



The Art of COACHING

leading from the inside out

by Andrea Pauquet

She was very professional and intent on finding a coach who could get her to the next level professionally. “Or was it personally?”, I kept hearing myself ask inwardly. “I’ve interviewed three coaches so far and have one more to go after you before I decide whom I will hire!” My inner voices vacillated between hoping she’d pick me from the coaching crop and wishing she’d pick one of the other coaches because I was working on trying to achieve life balance! Taking her on would not help me to get closer to this illusive goal!!

My potential client was puzzled by the many styles and pitches of her vendors and eventually settled on the coach who seemed to get her to have the kind of conversation with herself that others couldn’t. She wanted to have the difficult conversations for her own growth and career direction so that she could add the best value to life that she was capable of. She was asking for a perspective that would reframe her current reality and get her out of her stuck state at home and work. Coaching is the vehicle for the kind of change that this brave, committed lady was pursuing. She needed a safe space where she could face the truth, trust her coach and measure her progress personally and professionally.

Who are the gifted giants in your own life? Who are you helping on to your own shoulders as a coach and leader in business?



Why the COACH APPROACH for business?

Building a business case for coaching is crucial if it is to be adopted as a culture in organisations rather than an isolated, meaningless intervention. Coaching provides the platform for assessing and developing a person's ability in leadership and thinking (LQ), emotional intelligence (EQ) and business acumen (BQ). It measures individual and team change through identifying gaps that may be hindering the organisational imperative.

People and organisational capabilities have become even more critical to business success in today's knowledge-based economy. The emphasis has shifted to how winning companies manage their human capital and build their organisational capabilities in order to gain and sustain their competitive edge. (Minty & Bennett, 2000). Consequently developing and retaining talent is a key challenge facing many organisations and their HR professionals. One of the organisational responses to this "war for talent" is implementing interventions to improve training and development approaches. Offering business coaching to key people could contribute significantly to nurturing a pool of talent.

Coaching is designed to empower each individual to understand their potential and to identify how they can achieve it. Through developing a sound understanding of the protégé, the coach knows when to support and when to stretch, when to challenge and when to guide. Working on a one-to-one basis, coach and coachee collaborate to set and achieve key development objectives, taking into account the needs of the organisation as well as the experience, maturity, knowledge and career path of the individual.

Coaching encourages the creation of goals, which can then be broken down into manageable, measurable steps. To support this, coaching is delivered on a 'little and often' basis through a combination of face-to-face sessions, telephone and email feedback and 'on-the-job' observation. A coach will require each individual to examine and adapt their approach and to seek fresh ideas for boosting performance and personal job satisfaction. (Carter, 2004)

The key point is that coaching has an impact on business results but is not a short term process. Coaching people is the consideration that people can be even greater assets to the organisation than they already are. Whilst it has been established that a fine line differentiates coaching from mentoring at senior management level, the distinctions are clearer when one examines company-wide schemes.

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COACHING & MENTORING

the difference...

Although there are some key differences between coaching and mentoring, the edges are undoubtedly blurred. Mentoring is often referred to as the 'transfer of wisdom'. It is the process by which an individual learns from someone who has worn the same shoes and travelled the same path, someone metaphorically older and wiser. Often the mentor will work in the same organisation. Coaching, on the other hand, concerns itself with amplifying the individual's own knowledge and thought processes. It focuses on identified gaps for personal, professional, team and organisational growth. Clear strategies, measures and time lines are agreed upon and the coach is hired to assist the individual in changing the current status quo through providing knowledge, motivation and often company on what is described a lonely road for many executives.

The COACHING SPIRIT

working from the inside out...

For coaching to be of real lasting value, it needs to happen from the inside of yourself to your outer world. Assisting others in leadership requires first leading oneself. Ghandi spoke about being the change that you wish to see. Emotional Intelligence as a major leadership competence for success, it requires a high level of self knowledge as a prerequisite for managing relationships. Being coached can help identify personal blind spots or our dark sides. (the stuff that we would rather not know because it hurts!)

I said earlier that people trust under certain conditions. A true relationship needs to exist between coach and protégé where honesty, compassion, integrity, patience and courage are the fundamental building blocks. I have found a way of trying to hold this all in my head. To become self aware and present, areas that we don't normally look at in ourselves, both positive and negative, need to be unearthed. Given that by the time we reach adulthood we receive 18 criticisms for every one positive comment, it is no wonder that we are averse to pursuing what lies in the shadows!!

The motive for self discovery and the intent should be about growth and positive change. Coaching needs to be a safe place for authentic change to happen. Through gathering extensive information (via assessment and feedback from stakeholders).

I consider four areas when coaching an individual:

CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE: The valuable competencies and positive behaviours and qualities that you are currently aware of to build and value. What are you good at? What ignites your energy? How much do you value and build these qualities and skills?

UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE: The valuable competencies and positive qualities and behaviours that you are currently not aware of to build and value and encourage ownership of the unknown. Have you recently asked for feedback from your friends, colleagues, partner and subordinates around what they value about you? How are you valuing and building these skills and qualities? What stops you?

CONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE: The lack of competence and qualities that you are aware of that may be destructive or hindering leadership and personal success to shed light on possible obstacles to balance. Do you know that you are shocking at certain skills and behaviours? What are these? Which are crucial to your success and which require that you delegate and value someone else who could do that thing better than you?

UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE: The gaps in competence and behaviours that you are unaware of but that others see as hindering personal and career progress.



I am a newly self confessed control freak. This I knew, but thought I was doing a damn good job of hiding it. My partner pointed this out when I kept putting things away that I believed he wouldn't. (What was driving this odd behaviour? I was really angry with him!) I approached my coach for solace and she gently pointed out that this may be an area that is an obstacle to my own inner balance! Who said coaching is easy?

The above four exploratory areas require two actions for effective change to occur. These are:

1. **Seeking feedback**
2. **Appropriate exposure to others**

Are you able to seek the real feedback and as a result cultivate truthful conversations in your home, organisation and community? It starts with you. Do you have the courage to expose your not so perfect bits so that your manager, coach, employee, partner and child can assist you in your quest for aliveness?

Coaching that makes a difference changes us from the inside out. My wish is that women share their conversational competence and passion for truth as they lead from the inside out. The goal is to seek a coach that you may pass it on.

A POEM

I give you my ears, my eyes, my brain...I give you only my perspective
I give you space to be you to hear you so that you may hear yourself.
I give you the wisdom that I have only in the form of alternatives
I give you some illumination to see the many roads before you
I give you a nudge when only you can choose

I do not give you one answer
I do not give you my truth
I do not promise your success
I do not promise you relief and ointment for your struggles

What I give is what I have
My respect of your own wisdom
My faith in your potential
My never ending belief in your ability to grow
My knowledge of your need for space
My grit when you feel weary
My belief in your suffering as teacher
I give you my humanness, frailty, strength and honesty

.....I am your coach

(Andrea Pauquet - 2002)



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