

# COACHING -

## THE BETTER YOU ARE THE MORE YOU NEED IT

### INTRODUCTION

Why is it that in the sporting world the best teams would never play against competitors without their coach being ever present? Why do individual golfers, tennis players or athletes meet with their coaches almost daily? How is it that the best performers demand more and more from their personal coaches? Yet in business we obtain qualifications and think "that's it!" We participate in training programmes and then try, on our own, to put our new-found knowledge and skills to work (and usually fail). We go it alone, until we fail and then it's too late.

Why, oh why, do we not individually and corporately see the need for coaching in our business lives?

### PRESSURES

It's not that we are without pressures, there are plenty of them!

- Organisations are constantly down-sizing, delayering and right-sizing. Increased pressure and demanding workloads for everyone are now the norms.
- Structures are continually changing, and spans of control are increasing. Managers quickly need to obtain high performance from new and often larger teams.
- Employees see their employability dependent on their marketability. They are often pressing their managers for learning and personal growth opportunities.
- Customers are more demanding. Employees need to be more empowered to satisfy their needs.
- Old, autocratic styles of management are not tolerated. The enlightened employee is looking for a manager who coaches versus controls.

These and other pressures are driving the need for more coaching within organisations as never before. But there are dangers, the chief of which is not aligning an individual's coaching needs to the organisation's business needs.

### ALIGNMENT

- Alignment of personal coaching needs, to the requirements of the business, is key for the following reasons:
- Learning/growing/satisfied employees willingly give of their best in their jobs.

- Confidence in personal employability/marketability overcome the fear of job security.
- Innovative ideas for the business spring from expanding the thinking of employees.
- Personal coaching encourages true employee accountability/responsibility. This in turn generates a greater sense of ownership of, and commitment to, the business.
- Empowerment from coaching can produce real win/win outcomes for coachees and the business as they learn together.
- Staying the same is dangerous for both employees and the business. Changing together needs to be the key objective.
- Coaching needs to be built on mutual trust, and mutual trust needs to be built on mutually achievable goals.
- Employers and employees may need employment contracts to protect one another. But it is the 'emotional' coaching contract that causes both to grow together.

Alignment in a sense is the coaching contract between the individual and the business. The intention is for both to benefit from the provision of coaching, not just the coachee. So what is coaching?

### COACHING DEFINITIONS

As you might expect there is more than one view as to the definition of coaching. Look at these definitions however and they are likely to embrace the following content.

Coaching is:

- Action oriented, with a focus on future, improved performance.
- A skilful dialogue to assist the learning and development of another.
- About changing the paradigm, mind set, and self-motivation of the coachee.
- Based on a relationship of trust and commitment.
- Ongoing, enabling individuals to achieve their full potential.

In addition to these different definitions there are also different types of coaching.

There are basically six.

## BUSINESS COACHING

Organisational development, changes brought about by mergers and acquisitions, as well as culture change programmes often prompt organisations to introduce business coaching to support and reinforce new corporate directions.

The coaching provided is closely linked with organisational change initiatives in order to help employees to accept and adapt to changes in line with their personal values and goals.

The use of this type of coaching can enhance morale, motivation, and productivity and reduce employee turnover at times of potential doubt, uncertainty, and insecurity. The coaching may be provided by internal coaches or external coaching professionals.

## EXECUTIVE COACHING

There is a great deal of overlap between business and executive coaching. Both are used to effect individual and organisational change, and both seek to achieve an alignment of personal and corporate goals. The key differences between business and executive coaching are that Executive Coaches typically:

- Focus on individual change versus corporate change needs.
- Work in steady state situations as well as at times of organisational change.
- Coach 'high-flyers' or with those who have potential to be a high flyer.
- Work at senior management or CEO level.
- Maintain total confidentiality.

## PERFORMANCE COACHING

Coaching for performance enhancement in a given area, rather than the correction of a performance issue, is the focus of performance coaching. Performance is the key pay-back that both individual and organisation are looking for. The coaching might include balancing work and home life, but it will be with the ultimate aim of increasing the coachee's effectiveness and productivity at work.

The roots of performance coaching tend to lie in models from business and sports psychology as well as general management theories.

## SKILLS COACHING OR TUTORING

Skills coaching is similar to one-to-one training. One could regard it as personal tutoring. Skills coaches focus on the core skills an employee needs to perform in their role and therefore need to be highly experienced and competent in performing the skills they teach.

Skills coaching programmes need to be tailored specially to the individual, their knowledge, experience, maturity and ambitions. They have clearly defined objectives. These objectives often include the individual being able to perform specific, well-defined tasks whilst taking into account their personal development needs.

Tutoring, or one-to-one skills coaching, is not the same as informal 'on the job training'. What differentiates it is that it is based on an assessment of need in relation to the job role, is delivered in a structured way, and generates measurable learning and performance outcomes.

## PERSONAL OR LIFE COACHING

Personal coaches may work face-to-face but email and telephone based relationships are also very common. These coaches operate in highly supportive roles to those who wish to make some form of significant change happen within their lives.

Life Coaches offer individuals a supportive and motivating environment to explore what they want out of life and how they might achieve their aspirations and fulfil their needs. By assisting the person to commit to action and by being a sounding-board for their experiences, personal coaching allows the individual the personal space and support they need to grow and develop. The coach's key role is often in assisting the person to maintain the motivation and commitment needed to achieve their goals.

Personal coaching is therefore much more based towards the fulfilment of the individual's needs versus their organisation's needs.

## E-COACHING

E-coaching is the final type of coaching. It has the following features:

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| <b>Asynchronous</b>             | Coach/coachee can consider issues and communicate at different times.                                    |
| <b>Time efficient</b>           | Coach/coachee don't have to spend the same amount of time together.                                      |
| <b>Reflection time</b>          | Both coach/coachee can spend time reflecting on issues before communicating with each other.             |
| <b>Consolidation</b>            | As a result of reflection time, thoughts can be consolidated, connections made, and new insights gained. |
| <b>Instant advice</b>           | Coach/coachee can be involved together in real time, instant interaction on a given issue.               |
| <b>Access to other sources</b>  | Coach can provide coachee with links to other knowledge sources.   |
| <b>Support of others</b>        | Via a chat room coach can provide access to others with knowledge/experience of coachee issues.          |
| <b>Supportive/complementary</b> | E-coaching can support and complement face to face coaching.   |

What then is the difference between coaching and mentoring?

## MENTORING

Mentoring is....

“Off-line help by one person to another in growing their insights, knowledge, thinking, and awareness to support their personal aspirations.”

As the definition suggests there are many similarities between coaching and mentoring! Mentoring, particularly in its traditional sense, enables an individual to follow in the path of an older and wiser colleague who can pass on knowledge, and experience, and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities.

Coaching on the other hand is not generally performed on the basis that the coach has direct experience of their coachee's formal occupational role unless the coaching is specific and skills focussed.

Why then do the best get better through commitment to and use of coaching? The simple answer is that coaching delivers tangible, lasting benefits.

## THE BENEFITS

The benefits of coaching are many and substantial. For organisations they include.

- Reduced time and costs of escalation through employees taking the right decisions in the right way, first time.
- Reduction in employee turnover, with employability and marketability overtaking concerns about job security.
- Following redundancies, providing a strategy for handling the 'survivor syndrome'.
- Reversing an 'us and them' culture to an 'us with them' culture.
- Managing change effectively in a continuous state of transition.

For individuals they include:

- Creating the motivation and “know how” to increase personal learning.
- Adding fresh psychological insights to overcome problems, and achieve personal breakthroughs.
- Providing increased self-awareness and self-knowledge on which to build for the future.
- Increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-belief for improved performance.
- Achieving a move from dependence, to independence and on to interdependence.
- Becoming truly empowered.

## SUMMARY

Whether you are reading this bulletin as an individual with potential coaching needs, or as a manager or H.R. professional looking at ways to introduce coaching into your organisation, we hope you will draw the same conclusion. That conclusion is simply this – that without coaching you will be going backwards; that with it you will at least have a chance of keeping up with the best; and it is only the best that are long term winners.

And remember, the better you are the more you need it!