

COACHING AS A MANAGERIAL TOOL WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT: *The current trend in human resource management underlines the main role of a leader in motivating employees and helping them develop in the respective skills and talents. Researches and studies in the field of human resource management and organizational culture have indicated that effective and successful leaders are those who are exceptional motivators and coaches. In this paper the researcher defines coaching, identifies its skills, techniques, tools, objectives in addition to the major differences and similarities with other approaches such as counselling and mentoring.*

KEYWORDS: Coaching, Counseling, Training

INTRODUCTION

The highly competitive business environment with clients' increasing expectations, push organizations leaders to hit greater levels of productivity and service regardless of their decreasing capital and staff resources. Managers nowadays empower their staff to help them to operate in more self-directed environments that at the end lead to greater levels of production. Since managers have moved from controlling to empowering their employees, coaching as a part of techniques methods became fundamental managerial function. Several different elements played a specific role in the increased popularity of coaching in today's organizations. Many organizations operate under time pressure and dealing with change is nowadays a challenge. The capability to learn and adapt is becoming important for employees. Hence, coaching started to enable employees to regulate the major changes in the working environment. Moreover, the organizations are flatter, there are broader management roles and lower job security which also have been contributing factors to the growth of coaching. This as a result implies that newly skilled employees desire more responsibilities, so coaching can thus support these employees in achieving these changes. Coaching, rather than traditional training methods, helps to support different learning styles which could support employees. Also, coaching can offer a good approach for development, which can be focused on the individualized, just-in-time development (Jarvis, 2004, p.39).

According to Peterson and Hicks (2006, P.14), coaching is described as a “process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop them and become more effective”. Minor (2004) said that coaching is a directive process conducted by a manger to train and orient an employee to the realities of the workplace and to help the employee remove barriers to optimum work performance Coaching can also be defined as a form of directive teaching based on demonstration, explanation, feedback and encouragements (Farmer, 2007). In addition, coaching is away to discover and encourage the potential of employees. It includes continues flow of instructions, demonstration, dialog, practice, support and feedback. It needs building up a partnership based on mutual respect. It requires that managers continually enhance their skills and polish their tools (Minor, 2004, p.65). Coaching

uses a systematic methodology of inquiry that encourages executives or teams to answer questions candidly. The coach then seeks a solution through a rigorous process of self-discovery and awareness, goal setting and accountability, action learning and execution, and evaluation and revision (Gladis, 2007, P.59). In conclusion, coaching for development is a process of building a working environment and relationship that enhance the development of skills and the performance of one or both parties. Coaching must be supported and reinforced by the performance management system and the business culture (Minor, 2004).

The Objective of Coaching

According to Minor (2004), objectives of coaching can be listed as the following:

1. To make job easier because employees have the right skills for the job.
2. To enable managers to delegate responsibilities and empower employee's.
3. To build reputation as a manager who drives for results and develops people.
4. To increase employee's commitment to results because they know that the performance expectation is and how to achieve them.
5. To develop collaboration between team members because they have to coach each other.
6. To increase employee motivation and initiatives because positive recognition and feedback are given.
7. To help improve the quality of employee's work.
8. To help avoid surprises and defensiveness during performance appraisal.
9. To help increases creativity and innovation.
10. To increase team cohesion due to clarified goals and roles.

Based on Homan and Miller (2006) work, coaching helps the organization in four main ways:

1. Maintaining top-performing employees.
2. Creating a positive work environment.
3. Increasing revenue.
4. Decreasing erosion in customer revenue and satisfaction by keeping the personnel for a longer time.

Also, according to (Wood, 2008), the top three coaching objectives are:

1. Life development: balancing personal and professional roles more effectively.
2. Leadership: developing interpersonal and team leadership skills.
3. Self-awareness: becoming more aware of my shortcomings and growth opportunities as a leader, and understanding the origins and history of my behaviour in work and its impact on others

Coaching and Mentoring

Both coaching and mentoring involve a one-to-one relationship that provides an opportunity for the employees to improve, adapt and learn. The term mentoring has its origin from Greek mythology, when Odysseus told his friend, Mentor, to take care of the education of his son. Odysseus told Mentor to “tell his son all he knows about everything” (Jarvis, 2004, p.19). A mentor occupies a close interpersonal role and helps guide a protégé’s corporate career choices. A mentor can be a formally designated role or an informally acquired one. Formal mentors help their protégé understand the organization and support their journey within it, with the assumption of a long-term career in the company. An informal mentor does the same, but is more focused on addressing more personal and career developmental needs—if necessary outside the organization (Wood, 2008, P.3). Much of confusion arises because the skills of a mentor and coach overlap to some extent-coaches in stimulator style are behaviour like a mentor, using their own experience to ask questions that lead learners to their own insights and conclusions, helping them to develop their own wisdom and experience. But mentors also have several other roles to play which are typically outside the coach's remit. They help the learners to build wider networks, from which to learn and influence. They act as sounding board and counsellor, responding to the individual's needs for emotional support; and they act as advisor and frequently role model (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2005, p.5).

Coaching and Counseling

Counseling is a supportive process conducted by a manager to help an employee define and work through personal problems or organizational change that affects job performance (Minor, 2004, p.3). Counseling is a form of non-directive communication, based upon the principle of asking questions to lead people to solutions to their problems, as opposed giving advice or telling people what you think they should do (Farmer, 2007, p.70). Coaching and counseling share many of the same skills, such as listening, showing empathy, asking questions, providing information and creating action plans .at times, they may seem to overlap (Minor, 2004, p.3). When it comes to similarities and differences between coaching and counselling, one of the most important things is that many of coaching’s models and techniques are inspired from psychology and associated therapies. Counseling needs people with high skills because the focus is on helping individuals to solve and support underlying psychological problems. In this case, counselling can be used if the employees are unable to resolve problems in their behaviour during the coaching sessions (Jarvis.2004, p.20).

Coaching and Managing

One to one coaching is the most effective way to develop and support individuals in their roles, managers need to develop their coaching skills and learn how to help staff to be their best managers and consistently reflecting the professional standards, attitude and commitments wanted in the work place. Coaching for both transportation and professional practice variety, shares something in common –good coaches move people forward in comfort, speed style (Duan. 2002, p.46). A necessary aspect of a manager role is to coach others, but not every manager is equipped to do so. Coach does require a focus and approach, as well as skills.

A manager has a formal role within an organization and is in charge of ensuring that the primary tasks of the team/department/business unit/corporation are met. A manager can utilize coaching skills to informally coach a follower, but this “coaching” is in the service of the subordinate’s organizational task. Asking a manager to formally coach a subordinate is structurally

incongruent – it pits the roles of manager (for whom the organizational task is primary) and coach (for whom the individual well-being is primary) against each other (Wood, 2008, P.2).

Coaching Types

The most common types of coaching in use are performance and skills coaching. Coaching types aimed at the personal needs/concerns of employees, such as life and career coaching were among the least common forms of coaching used (Jarvis, 2004, p.24).

1. Performance coaching: the activities here are aimed at enhancing an individual's performance in their current role at work. The specific issues covered by the coaching will vary, but the aim will always be to increase their effectiveness and productivity at work. Generally, performance coaching derives its theoretical underpinnings and models from business and sports psychology as well as general psychological theory.
2. Skills coaching: this focuses on the core skills an employee needs to perform in their role. Skills coaching provide a flexible, adaptive, 'just-in-time' approach to skills development. Coaching programmes are tailored specifically to the individual and are generally focused on achieving several skill development goals that are linked to the needs of the organization.
3. Career coaching: the activities focus on the individual's career concerns, with the coach eliciting and using feedback on the individual's capabilities as part of a discussion of career options. The process should lead to increased clarity, personal change and forward action.
4. Personal or life coaching: This form of coaching provides support to individuals wishing to make some form of significant changes happen within their lives. Coaches help individuals to explore what they want in life and how they might achieve their aspirations and fulfil their needs. Personal/life coaching generally takes the individual's agenda as its start point.
5. Business coaching: coaching is always conducted within the constraints placed on the individual or group by the organizational context. The term is used to refer to any coaching activity that takes place in a business setting, so by definition overlaps with other terms.
6. Executive coaching: by improving the performance of the most influential people within the organization, the theory goes that business results should improve. Executive coaching is often delivered by coaches operating from outside the organization whose services are requested for an agreed duration or number of coaching sessions.

The Key Players in the Coaching Process

The primary players in any coaching activity involves the coach and the individual. Other key stakeholders include the person representing the organization's interests – most frequently an HR practitioner and the individual's manager. Both parties are interested in improving the individual's performance and therefore their contribution to the organization.

1. The individual and coach: This is the most visible relationship, and requires good matching for it to work effectively.

2. The coach and HR: These parties agree to the contractual relationship, with the HR practitioner representing the organization's interests. HR should thoroughly brief the coach so they understand the organizational context in which the coaching will take place.
3. The individual and HR: HR must explain why the individual is being coached, and allay any concerns they have about it. They must also assess that there is a genuine need for coaching and that the individual is ready for it.
4. The individual and line manager: The line manager must understand and be supportive of the individual during the coaching intervention, and for ongoing development plans. They can also be involved in helping the individual decide the development objectives for the coaching programme. e. HR and the line manager: HR must manage the line manager's expectations and explain his or her role in supporting the coaching relationship.

Coaching Skills and Tools

According to Minor (2004), the following are the list of skills of a coach:

1. Sponsor: A sponsor gives the high performing employee exposure to important information, decision makers and other people in organization, the sponsor assists employees in determining assignments that will help them grow and meet their career goals. This role should be used when an employee has demonstrated outstanding skills and contribution and is looking for a new challenge to grow.
2. Mentor: A mentor is one who is involved in a lifelong process of self-development, stays current in his or her respective fields and understands how networks operate. A mentor can help an employee understand how change occurs, as well as how to plan for and implement stage.
3. Appraiser: An appraisal helps employees assess their strength as well as their development needs, blind spots, interests and career goals. The appraiser contract with the employee to observe his or her performance under certain conditions and provide appreciate feedback and support.
4. Role model: Serving as a role model is crucial to coaching, as you have to be seen as trust-worthy, competent and credible in order to coach other role models and demonstrate an appropriate leadership style in their corporate culture.
5. Teacher: The role of the teacher is important in providing information about a business strategy, vision, values, services and products, and customer so employees can perform effectively in their jobs. Employees sometimes need a view of the big 32 pictures as well as specific job skills. The teacher provides this, frequently when the business strategy services or product change or to orient new employees to the business or introduce a team to a new manager approach and vision.

Coaching Techniques

According to (Durbin, 2005, p.7), the following are number of techniques that a coach can rely on to enhance the performance:

1. Communicate clear expectations to group members: For employee to perform better and grow, it is necessary to have a clear view of what is expected from them.
2. Build relationships: Effective coach builds good personal relationships with employees and works on improving their interpersonal skills.
3. Provide regular feedback: on areas that require specific improvement. A coach should identify what behaviour, attitude, or skills require improvement.
4. Listen actively: An active listener tries to grasp both facts and feelings. It is also essential to encourage the coaches to talk about his performance.
5. Help remove obstacles: and help employees to develop self-improvement.
6. Determine if an employee has a “skill” or a “will” problem: Skill problems require much patience and training; will problems require motivation.
7. Offer emotional support: An effective way of giving emotional support to those, whose performance is not at their best, is to use positive rather than negative motivators.
8. Reflect content or meaning: An efficient way of that is to rephrase and sum up concisely what the group member is saying.
9. Give some gentle advice and guidance: Part of that is to use the word ‘could’ instead of ‘should’.
10. Allow for modelling of desired performance and behaviour: An effective approach is to show the employee by example what composes the desired behaviour.
11. Gain commitment to change and maintain the big picture: Unless the leader receives a commitment from the team member to carry through with the solution to a problem, the team member may not attain higher performance. The best coach can see each situation as only one element of an individual’s overall performance.
12. Observe performance on the job: and with clients (mentoring) and offer chances to the employees and expose them to strong leaders. m. Applaud good results: and recognize and reward excellent performance.

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