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LEADERSHIP COACHING DELIVERS ROI

Once you have experienced real coaching as opposed to “surface level” coaching and learnt the tools, you will find it one of the most powerful forms of leadership you can practice. Leaders that utilize psychological based coaching skills can create an environment that energizes people and truly releases their potential. They are able to motivate and work with bosses, peers and subordinates in a manner that reduces friction, enhances productivity and innovation.

Applying this in business, the need to help employers maximize a return on their investments in processes, technology and people is paramount. Coaching is a key leadership skill and leads to delivering sustainable results for our clients, not superficial quick wins.

Michael Markovits, VP Global Executive and Organizational Capability, who oversees IBM's in-house executive coaching, states *"We've done research to show that leadership behavior has a direct impact on climate, and climate has a direct impact on business results. We invest in leadership development because we believe we're going to be a better-performing company as a result"*.

Coaching starts with Vision

Leaders must establish a clear vision to define key goals & objectives.

Managers manage the business in line with the visions goals & objectives and these may be supported by new systems, process or organization to achieve a successful strategy.

So how does coaching support the managers of today in achieving ever more challenging targets? Such as improving performance and productivity, staff development, flexibility and adaptability to change, more time for the managers and a better work life balance for all. These are but a few of those challenges faced by managers today and all can be achieved through the power of coaching.

What is coaching?

In the sporting arena it is widely accepted that having a coach is key to sporting excellence. In “The coaching Manual” (Starr, 2008) Roger Federer is used as an example. His coach cannot play tennis to the same level yet he plays a vital role in improving Federer’s game. A coach needs different skills than that of being technically competent. Someone with a best in class technical capability may struggle to replicate that in another individual. It is not enough to be able to “do” – you have to be able to coach and get the best out of the individual and continue to raise the bar. In a consultancy context we should be stepping away from giving a technical solution to encouraging the clients to find the solution for themselves. We should be guiding our hungry clients on how to fish rather than simply giving a fish! Effective Leadership coaching delivers sustained results and is far removed from the paradigm; “Consultants borrow your

watch to tell you the time, and then walk off with your watch" Robert Townsend, a former CEO of Avis.

Coaching looks at people in terms of their potential and the aim of coaching is to maximize the coachee's own performance and thereby uncover that potential within each individual, team or organization. Coaching is not telling or teaching, rather it is helping the coachee to learn in a non-threatening and supportive environment.

For any manager, telling or dictating to the workforce is quick and easy, and gives the illusion of being in control. In actual fact all the manager may be doing is alienating themselves from the staff, and in so doing upsetting, de-motivating, and causing resentment. The manager may be oblivious to this as the staff will be subservient in their presence. Even the manager's well intentioned efforts to develop his team such as sending staff on training courses will fail to deliver return unless there is the coaching culture to support application of new skills back in the workplace.

Coaching is a term used widely but generally not understood. A coach does not solve problems, is not an instructor and is not, and does not need to be a subject matter expert. A coach's responsibility is to act as a sounding board for the coachee, a facilitator, an awareness raiser, a counselor but not in the psychological sense. A counselor will look into deeper psychological elements from the past, coaching is about the here and now and moving forward towards goals.

Coaching for Business Change

For any business change initiative, would ownership and responsibility automatically be transferred through the management chain? If only it was that easy. Just because the boss says so, doesn't make it so. People today have a different perspective. People want the freedom to make choices and take responsibility; they want the choice that freedom implies. This is the first step to empowering people.

We see in all walks of life how people and their views change when put in a position of increased or changed responsibility. Whether it be in work or play, being put in a position that enforces, or allows you to view things differently, then enables you to view your map of the world differently also. We view things differently, we ask questions, we get answers, and we then become more knowledgeable and are conscious of our own actions and the impact of those actions on the people and environment around us.

Coaching focuses on two key areas, building **awareness** and **responsibility**, which are vital in laying the foundation for the coachee's self-development *and* self-belief. Coaching to achieve awareness and responsibility supports in achieving short term goals and objectives, and also for long term development of the coachee.

Coaching for Return on Investment

If coaching was focused purely on showing an immediate return on investment factor, then there is a risk of reverting to a traditional training model which may show short term gains but without the sustainment and continued development required. There is however a need for

organisations to develop alternative measures in order to visualise coaching success. Typically through a coaching session the coachee will be encouraged to set personal goals as part of a roadmap to self-development. These goals may be broken down into smaller actions, which can be measured as an 'action conversion rate' (ACR) and visualised as a % towards achieving their goal. This approach to the individual's self-development will provide long term gains for the organisation as people's performance improves and bottom-line results increase.

The Conclusion

Ultimately what coaching will provide, is a leader who knows what is going on and staff who choose to take ownership & responsibility. In this way targets are achieved and staff developed, releasing time for executive managers to focus on strategy and steering the business forward.

Timothy Gallwey, (1996) Harvard Educationalist writes:

"Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them".

"If the only tool in your toolbox is a hammer you'll treat everything as a nail." (Abraham Maslow)