

Coaching for Performance
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Book summary / Key messages
Curated by Tina Grant - July 20, 1998

Introduction

- It's a skill/art -- requires understanding and practice
- An independent coach can reflect ideas, evoke solutions and support implementation
- "Problems must be resolved at the level beneath the one at which they occur"
- Coaching is as much about the *way* these things are done as about *what* is done
- Results are due to the relationship between coach and coachee, and the means and style of communication

***"Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance;
it is helping them to learn rather than teaching them"***

- Should take the coachee beyond the limits of the coach's own knowledge
- Effectiveness will depend in a large measure on the manager's beliefs about human potential
- Must think in terms of their *potential*, not their performance
- "A manager must be experienced as a support, not a threat"
- *Relationship must be one of partnership, trust, safety, minimal pressure*
- Recall after 3 months: told = 10%; told, shown & experienced = 65%
- Outcome of coaching
 - Coach / manager knows what is going on
 - Performer / employee chooses to take responsibility
- *Coach is not a problem solver, teacher, advisor, instructor, expert, answer giver*
- *Coach is a sounding board, facilitator, counselor, awareness raiser*
- *Coach offers advice only **after** the coachee has exhausted all his/her options*

Two most important factors

1. Awareness

- Gather information and determine what is relevant
- Feedback from the environment, your body, your actions

2. Responsibility

- If not accepted by the coachee, performance won't rise
- *Telling* someone their responsible doesn't make them *feel* responsible
- Every time the coach / expert provides input, the responsibility of the coachee is reduced

Asking Questions

- As coach, answers are secondary; I only need to know coachee has necessary information
- Use open questions that begin with *what, when, who, how much*
- To maintain detachment and objectivity, use descriptive rather than evaluative terminology -- avoid *how* and *why* questions
 - *Why* is discouraged - evokes defensiveness - use ... "*what are the reasons*"
 - Instead of *how*, use "*what are the steps*"
- Questions should follow the interest and train of thought of the coachee
- May be valuable for coach to focus on any aspect coachee appears to be avoiding ... "*notice you haven't mentioned this ... is there any reason?*"
- Don't use leading questions ... ask directly
- If coachee has to stop and think before answer, awareness is being raised
- *Process is the same for team coaching and self coaching as one-on-one*

Coaching Structure

Goal setting - short term and long term

Reality - explore current situation

Options - alternative actions

What/When/Whom will do it



Goal Setting

- By setting goal first, you are less limited by the past and the problem at hand -- create the best and ideal context
- Key context is awareness and responsibility
- *End goal* is final objective -- seldom absolutely within your control
- *Performance goal* -- performance level which gives you good chance to achieve the end goal
- End goals should be supported by performance goals
- The value of choice and responsibility in terms of self-motivation should never be underestimated

Reality

- The coach does not need to know the *whole* history, but merely to be certain the coachee is clear about it
- Good question: *what action have you taken so far; what were the effects of that action*
- Reality questions
 - Compel the coachee to think
 - Demand high resolution focus
 - Descriptive not judgmental
 - Provide coach feedback loop

Options

- Create as long an alternative list as possible and get the creative juices flowing
- To eliminate restrictive barriers to creative solutions (i.e. ... it can't be done ... we can't afford the time ...) ask *“what if ... you had a large enough budget ... you had more staff ...*
- The key is to identify the false assumption; the resolution is then much easier to find
- *When should coach offer his expertise? -- when he recognizes the coachee has exhausted their possibilities*

What/Who/When ...

- Convert a discussion into a decision
- Coach can be tough here since he is not imposing his own will but activating the will of the coachee
 - *What are you going to do?*
 - *When are you doing to do it?*
 - *Will this action meet your goal?*
 - *What obstacles do you expect to meet?*
 - *Who needs to know?*

***“If either the quality of a performance or learning from the experience is important,
coaching is a must.
If neither is, then tell -- if you must.”***