

A case for coaching: How to measure the effectiveness of the ATO coaching model?

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An innovative coaching model is being designed to trial within the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). The coaching model is specifically designed to coach ATO auditors and objections officers (ATO operatives) prior to their interactions with taxpayers, and is focused on building and strengthening their dispute resolution capacity. The coaching model will also complement the ATO's toolkit for resolving tax disputes, with the objectives of supporting the prevention and early resolution of tax disputes, as well as influencing positive cultural change within the ATO in line with the ATO reinvention program. To suit the context of the ATO business operations, managers or peers with appropriate coaching and technical skills will provide the coaching internally.

Designing, implementing and choosing to incorporate a coaching model as part of everyday business is a significant investment for any organisation. The investment is not just in terms of direct financial outlays, but also indirect costs, such as staff time, staff engagement (buy-in vs disengagement), and staff experience. The costs can also be measured through external factors such as client experience and reputation of the organisation. What is an effective way to measure the value of an internal coaching program at the ATO? This paper will discuss the background of the ATO coaching program and the evaluation methodology proposed for measuring the success of the program. Consideration of goals specific to the ATO context will be explored, as well as definite methods of how each goal may be measured. Measuring the effectiveness of the coaching model will assist in determining the cost, benefits, and expected levels of success, which can be used as a platform for consideration of the uptake of similar internal coaching models by other large organisations (government and private sector).