



The Coach Approach

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So what's all the buzz about Coaching:

Executive Coaching, Business Coaching-- what the heck is a business coach? And why is it so "hot" to have a coach?

Today's workplace is very different now than during the industrial age. The skills needed today involve astute mental processes as well as the ability to navigate a more diverse and demanding terrain. Managing change, integrating diversity and achieving results are minimum requirements. This is precisely why Coaching is so "hot." Coaching is a process of working with people to **achieve specific and measurable results**.

Coaching has become such a phenomenon there have been studies performed to measure its effectiveness. Manchester Inc., the global leader in customized executive coaching programs, has released the results of a study that quantifies the business impact of Executive Coaching. Companies that provided coaching to their executives realized improvements in productivity, quality, organizational strength, customer service and shareholder value. They received fewer customer complaints and were more likely to retain executives. This study also found a company's investment in providing coaching to its executives realized an average return on investment (ROI) of almost six times the cost of the coaching.

So what is coaching?

Coaching is a relationship of equals. The Coach is not a judge or advisor but a partner who collaborates with the client to move toward the client's goals. Coaching is an empowering process that guides a client to **focus on their strengths** and delegate their weaknesses. It is **task oriented** and **holds the employee accountable** for results. The focus is on the present and the future. Coaching doesn't ask why or seek to understand underlying reasons for one's behavior--that's counseling. Coaching is about forward movement and measurable results.

Coaching works because the client is in charge of the process; the client sets their own goals, gives specific dates and methods by which to measure their success and agrees to be held accountable. People want to be valued for their unique gifts and strengths. When they are, they will perform and function at continuously higher levels.

External vs. Internal Coaching

Internal and external Coaching follow the same principles: the client defines their desired goals and outcomes and the Coach holds them accountable for their completion. The difference is who serves the role of Coach.

Internal Coaching is between manager and employee within an organization. The process of encouraging employees to be more self-directed and accountable is a worthwhile investment and one that should be the norm in every organization. Leaders that are coached themselves typically make better Coaches because they understand their employee's position and try to neutralize their power by staying focused on the desired outcome.

After taking a Coaching Certification course with Halogenex, an executive with IBM began using the principles with her personnel and was amazed at the difference. One employee whose performance was lackluster began to really shine when encouraged to set and achieve his own goals rather than goals being imposed upon him. Coaching values people and provides a format for them to optimize their performance while benefiting the organization simultaneously.

External Coaching occurs between a top executive or leader and an independent Coach who is not employed by the organization. This structure allows for a much more open and objective dialogue. These goals may include improving time management and prioritization, developing leadership skills, enhancing interpersonal skills, succession planning, personal goals such as work/life balance and planning for their retirement. Coaching is about being intentional about the life one wants to create now and later.

Benefits of Coaching

Due to the collaborative and empowering nature of Coaching, the client:

- 'owns their goals'
- invests in their own success
- clarifies their life vision and business objectives
- enjoys enhanced self-awareness
- better understands their strengths
- becomes more adept at realistic goal setting
- realizes enhanced morale and optimized job performance
- experiences accountability which provides the impetus and motivation to stay the course when obstacles are encountered

Summary

Effective coaching will directly impact the performance of an organization's employees, and in turn, the organization. Pro-active and progressive organizations are including Coaching in their efforts to be an 'employer of choice.' In doing so, they optimize their performance and increase their profits.