

The Coaching Manager

The Coaching Manager - 1

What is coaching?

Coaching is a wonderful skill, which if used appropriately by managers can transform the lives of the manager and coachee alike.

At this point it is essential for me to emphasise that coaching is only part of the Manager's role and that the challenge of management is to ensure that all the differing aspects of management are built into the role. It is fine for me to promote the skill of coaching but without the other aspects of management then a manager would not be fully effective and would not last long in their role. Recruitment, performance management, financial management, business planning and a host of other skills are management skills, which are not covered in this newsletter. The manager's role of coach is the main skill covered. A manager must ensure that they get the balance of all skills right in order to be successful. Being a successful coach does not guarantee managerial success. I know, I've been there!

The challenge for coaching is that in the six years I have been coaching business people, I see managers struggling to cope with coaching, both in terms of taking the skills on board and also of taking the time to put them into practice. I've encountered weird and wonderful excuses as to why managers don't or won't coach. "It's easier and less time consuming to tell them what to do" is one common "reason" or "I am here to manage, not to coach" is another reply I have heard. Probably the worst comment I heard was, "These people do not deserve a coach". More about beliefs in a later issue!

Training courses have helped to give people some initial exposure to the skill of coaching, the challenge is that once the course is over, is there any qualified coaching support available to ensure follow-up?

In a later newsletter we will look at the reasons as to why coaching skills are not taken on board as well as they should be.

I would like to quote Sir John Whitmore from his book "Coaching for Performance"

"...the hunger for coaching has resulted in hastily and inadequately trained managers, or so called coaches, failing to meet the expectations of those they are coaching. In too many cases they have not fully understood the performance related, psychological principals on which coaching is based..."

How true! And in my own case, in the early days, VERY true! I was thrown into coaching at a time of extreme organisational change. Training was given and although some of it stuck, the majority of it was lost in the "need to get things done", task-orientated culture that the organisation I worked for at the time had. It was only until I experienced expert coaching from an external independent coach that I realised and experienced the power of good coaching. It had taken

me thirteen years of numerous managers before I experienced the effects of excellent coaching. It really did change the way I looked at life and also the way I approached it.

The longest journey starts with the first steps. So, with regards coaching what should these be. You need to clarify in your own mind, "Exactly, what is coaching?" We are all aware that there are coaches in sport and sometimes that is where the initial confusion starts. A lot of coaches in sport are actually not true coaches, they are trainers. Trainers can tend to shout a lot, they direct, they pass on advice, advice usually based on their own knowledge and experience. Good coaches are self-aware; they listen intently, question appropriately and challenge assumptions and actions. They will direct, but only when appropriate, and they only use their own knowledge and experience when they know it will move their coachee forward. In my own experience one of the main differences between a good coach and a directive trainer/manager is that the coach does not make judgments and does not let ego get in the road!

Coaching aims to enhance the performance of others through feedback, motivation, effective listening and questioning. Above all, coaching aims to enable the coachee to do it for him or herself!

ACTION:

There are numerous definitions and I would advise you now to go out and do some reading on the subject. Go to your work library, your local public library, check the web, (check the attached links for information) speak to a coach if you know one. Make sure you understand what coaching is, what coaches do, and what skills coaches and managers need to coach effectively.

Useful Links: www.coachville.com
www.coachu.com
www.ukclc.net
www.coachfederation.org

Why not talk to your own boss and see what the company can do for you. There is probably money in a Training or Personal Development Budget somewhere. Go on a course. Or you could hire your own coach! Again check the web. You can find lists of coaches on the International Coach Federation site. Although most business coaches charge around £100 - £200 a month for telephone coaching (£100/hour face to face), a lot of coaches take on what are called "pro-bono" clients who do not pay anything for a limited period of time.

It is vital that you do get a full understanding of what coaching is about and where it fits in the overall scheme of management.

Summary:

- Coaching is an essential business skill.
- Many managers do not possess the appropriate skills or do not use them as often as they should.
- Coaching is only part of the manager's role and should be used in balance with the other skills.
- Managers should fully understand what coaching is about and what it entails before embarking on using the skills.

Quotable Quotes... " A coach is someone who helps you hear what you don't want to hear, who helps you see what you don't want to see, in order that you can be who you have always known you could be."

- [Tom Landry](#) Top US Football Coach