. Although people often mistrust the quality of relationship-building through digital coaching, a study by Berry et al. (2011)¹ showed no significant difference between face-to-face coaching and coaching over the phone.

With a digital solution people development goals can be completely tailored to each individual and offer employees more flexibility in their coaching journey. Moreso, it allows for the possibility to connect from anywhere in the world, which in the wake of remote and hybrid work is an incredibly valuable benefit.

¹ Berry, R. M., Ashby, J. S., Gnilka, P. B., & Matheny, K. B. (2011). A comparison of face-to-face and distance coaching practices: Coaches' perceptions of the role of the working alliance in problem resolution. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 63(4), 243–253. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026735>

02

Coaches don't understand the company's needs in an online environment

Communication is a two-way street. Therefore, a holistic understanding of the company's needs depends not only on the coach but also in the willingness of the organization itself. It involves mutual trust and respect.

For a practical example, let's showcase how Sharpist successfully accomplishes this. With a community of over 1000 highly-trained coaches, our premise is to deliver tailored learning and personal development programs that directly answer each company's needs. We aim to be a bridge between the company and the coach, making sure the latter has a holistic understanding of the company: both are aligned and working towards the same goals.



03

Digital coaching is not for everyone

"Everyone needs a coach. It doesn't matter whether you're a basketball player, a tennis player, a gymnast or a bridge player."

*Bill Gates
Co-founder of Microsoft*

"I don't need coaching." Coaches are familiar with these famous last words. We've heard that before, and we disagree. Bill Gates does, too: the famous businessman notoriously started his 2013 TED Talk with the sentence "Everyone needs a coach." We'd go one step further: everyone needs a digital coach.

When it comes to employee well-being and personal development, digital coaching goes one step further since the ability to use digital media creatively is one of the most critical skills in a digitally shaped culture of the future (according to a 2010 BMBF study²). Everyone can benefit from it.

² Schelhowe, Heidi & Grafe, Silke & Herzig, Bardo & Koubek, Jochen & Niesyto, Horst & Berg, Antje & Coy, Wolfgang & Hagel, Heinz & Hasebrook, Joachim & Kiesel, Kurt & Reinmann, Gabi & Schäfer, Markus. (2009). Kompetenzen in einer digital geprägten Kultur - Medienbildung für die Persönlichkeitsentwicklung, für die gesellschaftliche Teilhabe und für die Entwicklung von Ausbildungs- und Erwerbsfähigkeit.

04

It's harder to organize coaching sessions online

This is probably the most straightforward digital coaching myth to debunk. In the US alone, phone sessions are more used for coaching and training than in-person. With remote and hybrid work on the rise, there are no excuses for why online coaching sessions would be remotely tricky. At Sharpist, we are constantly working on product updates and new features to make user experience even smoother. We work with our learners and coaches to understand their needs (and schedules) to deliver exactly what they are looking for.





05

Digital coaching doesn't have the same success rates as face-to-face

Coaching has an impact in a broad range of areas but its measurability is not always clear. [Read our guide](#) to learn how to measure the impact of coaching in your organization.

This is proven to be a wrong assumption. According to research, face-to-face coaching is just as effective as distance coaching (i.e., phone, video). There's an equal success rate when considering the most critical factor in a coaching program: the relationship between coach and client. With trained, certified coaches, there's no compromise, regardless of the platform they coach on. Furthermore, digital coaching saves time for everyone - it's convenient and easy to reschedule sessions if necessary and there's no commuting beyond your phone or laptop screen.

06

Some coaching techniques can only be applied in-person

Although the digital realm has its physical limitations, it doesn't affect digital coaching the way most people expect. Physical activities and group interactions must be redrafted, of course, but it doesn't mean that they can't be translated to a digital platform. The creativity coming from digital coaching is endless. Just think of replacing a classic flip chart with interactive whiteboards and the vast range of devices and communication formats (e.g., smartphone, tablet, telephone, e-mail, video chat, breakout rooms, apps, collaborative digital boards) that are available to you.





07

You have to be tech-savvy to get the most of digital coaching

Sharpist drives the growth of organizations and their people through 1:1 digital coaching and personalized learning

Even though most of us couldn't live without our digital devices anymore, the word "digital" can still carry overly complicated assumptions. This can be true for some topics - such as blockchain or NFT - but it's certainly not the case when it comes to digital coaching. With a friendly and seamless user experience, Sharpist makes digital coaching and personalized learning easy and accessible for any one, in any team, anywhere. Going beyond, Sharpist has a dedicated (and fully human, no bots) user operations team to help learners and coaches with any questions or hurdles that come up.



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