

Invest In People—Enjoy The Returns

Executive coaching has the ability to sustain an array of business goals and objectives, for example, developing intangibles such as management and leadership skills.

Although coaches typically work with clients one-on-one, more often, we are seeing group or team coaching emerge as well. By listening, and asking thoughtful, focused questions, a coach works together with the client to identify themes or issues, and then develop a strategy and action plan, subsequently carried out by the client.

Because coaching is a relatively new profession, there is definite confusion. Coaching is not counselling, nor is it remediation. Rather, it is a process that is entirely about supporting people and organizations in the discovery and optimization of their personal and professional potential.

And so you're wondering, isn't that what the manager is expected to do? In today's world, the answer is likely, and certainly more often, no. Overloaded supervisors or bosses are becoming the norm, especially at middle to senior levels. More notably, managers are finding it increasingly difficult to address the soft skills, or human aspect of business.

In today's highly competitive corporate environment, where organizations are directed to operate in a leaner and meaner manner, effective management, leadership, mentoring, and relationship building efforts are on the decline, and often fall by the wayside entirely. Like many functions traditionally found on the inside, skill enhancement, development initiatives, and even complete learning programs, are now being outsourced.

Consider also the changing cultural environment within organizations, and the marketplace at large, especially in more recent years, where people are on the move, changing companies, roles within companies, or their profession.

While we know relationships are an essential ingredient to career success, the time dedicated to developing and managing relationships seems to be less of a priority. Add to this a fiercely competitive market and the notion that we are all dispensable, and the result—diminishing trust within the workplace. Sharing ones' thoughts and opinions with colleagues, a boss, or peer, is fast becoming politically incorrect, if not suicidal.

For this reason, an external coaching reservoir is becoming an extremely important, if not critical, resource. Outsourced coaching services offer a completely unbiased, safe, and objective support system to people within the organization.

In the words of coachee and client Jeff Lastiwka, "I felt like increasingly complex demands were constantly coming at me, over and above the fast pace of the business environment we work in today, and it was becoming more and more of an effort to simply stay afloat. Although I was working hard and putting in long hours, I knew that I was not performing as a highly effective and efficient leader on behalf of my organization. This in turn began to create unwanted stress within my life", says Jeff.

"Somewhat instinctively, I was compelled to seek out an executive coach, and was fortunate in that I found an exceptional coach. The coaching process was both highly effective and rewarding, for myself and the organization I served. I was guided through a process of discovery, and encouraged to identify where my professional skills and abilities best served my goals, and that of the organization, while at the same time slowing things down. My coach did not hand me the answers—rather, while I worked at identifying what was possible, determining options, and developing focused action plans, he simply held me accountable."

In short, the establishment of a coaching program is money well spent, since any investment in helping people to be the best they can be will be paid back in dividends not to mention the new ROI—results, outcomes, and improvement.

About The Author

Lara Masse, MBA, CEC, ACC is the founder of Higher Ground Executive Coaching, Inc., a professional coaching, leadership development, and assessment consultancy. With more than 20 years in frontline, senior management, and leadership role's, Lara's mission includes helping others to "aim high" and "discover new heights", both personally and professionally. She is a credentialed member of the International Coach Federation and International Association of Business Communicators. Email feedback or questions to info@highergroundcoaching.ca.