

INSPIRE – Seven Essential Steps to Building a Coaching Culture

By Amy Tan and Uwe H Kaufmann

*"I absolutely believe that people, unless coached,
never reach their maximum potential."*

Bob Nardelli

Coaching is "Expanding a person's capacity to take quicker, more effective actions." Robert Hargrove. In a coaching culture people continually discover how they create their own reality and how they can change it. Everyone understands the goals of the organisation and the personal contributions necessary to achieve them. Organisational resources are maximised.

In coaching cultures, all members engage in candid, respective coaching conversations with one another, unrestricted by reporting relationships, about how they can improve their working relationships, individuals and collective team performance.

Everyone learns to value and effectively use feedback as a powerful learning tool to produce higher levels of personal accountability, professional development, high-trust working relationships, continually improve job performance and ever increasing customer satisfaction

This essay is elaborating potential steps for building and sustaining a coaching culture. Our next article will illustrate its application.

Identify And Align Business Strategy, Structure And Culture.

In order to be successful, implementing a coaching culture – as many other OD interventions – is based on a strong need for change. Identifying this need and scoping goals for coaching is key. Although, coaching shall ultimately be part of the day-to-day business life and hence, should be applied in all kind of situations, it is wise to start with a clear focus for coaching.

Nominate Champions

Organisational cultures take their cue from its leaders at the top. They set the tone, pace, and expectations for what is right and what is wrong - what is acceptable and what is not. When leaders become skilled coach-practitioners, they transform their leadership style from being THE BOSS OF PEOPLE to THE COACH FOR PEOPLE.

Coaching is "applied leadership," requiring the best of what we know about contemporary leadership. Leaders who master coaching learn to create powerful, emotionally-intelligent conversations where the coach guides productive change, passion, and inspired action.

Inspirational leaders create an inspiring culture within their organisation. They supply a shared vision and inspire people to achieve more than they may ever have dreamed possible. They are able to articulate a shared vision in a way that inspires others to act. They coach and train their people to greatness.

People do what they have to do for a manager. They do their best for an inspirational leader.

Start & Maintain Coaching Methodology & Conversation".

We define coaching as "the process of helping others enhance their effectiveness...in a way they feel helped." This comprehensive definition of coaching reflects the intention of the coach as well as offers guidance in how to organise and conduct the coaching conversation. Coaching cultures adopt a singular approach and methodology so the culture has an easily recognised, commonly understood approach. Why is this important?

If an entire culture has a shared understanding of HOW to coach, then the coaching conversations are more easily started and sustained between people. The mystery is removed. People can connect easily and communicate with fewer distractions, making the communication much more effective. This increases the likelihood that more people will start getting more of what they want, and less of what they do not want.

Publish Success Stories and Sell The Benefits

One-to-one coaching is a good way to prove the case for coaching. Successes can be used to help sustain momentum for building a coaching culture.

Involve Everyone in the Organisation

In a coaching culture, it is common practice to involve everybody affected by the change in the decision to make the change, and certainly in the implementation planning. Coaching is the act of engaging people in safe dialogue where they are expected to respectfully share their candid concerns, ideas, and points-of-view so that they experience feeling part of the process and being valued as a partner.

Coaching speeds up the personal and team learning curve by capturing lessons learned more quickly. Teams make frequent use of after-action-reviews (AAR) to document any and all lessons learned. People become anxious to tap and share wisdom across the team. People learn to fail fast without fear of repercussion in what is truly a learning environment.

Re-align and Integrate With HR System

Human resource systems comprise of talent acquisition, orientation, training, performance evaluation, promotions, recognition programmes, and compensation. Coaching must be fully integrated into all the systems that impact people.

Most organisations today have articulated organisational values that hang on the boardroom wall. Coaching cultures actively embrace and use their espoused core values as a compass to guide people and business decisions. Members of the culture are expected to observe and coach their colleagues on the extent their colleagues' observed behaviours are congruent with the core values and guiding behaviours. This makes values relevant, useful, and meaningful to the organisation.

Coaching cultures use 360 processes to gather feedback on a regular basis. All members of the culture have personal development plans that are taken seriously, reviewed annually, and serve to significantly impact the effectiveness of individuals and teams.

Competency models and Job descriptions include a clear description of relevant coaching skills required to be successful in the job. Everyone is expected to perceive themselves as a "coach practitioner" engaged in continuous learning about what it means to be a coach.

Eembed the Process

Having implemented a coaching culture means an ongoing commitment to have everyone receiving formal coaching at least once per month.

Additionally, it means to measure the pulse rate of coaching by listening to your staff to find out what is working and what isn't. Like with most things your staff will tell you what needs to be done to make it a success. Hold focus groups before, during and after the implementation.

Keep measuring the success with formal KPIs. Remember: What you measure is what you get.

Conclusion

Organisations have seen the powerful impact on the effectiveness of executives who retain external executive coaches or utilise internal business coaches. They are also beginning to connect-the-dots and extrapolate the incredible power of an organisation whose capacity for growth and change is enhanced through the systematic practice of coaching.

*"Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance.
It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them."*

Timothy Gallwey

About the Author

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