

Seventeen Gorman

ADVISORS LLC

"Innovation through Collaboration"



Creating Individual and Organizational Excellence via Leadership Development, Management Development, Mentoring, Coaching, Team Building, Skill Building

Achieving Excellence

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Welcome

Welcome to the January issue of "Achieving Excellence" which is inspired by clients and friends of **Seventeen Gorman Advisors**. We enjoy new ways of thinking and new ways of helping you achieve your goals.

Seventeen Gorman Advisors is a consulting practice focused on improving individual and organizational performance through skill building programs and developmental services.

Our approach to problem solving and issue resolution involves client participation at all points in the process. Above all, we listen to our clients to understand their needs and goals so that the solution we develop together - as true partners - provides a

sustainable business advantage.

Best Regards,

Jeffrey C. Leventry
Principal

In Your Quest for Excellence

"Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them." - Timothy Gallwey

The Role and Impact of Coaching in Business



At this time of the year football fans are focused on the playoffs and following their favorite teams. This is also the time when many teams make coaching changes in order to create a new direction for their teams, and thus promote a winning mindset and culture. Team owners and general managers realize the value of having a good coach who possesses the ability to unlock players' potential to maximize their performance so the team can regain its championship form.

Similarly, the best business firms recognize the value of enlisting the help of coaches to transform their employees and the organization, so that top-notch performance can be achieved to impact the bottom line.

What is business coaching?

In business, coaches serve many roles and act as thought partners who bring clarity to a situation so company leaders, managers and team members can devise corporate strategies that align with the company mission and vision. Coaches also facilitate performance improvement programs for employees so strategic goals can be achieved.

While the coach does not make the final business decisions, he / she facilitates the conversations that support better decision-making across the organization. The coach also utilizes various assessment tools depending on the type of engagement, organizational needs, and expected outcomes. Among other things, the tools can analyze firm strengths and weaknesses, conflict styles, leadership approaches, and overall performance effectiveness.

Why is creating a coaching culture important?

While many organizations embrace change and recognize coaching as a business imperative, other firms still view coaching as a luxury that can be deferred or avoided altogether. In both scenarios, it is important to investigate how a culture of coaching can be created so the organization reaches its potential.

There are many ways to instill a coaching culture in an organization so that employees recognize its value and are eager to participate in the coaching process. Some effective approaches for accomplishing these objectives include the following:

- Allow key influencers to experience its power by targeting those who are struggling with an issue such as conflict resolution or decision-making. By helping them improve their performance via coaching, they can share their positive experience with others in the firm.
- Embed coaching in organizational leadership programs for targeted populations such as high potentials, senior managers, and key employees so they can begin to recognize its value.
- Equip business leaders and HR professionals with knowledge of coaching tools and processes via training so they understand the coaching mindset and appreciate the potential impact resulting from various coaching techniques.

What is the impact of effective coaching?

The reward for creating an effective coaching culture is real, and even dramatic in organizations who adopt coaching best practices. Among other things, it typically yields the following benefits:

- Better decision-making and conflict resolution
- Higher employee engagement and focus
- Enhanced management and leadership self-awareness and effectiveness
- Increased accountability for achieving business results

As with any new organizational initiative, the key is to develop a mechanism for sustaining the new culture and measuring coaching's effectiveness so the benefits can be articulated and monitored over time. This can be accomplished in part by agreeing on the workplace measures of success, and discussing how coaching will link to a leader's role, or to business unit performance indicators.

In conclusion, a coaching culture can deliver a great value proposition - a high performance environment that holds employees accountable, while fostering a climate of full engagement, personal development and mutual support toward the achievement of organizational goals.

If you would like to explore ways that coaching can improve your firm's organizational performance to achieve better business results, please contact me at jeff@17gormanadvisors.com.

The Power of Deliberate Practice



As any reputable coach will attest, the key to developing a particular skill is having an opportunity to practice the skill until the coachee achieves the desired level of

performance. However, practice alone is not enough. What is necessary is practice combined with feedback from someone who has expertise and has mastered the skill you are attempting to develop.

Why is practice important?

Anyone who has learned a new skill realizes that the best way to hone one's ability is to practice the skill until it becomes second nature. Repetition of specific targeted tasks, or activities identified with the help of a coach or instructor, is essential to mastering any skill over time. The coach can provide feedback to improve performance and correct any issues that prevent the coachee from attaining the desired level of skill.

How much do you need to practice?

If you possess natural talent it usually takes less time to become competent at that skill (for example, delivering an effective presentation or excelling at a sport). On the other hand, if you do not possess an innate ability, it undoubtedly will require more time and practice to become proficient.

Malcolm Gladwell in his book "Outliers" asserts that one can become extraordinarily proficient in certain subjects or skills with 10,000 hours of practice. Research conducted by Professor Anders Ericsson at Florida State University concluded that the quality of practice (and how it is combined with the interaction of a coach or instructor) is a key contributor to achieving competence. My experience proves that the formula for success is a combination of both the quality and the quantity of deliberate practice (defined as repeating an activity over and over for an extended period of time).

Depending upon the individual (and their motivation level) it may take months, or even years, of continuous deliberate practice and coaching to master a new skill. For example, both of my children practiced their respective sports for years under the watchful eyes of many coaches to achieve "starter status" at the varsity level in high school.

Similarly, the best athletes, musicians, actors and business executives spend many years learning and then practicing their craft in order to excel in their chosen profession.

What is the recommended approach for practicing?

Assuming that deliberate practice is a necessary condition precedent to achieving excellence at a chosen skill, the key is to develop an approach or game plan to ensure you reach your goal.

My advice for mastering any skill (and thus achieving competence) includes the following 6 steps:

- Establish specific goals - before starting to practice, it is important to determine what level of performance you wish to achieve
- Create an action plan - develop a plan of action that includes a coach who will act as your instructor, and determine where and how you will practice, how often you will practice, together with a target completion date
- Assess performance level - before implementing your action plan evaluate your existing strengths and areas for improvement, which forms your baseline skill level
- Develop a feedback approach - determine how feedback will be provided (oral, written, video or some combination of each) so that the coachee will be able to receive constructive feedback to improve performance. The feedback should include both what you are doing, and an explanation as to why you are doing it.

- Monitor progress to evaluate performance - develop an approach to monitor progress with milestones and benchmarks so the coachee can fully appreciate that the skill is being enhanced over time
- Reward success - at various stages of the process make sure that success is rewarded to provide positive reinforcement and maintain motivation

What rewards can you expect to achieve?

The reward for mastering a new skill takes many forms, and varies from individual to individual. Among other things, it may include all or some combination of the following:

- Career advancement
- Respect and admiration
- Self-fulfillment / achievement
- Financial success

In conclusion, there are no shortcuts for mastering a new skill, and my experience demonstrates that occasional or sporadic practice does not suffice. Instead, the above approach (including the referenced action steps) should be adopted over an extended period of time. In the final analysis, deliberate practice with a coach or instructor is the key to success.

Our offerings include the following:

Developmental Services

[Coaching](#)
[Management / Leadership Development](#)
[Meeting Facilitation](#)
[Mentoring](#)
[Team Building](#)

Skill Building Programs

[Influencing Skills](#)
[Presentation Skills](#)
[Project Management Skills](#)
[Decision Making](#)

Seventeen Gorman Advisors looks forward to collaborating with you.
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