

THE LOST OPPORTUNITY FOR CORPORATE SUCCESS

Think back over your life and answer these simple questions:

- Who was your favourite teacher?
- Who has most impacted your personal values?
- Who has influenced your future direction?
- Who has had faith in your abilities?
- To whom do you owe most when it comes to your career success?

If the answer is 'I don't know', the chances are you have never had a coach or a mentor. If you can put names to the above questions then you were fortunate to have several. Someone wanted you to succeed and took pleasure in helping you. Right now both you and your organisation are benefiting, and the chances are you may even enjoy coaching yourself!

There has never been a greater need for coaches within organisations. As corporate success becomes harder to achieve so coaching is required at all levels to increase people's capabilities.

How can you unlock this coaching talent for the benefit of your organisation in such a way that you can grow people's abilities faster and more effectively than your competitors? Here are some clues:

CHECK OUT YOUR CULTURE

If yours is a 'blame' or 'fear' culture it will breed insecurity. A learning organisation on the other hand accepts mistakes as part of the learning culture and fosters the need for their managers to become good coaches and mentors. People in these organisations undergo new experiences and learn from them with the help of coaching managers. The culture is one of mutual support for the customer's benefit. Changing their culture is the first step for many organisations.

CHALLENGE OLD BELIEFS

Old beliefs can crush the spirit of coaching and effectively snuff out new coaching initiatives. Old beliefs can suggest that:

- He or she who knows more wins - information is power.
- Only the weak need coaching.
- Short term results are more important than long term capabilities.
- It is better to invest in yourself than in others - the fittest survive.

- Nobody has the time for coaching others; if they do then they can't be doing their job!

Have you ever heard these beliefs expressed in your organisation? Does anyone dare to challenge them? If they don't, your organisation may be destined to become a 'has been', with its 'head in the sand' and its past success turning to future failure.

Where do your current beliefs come from? Do you need to change the thinking at the top?

CHANGE FROM AN INDIVIDUAL TO A TEAM FOCUS

An individual focus promotes the 'prima donna'. A team focus promotes the team player. **Prima donnas are there for the moment, teams exist for a season and even an era.**

There is nothing more predictable than the fallen star. There is nothing more exciting than the sustained success of a winning team.

Coaching seeks to make the ordinary extraordinary. It seeks to elevate the average to the above average. It seeks to motivate the less confident to be more confident.

It ultimately aims to make everyone winners. It does not thrive in a political, self-promoting, and self-rewarding environment.

What does your organisation currently reward - an individual or a team focus? Corporate success requires a team focus, as does coaching.

CREATE COACHES

Think for a moment about your most talented people. Are they passively working **in** your business or are they actively working **on** your business?

If they are simply working **in** your business, then when they move on, your business moves backwards.

If they are working **on** your business, then when they move on, your business moves on. Why?

Because their knowledge, insights and abilities have been coached into others. **Knowledge sharing is now critical for your organisation's future success. How are you creating coaches for this vital task?** What would happen to your

organisation if you lost your most talented individual or team? To create your future you must create coaches.

TRAIN YOUR COACHES

Coaches need to be trained in order to be fully effective.

They need to understand how to:

- Respond to people's learning styles.
- Unbundle what makes them successful and explain it to others.
- Create learning experiences for people and have them reflect upon them.
- Use a coaching management style.
- Grow self-sufficiency in people by helping them solve their problems.

RECOGNISE YOUR COACHES

In sport the winner gets the trophy, but the coach gets the acclaim!

Organisations hand trophies to winners but they rarely acclaim their coaches. **Make a point of recognising your coaches, however this is done.** Make coaching an attractive pursuit and a valuable competency. Openly reward those who have grown successful teams. Openly discourage those who by solo effort have won acclaim for themselves only.

CAPTURE THE WISDOM OF ELDERS

How many organisations live to regret the early retirement packages given to their most experienced managers and technicians. Some have even had to hire them back as consultants!

Wisdom is born out of very many years experience. It is often related to a large customer, a complex internal operation, or a specific product or product application.

All three categories can often defy the laws of the 'norm' and require particular insights, specific know-how, and a unique treatment. Responsibilities for them cannot be quickly and easily handed on to others. They require a thorough, thoughtful and timely handover of wisdom.

Plan for the capture of the wisdom of your elders by ensuring that they carry out a coaching role before they leave!

COACH YOUR DIRECTORS

Directors don't do courses!

Corporate success is ultimately the responsibility of directors and senior management. More than any other group they need the soft skills of leading, motivating and influencing. Unless they model the behaviours sought by the organisation the chances are no-one else will.

Formal training at this level is often not appropriate but coaching and mentoring most certainly is. This invariably needs to come from an outside source to be effective.

Make the coaching and mentoring of your directors the norm. Select a number of appropriate external coaches and make them available on an 'as needs' basis to coach your top team.

MAKE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS THE NORM

You may have a competency framework to give bite to behavioural change and skills acquisition. You may use assessment or development centres for recruitment, development or succession planning. You may employ a finely developed performance management system. All these will add to the effectiveness of your people and their contribution to your corporate success. But do you use personal development plans?

Personal development plans focus on growing the individual, and growing people requires a coaching input. **If you want to get your managers to appreciate the need for coaching, then introduce them to personal development plans for use on themselves.** They will quickly see the benefit of using them with their own teams.

Make personal development plans a vehicle for coaching.

Is coaching the lost opportunity for corporate success or just another soft skill? Only you can decide.

What is absolutely certain is that in today's markets, intellectual capital, knowledge management and skills transfer will separate the winners and losers - your organisation will be one or the other, depending on its response to the simple issue of coaching.