

MTD Quick Tips

How To Create A Coaching Culture

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How To Create A Coaching Culture

One of my on-going pieces of HR Consulting work at the moment is helping to create a coaching culture within an organisation.

Now what I am not saying is that the company wants to adopt a "brainwashing" mentality to embed the culture in all that they do and that this is the only management style they adopt!

What I am saying here is that they want to achieve results "By creating a certain culture" to their ways of workings and coaching has been identified as one of the major approaches they want to use.

I'd like to share some of thoughts with you on this.

Who knows?

You might want to go down this route as well.

When developing a coaching strategy it is first useful to look at the 3 main applications of coaching in the workplace:

Short Term - Performance Enhancement/On the job

Medium Term - Job Development and skills enhancement

Longer Term - Career management, succession planning, professional growth

When formulating a coaching strategy the powers that be need to answer the following questions with regards to each:

- What plan do we have in place for the short, medium and long term? If any? How are we improving the effectiveness of our staff at each stage?
- What are our goals and objectives for each stage?
- If we improved each stage by 30% what would this mean to the customer?
- How committed are we to each stage? Which one is most important to us as a business?

If your company has immediate performance issues you are obviously going to look at the shorter term.

If your company has high staff turnover rates you will want to look at ways to keep them and develop them and hence a medium/long term plan is required.

Its horses for courses!

Coaching is a powerful management tool and one which should become a natural component of your on-going interactions with employees.

Coaching is powerful because the end result of effective coaching can be any and all of the following:

- High morale and productivity
- Empowered staff who function independently
- Motivated workforce
- Well trained employees
- Employees who work as a team

So, after you have formulated the "why" it is now time to look at the "how".

You know, I just love going into companies to first work out the "why" and then the "how". It is a great satisfaction for me as a HR Consultant and trainer to see initial thoughts on paper become a fully blown project plan!

I digress!

So back to the implementation plan!

In 95% of the companies that I have consulted with the end product has been some sort of companywide "training programme".

When I say programme I mean that to spread the "coaching culture" XYZ company are implementing a:

- Leadership development programme
or
- Management development programme
or
- Coaching for managers programme
or
- Customer service excellence programme

Coaching forms a large part of the above programmes.

Indeed on all of the programmes that I have set up and delivered in companies there is always an element of "know thyself" in them whether it be managerial styles, leadership style, learning styles etc.

Coaching is more than just learning "How to coach models"

It's all about understanding other people and how to communicate and get the best out of others.

I see so many "coaching" training courses just concentrate on the "how to coach" approach.

This, in my opinion, is wrong.

Coaching is conducted between two or more people who see the world in different ways, have different values, beliefs, opinions, learning styles and everybody absorbs information in different ways as well!

In implementing a coaching culture it is very important that all of the "management" of the company go through the programme.

Right the way from the very top to the supervisors and team leaders on the shop floor it is very important for staff buy in to know that the MD or Senior Management have also had to build a 2 metre tower made out of dry spaghetti and marsh mallows in less than 15 minutes!!!!

No matter what programme is used your staff should be equipped with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours that will enable them to coach:

WALKING THE FLOOR
This is "managing by walking around and observing". Being able to give immediate feedback and informal coaching whilst carrying out the normal day to day duties.

CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS
By listening in/role plays and observing you will be able to provide feedback to your team on their customer interactions, you'll help them develop and improve customer service skills.

FOCUSED OR ONE TO ONE
By spending 30 minutes every month reviewing results, you'll help staff focus on priorities.

FORMAL COACHING AND PERFORMANCE
Can be part of your performance management system.

HOTSPOTS for coaching culture failure:

1. No commitment from the top. If you have not got this question, why?

2. Coaching must become a way of life. As soon as it becomes and activity that only comes out at appraisal time you are in deep trouble!

3. Lack of budget - training and development costs money.

4. Lack of persistence. This is an investment in the future.

5. Lack of regular 121's. If the staff are not having regular 121's each month they will view the programme as just lip service.

6. Using in house trainers who deliver all types of training. You need to make a big bang impact by using coaching professionals.

Coaching is most successful when an organisation captures and implements best practice, and develops a competency framework related to best practice and meeting its goals.

The relationship between these factors is shown below where the highest impact for coaching is seen in the context of Best Practice and Competencies Development.

There are three other areas that need careful consideration:

Management Style

If the management style is one of command and control, a teacher-pupil relationship, coaching struggles to move beyond the classroom.

Organisational Maturity

For an organisation that is purely focused on outputs, coaching will be viewed as another transactional activity, rather than an instinctive and normal process.

Learning Organisation

By definition, coaching is a closed loop feedback model. Coaching will only be of value if we learn from the feedback we are given and change our behaviour as a consequence.

The above areas are all highly interconnected.

A weakness in one area tends to be reflected as a weakness in another, which explains why many organisations cannot escape the vicious circle of trying to embed coaching through a series of coaching courses one after another, rather than the virtuous spiral of a coaching mentality driving learning opportunities that produce best practice, which is reinforced and developed through further coaching.

5 WAYS TO GET IT RIGHT

1. Every person with line management responsibility goes through the programme

2. Everyone in the company knows "WHY" you are doing this and what the end result is

3. Excellent communication all throughout the programme including successes

4. A commitment that EVERYONE receives formal coaching at least once per month

5. Listen to your staff to find out what is working and what isn't with the strategy. Like with most things your foot soldiers will tell you what needs to be done to make it an overwhelming success. Hold focus groups before, during and after the implementation.

Is coaching on your list of priorities? If it isn't, it should be. All organisations know that their success depends on having great people doing a great job. This sounds a simple objective, but as we all know, it is not necessarily easy to put into place.

If coaching is on your list of priorities, how do you ensure coaching is part of the way you and your organisation work, rather than the latest fad that fails to be sustainable in the long-term?

I hope that gives you some idea of how to implement a coaching culture. I have tried to be as generic as I can because there isn't a one size fits all approach!

If you would like me to come in and talk through how we would make this possible in your company please feel free to drop me a line!

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About Sean McPheat



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Founder and MD of international management development firm MTD Training, Sean McPheat is widely regarded as a leading authority on modern day management and leadership.

Sean is a bestselling author, and has been recognised for his own business building skills through the **British Business Awards** and has been featured in the **Who's Who Of Britain's Business Elite**.

He has been a regular judge for the UK's Young Enterprise Programme but was not as horrible as Simon Cowell (well almost!)



Sean has been featured on **CNN International, the BBC, SKY, ITV, The Guardian, Forbes, Arena Magazine, Marketing Weekly, Business Zone, Winning Edge** and radio stations such as BBC WM and LBC (London's Big Conversation).

Sean has over **250 media credits** to his name and his weekly email tips go out to over **60,000 people** interested in management and development strategies.

Sean is also a **much sought after media figure and motivational speaker** on all topics related to management, HR, business improvement and entrepreneurialism.