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# A STRATEGY FOR LONG DISTANCE COACHING

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## INTRODUCTION

Tom and Brian were leaders for their movement on campus. However, their staff coach lived four hours away in another state. But that's not a problem. Using the Internet, coupled with a plan, leaders such as Tom and Brian can be well equipped.

Probably the most important element of distance coaching is to have a plan. iCoaching offers one such way to be organized and ready to engage with a leader over a video Internet call or telephone call.

The strategy includes six elements: initiate, investigate, interview, inform, instigate, and intercede.



## iCoaching

*a strategy for effective distance coaching*

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### **Initiate**

Initiate the appointment by finding out what's going on with the person. Don't just jump into the "ministry" and fail to build trust and understanding. Ask him how things are going personally and share something of what is going on in your own life. Steve Saccone writes, "As we push people to make progress and pursue a greater purpose, sometimes we find that we're too impatient to do the work of cultivating the relationship that will help them succeed" (10).<sup>1</sup> A key to having a deep influence on a person is to have a meaningful relationship with him.

### **Investigate**

Are there unique things about the target area of their ministry? Are there aspects of the community that need to be explored and talked about? Take this time to present to your coachee an element of contextualization that will help her gain a deeper understanding of the community she is seeking to reach. Try to have a conversation about what you both are learning and observing. Ideas for this include: watch an online video about how people in this community view the world, or read an excerpt from a book by an expert on the contextualized community (Some examples are *Coconut Generation*; *Being Latino in Christ*; *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*; and *A Cry of Hope, A Call to Action*).

### **Interview**

This is where you turn to the ministry at his location. Refer to his strategic plan (see later section). Ask him how things are going, listen to what he has to say, ask good coaching questions and offer advice where pertinent. Be careful to not just tell him what to do. Coaching helps a leader think through his situation and create his own answers. Ask questions like, "What else?" and "What's another possible solution?" A great resource for developing in your ability to coach effectively is *Coaching 101: Discover the Power of Coaching* by Robert Logan and Sherilyn Carlton.

### **Inform**

In this stage, it's your chance to let your coachee know about some things that are going on. These are things that she will need to know in order for her to lead locally while remaining connected to the overall movement. Let your coachee know about: any upcoming activities regarding your movement's international partnership, any leadership development meetings that you'd like her to know about, conference dates and availability of promotional materials, and movement-wide initiatives in which the movement at her location will want to engage.

### **Instigate**

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<sup>1</sup> Saccone, Steve. *Relational Intelligence: How Leaders Can Expand Their Influence through a New Way of Being Smart*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

By combining what came out in the Interview and Information stages, help him think through next steps. How will he activate, or instigate, the things on which he wants to take action? What's next for his campus movement? How will he take big ideas and mold them into manageable, bite-sized steps? What actions points does he need to put on his calendar for the next week in order to see momentum?

### **Intercede**

Take a few minutes and take all that you've talked about, both personal and ministry, to the Lord in prayer. Even though it's only two people and not a group, Cru Press Green has an article about leading a prayer time that may prove helpful to you: [crupressgreen.com/how-to-lead-a-prayer-meeting](http://crupressgreen.com/how-to-lead-a-prayer-meeting). This step also helps with building a relationship.

### **A few other thoughts**

At the beginning of the coaching relationship, a strategic plan for a local movement should be developed with your coachee's team of local leaders. This will serve as a guide through her semester or year. You can show her how to make one, encourage her to create one with her fellow leaders, and then give her feedback. You may want to utilize the iCoaching Strategic Plan worksheet to help guide this process.

Possible misconceptions about iCoaching:

1. It is not meCoaching. This time of coaching is not about the coach, but about the coachee.
2. It is not encroaching. The point of the time is to empower the leader, not take on his responsibility.
3. It is not iCouching. It takes effort on the part of the coach to be prepared for the time of coaching. As the coach, you cannot be lazy about your responsibility to be prepared.

(Mark Covell is on staff with the Design Movement, which seeks to reach out to second generation South Asian college students. [www.designmovement.org](http://www.designmovement.org))

# University of Anywhere

iCoaching Strategic Plan Worksheet

## 1. Current Situation

We have \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Goal

We will have \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Critical Path Steps

Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 3A: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 3B: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 3C: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 2A: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 2B: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 2C: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 1A: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 1B: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 1C: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Critical Mass Steps

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 1A: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 1B: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 1C: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 2A: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 2B: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tactic 2C: \_\_\_\_\_

### Definitions

**Current Reality:** This is true of our organization as of today ( \_\_\_\_\_ ). (For example, "We have Juniors and Seniors involved and no Freshman or Sophomores." "We have \$25 in our account.")

**Goal:** In light of our vision, this is a measurable outcome we are seeking. (For example, "We will have 20 new members by the end of the semester.")

**Critical Path Steps:** What we need to do in order to reach our goal. (For example, "See an increase in freshman involvement.")

**Tactics:** Specific and measurable activities we will do to accomplish the Step. (For example, "Host a freshman welcome party in the first few weeks of the semester.")

**Critical Mass Steps:** the things that need to happen in order for the Critical Path Steps to happen effectively (usually handled by the leadership). (For example, "Develop \$1,000 for the semester's activities.")

## iCoaching appointment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Campus/location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spiritual conversations: \_\_\_\_\_ Gospel presentations: \_\_\_\_\_ New believers: \_\_\_\_\_ Movement size: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Initiate**

*(Possible Questions: What was a high and low of your week? What is new in your life?)*

### **Investigate**

*(Possible Questions: What do you think about what we just read/watched/discussed? How could it apply in your ministry location?)*

### **Interview**

*(Possible Questions: How is ministry going? What has been successful? What has been a learning experience?)*

### **Inform**

*(Give information about any upcoming calendar items or movement-wide initiatives.)*

### **Instigate**

*(Possible Questions: What is your next step? What do you need to get there?)*

### **Intercede**

*(Pray for the movement and one another.)*