

When you invest in training and communicating your organization's vision, how do you ensure that profitable changes in the workplace are realized and sustained?

Coaching is being explored as the solution to increase accountability so that training and strategic planning initiatives lead to improved performance. This article is part I of four discussions on how to create an effective coaching program by:

- 1) **identifying what great coaches do and providing guidelines to determine whether coaching would benefit your organization;**
- 2) finding great coaches who can ensure that your people become skilled at inspiring accountability;
- 3) incorporating software to build an affordable coaching program that will generate sustained results; and
- 4) overcoming the reluctance by employees to provide and to receive coaching.

The Need for Great Coaching:

Most organizations strive to have employees continually improve skills and coordinate efficiently on strategic objectives. Therefore, organizations invest in opportunities for their employees to participate in seminars, departmental strategic planning workshops and training courses. Employees return from these events filled with new ideas, and a sense of mission. They are motivated to develop and implement new skills and plans, but too often find themselves falling back on old habits. This not only creates a low return on investment for companies, but also leaves the impression with employees and management that learning events have limited effectiveness.

Great coaches are able to help organizations overcome the following challenges that often occur while trying to implement a strategic plan or concepts from a training course:

- *lack of “buy in”*—employees who do not believe that the concepts apply to their particular working situation;
- *old habits triggered by stress*—individuals who repeat their old habits rather than remember to implement new ideas, blaming this on the stress of the moment;
- *lack of instant success*—people who lack the confidence to develop new skills and ways of getting work done if the first few attempts in their working environment are unsuccessful;
- *Dealing with discomfort*—people who understand how to improve their performance but require help to maintain the discipline associated with keeping goals top-of-mind until a new level of performance becomes automatic.

The Value of Great Coaches:

Great coaches hold themselves accountable for identifying the root causes that lead to a lack of performance. Furthermore, they are able to break down skills and strategic concepts into enough detail so that employees are confident that they can implement changes in their actual working environment. Great coaches also help people adapt skills and new ideas to the ever-changing work environment until employees can perform automatically and independently. Quite simply, great coaches work with people until results are realized.

Developing a needs assessment in regards to coaching:

It is important to ask employees and managers about the amount of improvement they believe they achieve. In addition, it is critical to assess the amount of work, follow-up, resources, and time that both employees and managers believe is required to turn the concepts from a training course, or strategic initiative into sustained and profitable growth in performance. The need for coaching can be determined by measuring the employees' and managers' perceived level of achievement, perceived potential for improvement, and their understanding of the mutual investment required to improve performance.

For an example of a needs assessment about goal setting, accountability and support from managers, see the FranklinCovey execution quotient (xQ) survey at www.The8thHabit.com/offers.

Here are some of the findings from 2.5 million people who have participated in the xQ survey:¹

- Only 10% felt their organization held people accountable for results.
- Only 8% systematically schedule their priorities.
- Only 17% felt their organization fosters open communication that is respectful to differing opinions and that results in new and better ideas.
- Only 60% of people's time is spent on key goals.
- Only 37% understand what their companies are trying to achieve.
- Only 48% meet with their managers at least monthly to review progress on their work goals.

¹ Covey, S. **The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness**. Free Press: New York, NY, 2004.