

The Role and Impact of Coaching in Business

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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.

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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.