

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Coaching."

RESULTS SUPPORT THE VALUE OF BUSINESS COACHING

Just a decade ago, coaching was considered an athletic endeavor. The typical coach wore a whistle around the neck and paced the sideline of the sporting arena.

David A. Thomas, a professor at Harvard Business School, recently exclaimed that professional, executive, life, and corporate coaching are the hottest services in corporate America today. As a hundred million dollar industry, it is second only to the Information Technology industry in US growth rate. Time Magazine (September 25, 2000) reported that corporations believe that coaching helps keep employees and that the dollar investment is far less than the cost of replacing an employee. According to One to One Coaching School, coaching fees range from \$600-\$2000 a month for three or four 30-60 minute phone conversations.

Business Wire released the results of a study involving 100 executives from Fortune 1000 companies who received business coaching for 6-12 months to change behavior and sharpen performance. The age range of the participants was 40-49 and most held positions of Vice President or higher. The programs resulted in an average return on investment of 5.7 times the expense. Perceived benefits included increased productivity, quality, organizational strength, customer service, reducing customer complaints and retaining executives. One to One Coaching School reported that The Xerox Corporation's research revealed that 87% of skills acquired through training are lost without follow-up. That is the role of the coach.

The Manchester Executive Coaching Survey



reports that the top management behavioral problem with how they manage people is poor communication skills, both written and verbal.

Just what is business executive coaching? The first step is to assess the need and establish specific goals for the individual. No two people are the same. Coaching requires flexibility and a willingness to modify the focus as needs occur. The coach lends expertise and experience as well as uncovering hidden barriers that hinder the client's success. Coaching goals are established after an evaluation and the coach has received input from the person being coached and other sources.

Once the goals are established, the client drives the need. Goals are subject to midstream calibrations. Successful coaching requires active participation. Not only should assignments be completed, the client needs to meet regularly with the coach and be prepared to discuss progress and failure. From time to time the coach will survey the client's interaction with people and gather input, with the client's full agreement, from those people with whom the client interacts on a regular basis.

The goal of the coach is to work him/herself out of a job. The client must not become dependent upon the coach. To accomplish this successfully, the client learns to self-assess and correct as well as gather feedback from others. Follow-through is essential even when the coaching sessions extend over a year's time.

While the whistles are not around the neck, the business/executive coach teaches new skills, improves performance, corrects errors, encourages, and holds the client responsible. The greatest day for a coach is the day the client no longer needs the coach.

What Our Clients Are Saying

"I really learned a lot in your communication workshop and can't wait to learn more. I spent all night analyzing everyone I know and trying to figure out what communication style they exhibit."
Rebecca Springer, Atlanta GA



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LOOKING AHEAD:

- ◆ The June issue of The Exchange will focus on Interviewing.

LOOKING BACK:

- ◆ For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).
- ◆ Re-read the [03/2002](#) edition: Mentoring.

The mark of a successful coach is not that the clients stay, but that they leave with what they came to acquire.

Anonymous



Helpful Hints:

- Have a list of questions before you interview your potential coach.
- Brainstorm with yourself to uncover what improvement you want in yourself.
- Complete your assignments thoroughly and think through what you learned before your next meeting with your coach.

What we learn to do, we learn by doing.

Aristotle



To learn more about it, click here!

COACHING COUNTS!

Are you a "team player"? Have you ever "dropped the ball"? Remember the feeling you got when you knocked your last project "out of the park"? How fast did you run when your co-worker "passed you the baton" on an assignment? These are only a few of our everyday sports terms that we have adopted into our corporate lives.

Whether you are on an athletic team or an office/work team, having a good coach can make the difference in total team success. Let's look at three examples of how having a coach in either arena can help you and your team improve.

Preparation

Athletic: A good athletic coach ensures the players are properly conditioned by having them exercise, review possible game scenarios, and execute plays on a regular basis.

Corporate: A good corporate coach ensures the team members are ready to perform by giving them practice on solving potential challenges and teaching them how to use their natural and acquired skills to ensure victory.

Decision-Making

Athletic: A good athletic coach calls effective plays throughout a game and makes quick decisions when time is short.

Corporate: A good corporate coach listens to the challenges that have been presented and is able to confidently share what needs to happen to ensure the preferred outcome.

Strategy

Athletic: A good athletic coach can enter a game knowing exactly what the team has to do in order to win. He/she is also flexible enough to switch from a game plan that is ineffective so that the team can get better results.

Corporate: A good corporate coach has a plan for each person's success. This plan is created with the end goal in mind. Coaches can motivate their people so that they can see where they want to go. The coach also illustrates what it will take for them to get there.

Coaching can be the link between scoring a touchdown or gaining a promotion. The coach can make the difference between winning the championship game and delivering a superior presentation. The coach can help call the play that changes the flow of a game or change your approach in communicating with a difficult person. If you or someone you know could benefit from a corporate coach, please call the interpersonal communication coaching experts at TLC. Whether on the field, or in the field, we want to coach you to victory!

QUESTIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE

Ben Cairns, M.A.



Critical thinking skills combined with independent action can advance organizations and individual careers. Building these prized skill-sets in key employees is the aim of both managers and coaches. How do you do it? One executive said that he liked to let his people occasionally fail and learn from their mistakes. Another executive said that he wanted his people to come to him with solutions for him to approve, not problems for him to solve. How do you cultivate a staff of people who generate solutions and progressively develop leadership potential?

The answer is simple - ask questions. "What" and "How" questions are the key types of questions to ask someone that has come to you with a problem or a solution. If they come to you with a problem, ask, "What do you think the solution is for this?" If they bring a solution, ask, "How will you implement it?"

People who seek guidance from someone else and find that they are almost always handed a good answer also find it easier to just ask before thinking. When they encounter a problem or issue, they don't hesitate to go to their manager. Following the safe and easy route is just human nature. Because it's often faster and easier to just offer a solution rather than ask questions and wait for answers, managers often fall into the pattern of just telling people what to do and moving on.

The problem with this type of pattern is that it reinforces dependent behaviors. In busy times or times where the manager has to be away from the office, little can get done without independent workers. The solution piece is "out to lunch." And, over time, fewer people will develop the skills necessary for succession to leadership. This leads to the necessity of hiring from outside the company and having current employees who won't see the promise of a career as a reason to stay with the company.

In a nutshell, coaches and managers build critical thinking skills and leadership by asking open questions. And, they progressively ask questions until solutions are created and the ownership belongs to the employee. This simple process develops employees who will automatically think critically and develop solutions any time they encounter a problem. At TLC, we think that questions build independent thinking. What do you think?

ANOTHER WORD FOR RESPONSIBILITY

Coaching is a developmental process that depends upon accountability for outcomes. Accountability is the personal responsibility for following through and getting results. What can a coach do in order to enhance accountability? Here are some pointers that have worked well for us and the people that we work with:

- Co-develop plans for training. This gives personal ownership to the person who is being coached. Ask "what" and "how" questions to get more of their input (see "Questions for Independence" in this article).
- Include specific, measurable, realistic, scheduled objectives in the plan.
- Objectives should be measurable in that outcomes are defined in terms of specific results or observable behaviors. These specific results and observable behaviors are most effective when they are defined in advance of implementation.
- Discuss any negative consequences that may result from failure to achieve the objectives, and be as specific as possible. This is also most effective when it is done in advance of implementation.
- Give feedback as close to "real time" as possible. At minimum, "checkpoints" or "midpoints" allow time for midstream adjustments.
- Celebrate and reward success.

Accountability sounds negative when consequences are dangled menacingly above one's head like the Sword of Damocles. With the above recommendations, accountability can be more like "the responsibility for a beneficial outcome that is desired and anticipated by all parties."

COACHING T.I.P.s

Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

Last week a client in Atlanta wanted to discuss how the communication tools he applied resulted in a favorable outcome for everyone involved. When leaving his office he said with a smile, "Thanks for the great tip!"

That statement led me to write this month's column on the origin of the word "tip." "Tip" began as an acronym in the early 1900's meaning, "To Insure Promptness." In old English Inns and Taverns, helpers were poorly paid. Customers would pay them more when they moved faster or were friendlier.

"Tipping" someone became common practice to get service workers to be nicer or to reward someone for doing well. As these initials became an accepted word, giving someone a helpful "tip" also became a common term for giving someone advice or suggestions for doing something better.

If you routinely make tough decisions, retain the help of a professional who can provide relevant and effective tips on a regular basis. Although there are percentages we give for tipping, practical and effective information is priceless. Listen when a Communication Coach or anyone else offers you a helpful tip. It could save you time and money, and that allows you to give bigger tips too!



FEATURED SERVICE: Receive TLC Training Through Telephone Conference Call

Our popular program, "Success Over Stress," or, "S.O.S," has been condensed for a convenient and powerful one-hour teleconference. S.O.S will be offered four times in the month of June, scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, June 3 at 9 a.m. EDT
- Monday, June 9 at 12 noon EDT
- Thursday, June 19 at 4 p.m. EDT
- Friday, June 27 at 12 noon EDT

Learn about the physical and chemical changes that your body experiences under stress and how to spot them before damage is done. Know what you can do to release the stress and live a more peaceful life at work and home. The cost is just \$25 and credit cards or company purchase orders are accepted. Enrollment is limited in order to give you an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers that will positively change your life.

To enroll, call TLC at **1-888-BECAUSE** or email us at tlc@talklisten.com, giving your name, contact information including a phone number and address, and the conference date that you are registering for. Our Office Administrator will contact you to confirm enrollment and payment option. You will receive the phone number and code, along with written instructions and an outline for the training program. Act now. This may be the best hour you spend all month.



The boss drives people; the leader coaches them. The boss depends on authority; the leader on good will. The boss inspires fear; the leader inspires enthusiasm. The boss says "I"; the leader says "WE." The boss fixes the blame for the breakdown, the leader fixes the breakdown. The boss says, "GO"; the leader says, "LET'S GO!"

H. Gordon Selfridge

I like to have a thing suggested rather than told in full. When every detail is given, the mind rests satisfied and the imagination loses its desire to use its own wings.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich



CEO CORNER

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

I remember my first coach in high school. Her name was Teia Badesque. She was a dance major at the University of Cincinnati, hired to coach our drill team to improve performance. She was made welcome by everyone, except me. I was the captain of the drill team and resented her interference. After just four months with her, we won two first place trophies and I learned how to choreograph routines from the audience's perspective.

My next coach was a tennis pro who made me spend hours throwing tennis racquets. I was anxious to hit the ball, cover the court, challenge an opponent, but instead imagined that the discarded racquets were aimed at my persistent coach. For years following those lessons, I was able to ace serves even to opponents who had a much higher skill level. I guess the boring exercise taught me to follow through on my serves.

Can people benefit from coaching even if they go grudgingly? Some of my clients come only because they initially have no choice. When I see their defenses up, I remember learning from someone that I only wanted to go away. I occasionally warn a client that an assignment that I have given them will make them feel silly, yet stress the importance of completing it. It makes me wonder if they have my picture on a dartboard much like I had mentally attacked my tennis coach.

Coaching is very personal. It usually takes a session or two to establish trust. The client often reveals information that has not been expressed to anyone at work, perhaps not to anyone at all, even oneself. My favorite moments are when the clients learn something relevant about themselves and I can see the light come into their eyes. I love the "Aha!" moments.

As close as the coaching relationship is, it is not therapy. The coach helps the individual to



change behavior, plan for success and execute the steps that accomplish what the client wants to accomplish. Helping the person to become self-sufficient in the new skills is extremely rewarding. At TLC, we have many services including keynote speaking, seminars, facilitating, and coaching. Coaching is my favorite. I get a real high from the up-close and personal contact. So if you don't see me as much in the seminars, please know that I am doing what I love to do, helping one person at a time.

I stay in contact for years with those that I have coached. Every

other week, I'll get an email, a call, or an occasional visit with a former client. If I have been your coach, when our paths cross in ten or fifteen years, although your name may not be on the tip of my tongue, I know you, your family, and your dreams of yesterday and am delighted to find those former dreams have been turned into reality. Thank you for all you have taught me. One cannot touch another person without having been touched as well. Your fingerprints are all over my soul. May God bless you as you live your dreams!

I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.

Winston Churchill

A coach is someone who can give correction without causing resentment.

John Wooden

Today is your day!

Your mountain is waiting

So...get on your way.

Dr. Seuss

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ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I have taken two good classes in Time Management, but feel like I am a lost cause. I intend to apply the information I learn, I just don't follow through. Can you help?
Out of Time

Dear Out of Time,

While TLC offers Time Management training, we recommend coaching for you. One of our trained coaches will work with you in your office to get you organized and keep you on track. The amount of time you save will more than cover the amount of coaching time you spend.

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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