

Example of essay on coaching and leadership development in the workplace

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Summary

‘ Coaching is arguably the most powerful method for developing managers’ capacity for leadership.’¹

The International Coach Foundation (ICF) defines coaching as “ partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” ². As a management practice, coaching in a modern organization is inextricably linked to building a strong leadership pipeline and achieving the high performance standards that are demanded of it. In this report we examine the importance of having a common, structured coaching framework and approach and a supportive organization culture to ensure that both the individual and the organization derive maximum benefit from coaching. Such a culture not only promotes the use of effective coaching techniques and behaviors but also fosters and promotes people management structures that provide opportunities for leaders to practice the skills learnt in a culture of continuous improvement. However, as most writers will be quick to point out coaching, coaching models and leadership development cannot be accurately quantified in isolation. They form part of a concerted people and leadership development strategy of an organization and can truly add value only when integrated with other people development practices such as robust performance tracking systems and periodic appraisals. These serve as important check points and reward and recognition mechanisms that bolster the effort of both the coach and the client (person being coached).

The Relationship between Coaching and Leadership Development

The purpose of coaching for leaders is usually to help develop key attitudes and people management behaviors. This is a vastly different from building actual productivity or production enhancing skill based capabilities.

Considering that the building of attitudes and relevant behavior will take place over the long period of time, using a coaching approach ensures that any basic training delivered in the classroom is successfully migrated and implemented in the live environment.

The premise of coaching is that the behavior of an individual will change through an examination of current behavior, the impact of the behavior on the situation, the environment and the people involved in the context of achieving personal and organizational objectives. Through the effective use of self-reflection and feedback the client (or person being coached) will examine his or her behavior with the guidance of the leader and identify different ways in which their behavior can be modified and adjusted to achieve the desired goals or objectives more quickly or more effectively. In order to foster open communication and facilitate this influence process it is critical that the leader establish a high level of trust and rapport with the client. This is one of the most important steps in effective coaching. In *The Executive Coaching Handbook: Principles and Guidelines for a Successful Coaching Partnership* the authors note that breaches of trust or actions that run counter to agreements and guidelines are extremely serious, especially if the executive suffers negative consequences such as a loss of reputation, income, or relationships..

Of the different steps articulated above one of the most challenging stages is the identification and setting of goals. Since the coaching process assumes the involvement and commitment of the client at every level, getting the client to clearly identify the goals that are important for them to achieve the results or impact that they are hoping for is the most important step. In an organizational context, this step becomes even more important if we wish to measure the return on investment for the coaching intervention. Clearly identifying, defining and articulating the goals that are to be achieved at the end of the coaching relationship and throughout the coaching process is the first challenge for the coach and client. As with coaching there are a number of different approaches to effective goal setting. However, the most popular approach is the setting of SMART goals that clearly define the Specific behavior you want to be able to demonstrate (S), how you will observe and measure improvement in this behavior and what target improvement measures you set for yourself (M), how achievable or attainable are these targets (A), how relevant is the goal for you, your position and the organization (R) and finally what are the timelines involved in achieving these goals (T). Once these are clearly established the remaining parts of the GROW model become much easier to articulate and then work towards solving. The skills involved in drawing out these priorities from the client and helping the client prioritize these goals are possibly the most important skills for an effective coach to develop.

Application

When applying the process of goal setting in practice coaching sessions it is important for the coach to carry out the following process. Since it is the first step in the coaching model, in order for goal setting to be done in a collaborative manner it is important that the coach establish rapport and trust with the client. Establishing trust can be accomplished by encouraging the client to openly discuss issues that they are facing and supporting them through empathetic listening, ensuring that you paraphrase or reflect back responses and clarify any ambiguous issues for the client. Once a desired level of rapport has been established the coach can begin to ask a series of probing questions to help narrow down and identify goals that the client may want to achieve. Some examples of goal setting questions may be: How do you want your career to progress? What outcome do you want from this process? How do you feel this process will help you? Will this session be sufficient to cover the points you need to cover? Or what would it take for this process to be a success?

One of the associated challenges of implementing this kind of coaching is the resistance to feedback that may be encountered. This resistance usually occurs when the client either does not understand has not clearly articulated the desired goal or the ideal behavior required to achieve that goal or the client has not received sufficient feedback in the past and hence is unable to objectively examine his behavior in the context of achieving the goal or performing the tasks required of him. It is best in these situations to take a couple of steps backwards, to re-establish rapport and the free flow of communication in a safe a trusting environment. The coach should then

revisit the goal setting discussion and redefine or clarify understanding of the desired outcome and ensuring that rapport is maintained begin to examine current behavior in the context of the desired outcome in a positive assertive communication style through two way dialogue with the client. As the coaching relationship progresses the client will begin to develop the faculty of self-examination and proactively assess present behavior in the context of goals, thus making the process of giving feedback easier for the coach.

Works Cited

Association for Coaching. (2010). Leadership coaching : working with leaders to develop elite performance. (J. Passmore, Ed.) London, Philadelphia, New Delhi: Kogan Page.

International Coach Foundation. (2008). ICF Code of Ethics. Retrieved from International Coach Foundation: <http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/Ethics-2009.pdf>

Lee, G. (2003). Leadership Coaching: From Personal Insight to Organisational Performance. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

The Executive Coaching Forum. (2008). The Executive Coaching Handbook: Principles and Guidelines for a successful Coaching Partnership. Retrieved from Institute of Coaching: <http://www.instituteofcoaching.org/images/pdfs/ExecutiveCoachingHandbook.pdf>

The Learning Network. (n. d.). John Whitmore: the GROW model. Retrieved from The Learning Network: http://repository.learningnetworks.org.uk/tayforth/coaching_models%20v2.pdf

Whitmore, J. (2002). Coaching for Performance - Growing people, performance and purpose. Boston, USA: Nicholas Beasley Publishing.