

Coaching counseling and mentoring management essay



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As it is stated in Nelson and Campbell Quick book “ Organizational Behavior”, “ performance management is often described as a process of defining, appraising, providing feedback on, and improving performance” (p. 195). Improving performance is one of the most important parts of this process. Otherwise, why even bother measuring it, if not planning to improve? In this section the main instruments for performance improvement shall be presented. Three main ways to develop high performance employees – coaching, counseling and mentoring – will be discussed.

Coaching

What is coaching?

“ A manager’s job is to get results through people and other resources. And with so many industries being more reliant on knowledge and service, people and their skills and performance are a top managerial concern” (Harvard Business Essentials, p. 2). In a book called “ Coaching and Performance” and published by Harvard Business Essentials (hereinafter – “ HBE”) (2004), coaching is explained as an “ interactive process through which managers and supervisors aim to solve problems or develop employee capabilities” (p. 2). More and more often managers that succeed in training their employees are called coaches rather than bosses (Robins and Coulter, p. 520). The main responsibility for a coach is to provide instructions, guidance, advice, and encouragement in order to help employees improve their performance.

Why to coach?

The lack of knowledge is probably the most important reason to coach. Most companies hire people based on an interview and the outcome is often very

unproductive and mistaken. “ It is probably no news to you that about one-third of job applicants lack the literacy and/or math skills necessary for the jobs for which they apply. In a recent survey asking small companies to list their biggest problems, “ the quality of workers” was listed number one” (Fournies, p. xi).

Everyone would probably agree that a day of a manager is busy enough without even applying the coaching function. They have so many responsibilities, projects, meetings and problems to solve, that it is really hard to find the time to coach. However, the benefits of coaching outweigh these concerns and Harvard Business Essentials’ book about coaching lists six reasons why managers should coach:

Firstly, coaching can help overcome performance problems, such as unfinished tasks, unsolved problems, that individuals do not have enough skills or knowledge to accomplish.

Secondly, developing skills of employees can help a manager with his own tasks, since employee can overtake some routine tasks that are very time consuming for the manager.

Knowing how and working more effectively increases productivity.

Another very important benefit is creating promotable subordinates. A manager which is known as the one, who prepares people for more important roles within the company, is better valued himself and increases his own likelihood of advancement.

The time and money spent when looking for a replacement for an employee is one of the issues that coaching can help solve. Improving retention makes people more loyal and motivated. Coaching is a voluntary and collaborative activity that helps building trust among employees, and that trust leads to greater loyalty.

Finally, coaching helps to create a positive work culture, produce greater job satisfaction and higher motivation. As an example, a research done by Thomas Wright, Jon Wefald Leadership Chair in Business Administration and professor of management at Kansas State University has shown that happy employees have higher job satisfaction and tend to perform better. Furthermore, such employees are less likely to leave their job and this makes happiness a valuable tool in order to maximize outcomes of an organization.

What is the process of coaching?

Harvard Business Essentials (2004) presents four main steps for a coaching process:

Preparation. The coaching process should not be started until the manager did not collect enough information about employee's current skills and needs. First step for the manager is to observe and identify what are the strengths and weaknesses, what has the impact on his/her coworkers' abilities to achieve goals.

Discussion. " A prepared coach is a better coach. Once you're prepared, you are ready to engage your subordinate in a dialogue that shares strategies for overcoming performance problems and building skills" (Harvard Business <https://assignbuster.com/coaching-counseling-and-mentoring-management-essay/>)

Essentials, p. 8). Within the discussion process, both parties should come to a plan, which would assure that the goal is to improve the performance.

Active Coaching. After the plan is set, the coaching sessions should begin. “An effective coach offers ideas and advice in such a way that the subordinate can hear them, respond to them, and appreciate their value” (Harvard Business Essentials, p. 9). Providing feedback is an extremely important part of the process.

Follow-Up. The follow-up meetings and discussions help you see, what progress the employee has done, or what problems have arisen in his way. During this part of the process you modify the action plan, identify if the employee has got stuck with his assignment, provide help, give an advice, and shift the employee to the right direction.

Finally, in order the coaching process to succeed, a manager should not forget that the goal is not to make an employee feel badly, or a supervisor to show how much he knows. The main purpose is to solve the problems of poor performance and improve the work of the employee and the entire department or company.

Counseling

The definition of counseling from an Oxford Traditional Dictionary says that counseling is the provision of assistance and guidance on personal, social, or psychological problems. Counseling is very similar to coaching, but a counselor basically concentrates on helping an individual to deal with one specific problem. “ Counseling tends to look at the causes for today’s issues;

it looks at the past and the route taken to arrive at the point where the
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individual currently is” (Thorpe and Clifford, p. 10). Counseling in an organization is used only when a solution to a problem is needed. When it comes to performance management, a more popular tool used is previously discussed coaching.

Mentoring

The origin of the term “ Mentor” goes back to the 8th/9th century BC to the tale of “ Odysseus” by Homer. Mentor was a faithful friend of Odysseus, and when Odysseus was leaving to fight in the Trojan War, Mentor’s job was to guide Odysseus’s son’s, Telemachus’ development. It was important for him to be prepared to rule the kingdom.

Today a mentor is generally defined as a wise and trusted adviser. One of the most often used definitions of a mentor says: “ A mentor is someone in the organization, usually older, more experienced, and in a higher-level position, who sponsors or supports another employee (a protégé) who is in a lower level position in the organization” (Robbins and Coulter, p. 530).

“ Mentoring aims to support individual development through both career and psychosocial functions” (HBE, p. 76). Sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure, and challenge are all the career functions of mentoring. These are the activities to boost protégé’s capabilities and position in the organization. Personal psychosocial functions address the inner self of the person, his behavior, workplace values, dilemmas in personal life and sense of acceptance by the group. Career functions enhance learning process, and psychosocial functions improve the individual’s sense of competence and

clarity of identity. Both functions together help the mentee to accept the challenges of each career stage.

When comparing coaching and mentoring, coaching can be considered as a subset of mentoring. The main differences between coaching and mentoring are that coaching is mostly concerned about improving performance, correcting inappropriate behavior, etc., while mentoring is mostly concerned about personal growth of the individual. Mentoring is provided voluntarily, and usually it is recommended that mentor and mentee would be from different chains or departments in the organization. Coaching is sometimes provided not necessarily by volunteering. The coach is the boss of the individual that is being taught and the process is focused on the current problem solving and learning opportunities. These differences between the two methods are listed more clearly in the Exhibit A attached. This table is taken from Harvard Business Essentials book about “ Coaching and Mentoring” which concludes that coaching is about your job while mentoring is about your career.

The benefits and cost of mentoring

Firstly, mentoring develops human assets in the organization. Nowadays human assets are more important than the physical and financial ones. Human assets provide a competitive advantage and this type of assets is the most difficult to replace. Physical assets, such as equipment and materials, and financial assets, such as cash and securities – they are all quite easy to replace and they do not distinguish the organization from another. Human assets are what make the organization create different production, to be competitive and original.

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Secondly, it helps to transfer the knowledge from one employee to another. “ Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is difficult to codify and store in written or database form. It is the type of knowledge found in people’s heads and nowhere else” (HBE, p. 82). For example, the knowledge where to look for a file, or what to do in a certain situation can be described as a tacit knowledge. Such information is hard to record and make available for others, but it is very important for the organizations. Mentoring is a way to transfer such knowledge from one generation to another and prevent a loss of it.

Finally, it provides help to keep valuable employees in a company. The goal for most of the organizations is to reduce the number of positions occupied by low performing employees and to create vacancies for better qualified people at the same time minimizing the turnover of the high-performers. When mentoring people, employees find themselves needful and accepted in the organizations. They are more satisfied with their work, growing their skills and exploring their potential.

Mentoring Cost

The benefits of mentoring are very important for a company’s success. But what is the price of it and is it worth wasting your own time for such volunteering activity? Unfortunately, this question cannot be answered that easily. Only individuals can decide themselves, if it is worth to spend the time. However, many executives encourage mentoring saying that it is worth the cost and viewing it as a natural part of the work. The cost of mentoring can be measured only by the time mentor spends and the commitment he gives. It is not possible not only to measure the cost of mentoring, but also to transfer the benefit to a financial amount. We could measure improvement in <https://assignbuster.com/coaching-counseling-and-mentoring-management-essay/>

job satisfaction, but it is not possible to say its actual value. But it is worth it and it is even noticed that more of young people earn more at a young age and are better educated, better perform at work, get more pleasure out of what they are doing, etc.

Real life examples:

“ The Scooter Store” is one of the leading suppliers in America of scooters and power chairs for people with disabilities. It is among the Fortune’s Best Companies to work for, because of preparing enjoyable work environment. Forty percent of its employees’ salaries are based on their performance.

“ LifeBridge Health” is another company that was announced as one of the Fortune 100 Best Companies to work for. It is a regional health care organization in northwest Baltimore and it was named one of the best companies to work for because of the way it enhances people to seek for further training and education. Entry-level employees can take computer classes in order to prepare them for higher-paying jobs.

360° Mentoring

Elizabeth Collins in her article about mentoring explains a 360° mentoring process. She addresses the differences in mentoring in organizations that have arisen in 15 years. According to her, 15 years ago, mentors were usually people from several rungs up in the organization. Nowadays organizations get flatter with their inner structure and it is even recommended to have a small network of mentors, consisting of several peers and subordinates. This would be the 360° mentoring model.

In order to build an effective model, you have to follow these three main steps:

The most important part is to define the goals you are trying to achieve.

What is it exactly, that you want to learn, what experience to gain? Once you get a narrow list of four or five objectives, find the people who you would like to be your mentors. It is important to clarify your expectations when someone agrees to mentor you and to decide on how often you will have meetings.

Another step is to make every mentoring relationship reciprocal. According to Collins, the old model of mentoring was one-way street and although the mentor may receive satisfaction from teaching, that was simply a by-product process. The new model is different because both members of this mentoring relationship gain teachable knowledge.

The final step in the 360° mentoring relationship is a regular evaluation of the progress. Sometimes the two chosen parties do not manage to work together and the time is wasted. That is why every quarter it is recommended for both members to ask each other – is this working for us? If the mentoring relationship is unsuccessful, it is very important to end it rather than walk away from a failing one.

Who should have a mentor?

Some people think that everyone should have a mentor. However, the majority does not. The cost of mentoring is not defined, but not everyone is interested in it since not all the people benefit from it. From Harvard

Business Essentials:

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Employees who stand to gain the most from mentoring include those individuals who have either moved up to a higher level, have moved into a new unit, or have recently joined the company. These people are in unfamiliar territory, which means that they may not understand the unwritten rules of the organization, or whom they can turn to in getting things done. Assuming that they have an acceptable level of self-awareness and an eagerness to learn, these people are good candidates for mentoring (HBE, p. 84).

People who are more career-oriented, self-aware, ambitious, eager to learn and take more responsibility are more likely to be interested in mentoring relationships. Furthermore, a protégé that is not interested in learning will not reach much in his career.

In conclusion, all of these methods are tools for supervisors to correct poor performance of employees. Some of the tools, like coaching and counseling, are more job rather than career-oriented. Mentoring is a wider concept, which includes both of the instruments mentioned previously and not only helps to improve the performance, but also develops human assets in the organization, helps to transfer the knowledge more effectively and give long lasting benefits for individual's career.