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Coaching – The New Word in Management

By Megan Tough

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The Old Way - Command and Control

Although workplaces and management styles have come a long way in the last decade, the command and control style of management behaviour remains common practice in many companies. This management approach basically means that employees are told exactly what to do, when to do it and even how it should be done. The manager is in charge, has all the answers, and fixes all the problems.

It's no surprise that plenty of people find this approach demotivating, and that workplaces with a command-control style are rated as pretty unsatisfying. When it comes down to it, none of us really enjoys being told exactly what to do, and neither do our employees. When people feel as though they have no say and are given no opportunity to contribute outside of their work tasks, then they switch off and become "disengaged".

The command and control approach is being phased out for a more collaborative and engaging style - a "Coach" approach or being a "manager-coach". This is a positive shift - as long as we support our managers in understanding what on earth is meant by a "coach approach", and how expectations of them are changing.

Coaching - What does it really mean?

The coaching profession has exploded in recent years, diversifying across many different fields and industries. All of these people are dedicated to helping others achieve their goals, improve aspects of themselves or their business, or move forwards from where they are today.

In a work environment, the role of a manager-coach can be described as :

- achieving results and excellence through others rather than personally taking care of things, and
- focusing on developing employees in order to achieve business results rather than micro-managing their every move.

Adopting coaching as a management style requires managers to help other people unlock their potential and enhance their own performance. It's about supporting people to learn instead of telling

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them what the answers are.

The mindset of the manager–coach is to create an environment that fosters learning, independent thinking and opportunities to contribute. The manager–coach doesn't want to be seen as a solution provider. Rather, they want to be seen as a facilitator, paving the way for team members to achieve their results.

Coach managers are a role model for others. They are excellent listeners and communicators, providing perspective and encouragement whilst setting high standards and expectations.

Making coaching behaviours part of what you do

1. Stop thinking about employees as people that need to be controlled or managed and give them the latitude to take actions and make decisions. Trust is a vital component of this equation. If you can't trust people to do their jobs well, then you either have the wrong people in the jobs, or you have the right people but you haven't trained them sufficiently. A third option is that the people are properly skilled, but the manager just can't let go.

2. Listen, listen listen. If there are unhappy or disgruntled people in your business, you can guarantee that at some stage they've tried to tell you what the problem is. It's likely you weren't listening (or didn't want to listen), or perhaps your initial reaction made the person think twice about bringing the problem to you. Truly listening is one of the greatest skills to develop, regardless of your role. Good listeners are genuinely interested, convey empathy, and want to find out what's behind the conversation. Great coaches are great listeners -without exception.

3. Focus on developing the strengths of each employee rather than managing merely for results. Identify each person's development needs and commit to following through on them. When people are growing and improving, their enthusiasm and effectiveness is greater. And they feel more connected and loyal to the company for supporting them.

4. Endorse effort and growth instead of pointing out failures or errors. As individuals, we all know how seldom we are given positive feedback, but how often we are reminded of our "mistakes". Instead of pointing out errors, the coach–manager accepts them as learning opportunities and uses them to develop their employees. The focus is on making sure the same mistake doesn't happen again by fixing the source of the problem.

5. Stop providing solutions. Managers often achieve their positions after being technical specialists, and so will have an opinion or view on how to "fix" situations or problems. The mindset is that it's usually faster to tell someone what to do, or do it yourself, than give your employees an opportunity to figure it out. By always providing the answers, managers take away the learning opportunity for their employees to come up with alternative (and potentially better) ways of doing things. If you catch yourself about to provide the answer, take a deep breath and ask a question like: "What would you do in this situation?"

6. As a manager, stop making all the decisions. You don't have all the answers all of the time. Engage

those around you – your team and peers – when it comes to finding a way forwards. Involvement breeds ownership and engagement. The more you can find opportunities for people to contribute to the decision-making process and encourage people to have their say, the more your employees will feel connected and satisfied with the company.

7. Be unconditionally constructive – no exceptions. Don't patronise or be critical of others – take complete responsibility for how you are heard. If you catch yourself about to make negative remarks, take a breath and rephrase your words to get your message across without the emotional attachment. It is possible to phrase everything in constructive terms - even a negative sentiment. Practice makes perfect!

8. Create an environment where people want to work with you, and feel valued and respected. Make it clear to your employees what they are responsible for, but give them the latitude to go about it in their own way. In short, treat them the way you would want to be treated.

The Wrap-Up

The true success of a leader can be measured by the success of the people that work for them. When managers and leaders adopt a coaching style, the productivity, motivation and satisfaction of the employees increases, which filters through to bottom-line results. All this makes for an engaged workforce who are committed to giving the business as much as it is giving them. And as an extra incentive, adopting a coaching style of management results in a much more enjoyable workplace for everybody!

Megan Tough, director of Action Plus, works with small business professionals who are ready to do more than 'just get by'. Increase your income – decrease your stress! To learn more and to sign up for more FREE tips and articles like these, visit www.megantough.com

What In The Heck Can A Personal Coach Do?

By "Aurelia M. Williams"

I just wanted to spread the word about Life Coaching and what it can do to help just about anyone. No, not every coach is suited for every client but the right coach/client combination is such a powerful tool.

I hear different variations of the following questions and statements a lot: "What can a coach do for me?", "I can't afford to pay a coach!", "What does SHE know that I don't know?", "I don't need a stinkin' Coach!" Ok, well I tossed the word "stinkin'" in there (smile) but I do know there are many people who could benefit from the power of coaching but feel they don't need it.

Well hopefully the following can open some eyes to the magic of this wonderful tool!

Coaching is an effective process used to support individuals in creating something new for themselves. I work side by side with my clients coaching them by providing perspective and support for

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self-knowledge as they accomplish their business and personal goals.

I personally help women achieve balance and cultivate the tools necessary for them to evolve into a life filled with happiness and serenity. I believe all women have the tools they need inside to lead a more fulfilling life. I simply guide them along an empowering path that will awaken these tools, focus on their passion and ultimately lead them to a more fulfilled self. If you are ready to find your way to a more balanced you, I will be your guide.

Life coaches are great and act as your personal cheerleader. There are many benefits to having a Personal Life Coach and here are just a few. Coaching is a valuable process for people looking to:

- * design life intentions that include both your business and personal goals.
- * make meaningful personal changes that reduce stress and simplify your life.
- * free up energy and other resources to attract what you want for your life now.
- * enhance the quality of your communication and relationships
- * work through a career or life transition
- * achieve better work/life balance
- * gain clarity, focus and direction

Coaching is also for those that are successful and growing entrepreneurs, where everything is going really well, and you would just appreciate a neutral sounding board who will give you straight-up honest feedback and on-going support.

There really is nothing like coaching. The best way to learn about it is to experience it for yourself! Most coaches will offer a free consultation or a free session to see if coaching is for you.

You have nothing to lose and the world to gain!

Aurelia Williams, is a certified Personal Life Coach (

) and owner of

Real Life Solutions (

) a Family Resource site that helps you lead an

emotionally & physically healthier, more productive and less stressful life.



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