

[Ps.78:72] With upright heart he tended them, and guided them with skilful hand.

Executive Coaching

You know that you can perform better. You know there must be more purpose and meaning in what you are doing. But you don't know what to do about it; you don't know where to find "it". More fundamentally you don't know where to start looking.

Rigorous measurements for employee attitude and satisfaction at Sears, showed that as the quality of management improved, so did employee attitudes, and then customer satisfaction. A Harvard Business survey stated, that in terms of the numbers, a "five point improvement in employee's attitudes will drive a 1-3 point improvement in customer satisfaction, which in turn will drive a 0.5 point improvement in revenue growth. In a Billion Rand Company, a 0.5% increase in revenue is a good financial reason to undertake the project. "Sears learned that when their managers fully valued and developed their employees, (i.e. exploited the coaching approach), they could confidently predict revenue growth and better customer retention in a particular territory".

Coaching helps employees set better goals and then reach them. Coaches ask their clients to do more than what they would have done on their own. They focus their clients to produce results faster; and provide the tools, support and systematic structure to accomplish more. Typically, coaching occurs one-on-one for an agreed timeframe or deliverable. Coaching sessions are held regularly either face to face or telephonically. Coaching is essentially about getting improved results. It is not a process for fixing broken executives. It is meant to make good executives better! Connections between the business and individual development goals need to be established by the employee. The coaching process elicits responses and helps people make decisions on how they can contribute. It is not about telling them what to do.

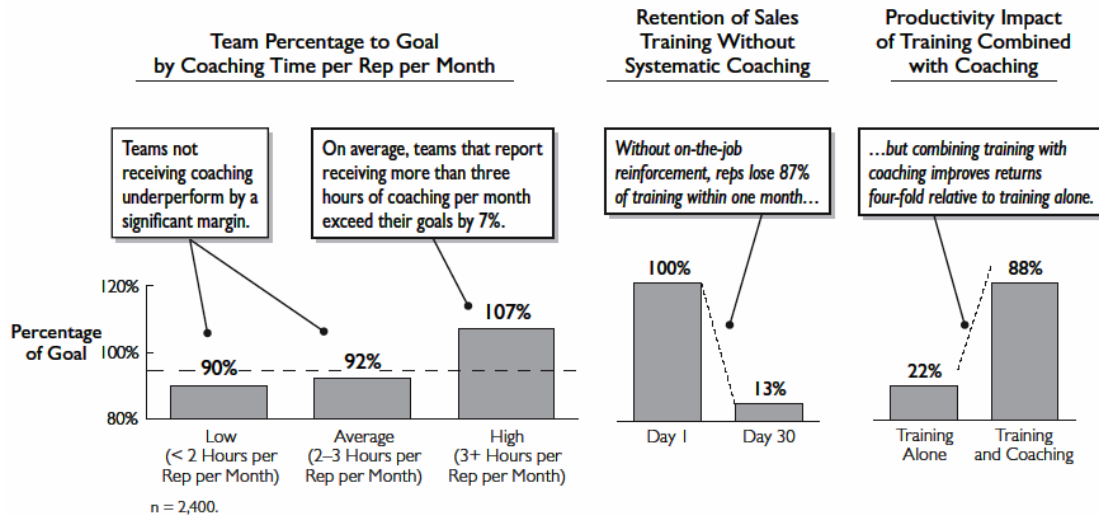
While definitions on coaching abound, in its simplest form it represents a skilful model for developing people, so that they are more effective, more fulfilled and have themselves developed meaningful competencies.

Globally coaching has a 15-20 year heritage. More than half the Fortune 100 executives use a personal coach to build leadership competency. In a recent survey, one-on-one coaching was the single most planned development tool being considered by executives for leadership development. Coaching is not therapy. Typically, but not exclusively, therapy deals with the less functional side of the individual. The process involves stepping into the internal world of the individual. Coaching deals mostly, but not exclusively, with the employee's external realities. Coaches are constantly reminded that they are not in the psychology business.

A study published in the "Public Personnel Management" magazine, examined the effect of executives coaching in a public sector municipal agency found the following; Thirty-one managers underwent a managerial training program, followed by eight weeks of one-on-one executive coaching. Training (which included goal setting, collaborative problem solving, practice, feedback, supervisory involvement, evaluation of results and public presentation) increased productivity by 22%. Training combined with coaching increased productivity by 88%!

While coaching is both the manager activity most closely associated with rep success...

...and the key to maximizing value of training efforts...



A major problem is that companies spend a lot of money on training and development with little returns because, usually, delegates are not able to apply what they have learned even when the will to do so is present. Coaching provides the critical bridge. The output of coaching includes building competencies, leaving the person self-correcting and self-generating, producing their own solutions. The paradigm shift leaves the coached autonomous to affect the changes required to achieve superior

performance. A further benefit is that well trained clients practice more, watches others perform, or watches an activity that will strengthen them in a new way, often in unrelated areas.

Because the clients view of "what they think they want" often shifts, the process must be flexible. The process is about shifting perspectives and about building confidence which leads to competence. Most executives have no-one to talk to. They have to display confidence at all times and be seen to be "in-charge". In the coaching environment, the *coached* is the most important person in the room. The coached can challenge all notions and try anything. The simple act of having a trusted confidant helps people balance their work and private lives. But, they need to shift their mindset first. You don't select a coach in order to change - change is everywhere - change is happening - it's what you do relative to change that counts.

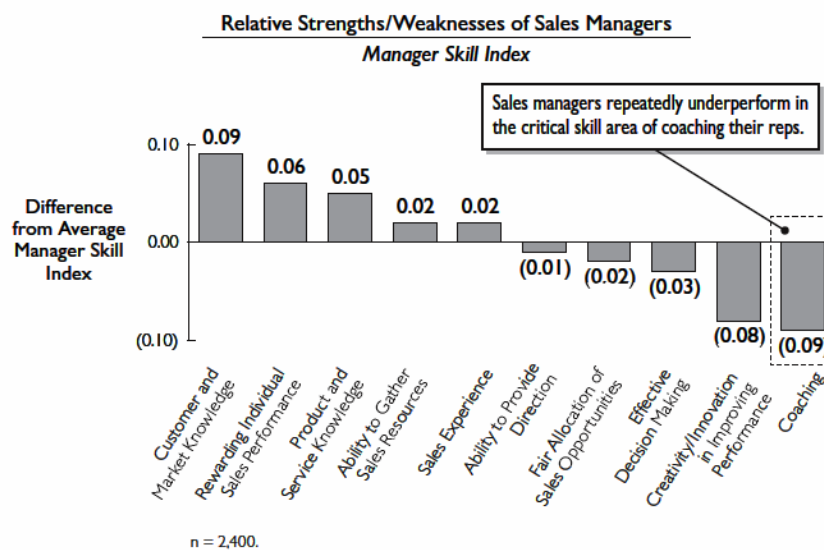
Most result oriented systems consist of a number of steps. Gain clarity on where the client is, establishing a desired end-point and defining the gaps, helping with the creation of a vision, setting measurable goals, developing an operational plan to meet those goals, taking sustainable action. Most companies set two or three business "required" goals. More dilutes the focus. When coaching, the desired objective is to set two businesses and one personal goal. This enables a balanced lifestyle which studies have shown enhances performance.

When it is time for action, the coach needs to focus on the critical need to keep the client focused. He needs to create an environment of accountability. Both the coach and the client are there to deliver. The coach often sees things a client does not and can provide an objective viewpoint on the "must do" aimed at enhanced performance. The two most important parts of the coaching process is for the coach and client to be clear on the goals to be met and their measurement criteria within the time-frames for success. The concept of coaching is situational. The process involves taking the defined methodologies and applying them to the situation that is found in the organisation. Sometimes coaching involves being goal orientated and at others, it involves being a sounding board in a non-judgemental, safe environment - something that is foreign to

most senior executives. Sometimes life issues become the blocking agent and one has to be sensitive and approach the problem in a holistic manner.

It is important for coaches to have a philosophy for life and who people are. *Unless you have a philosophy anything will do.* The client needs to be led to an understanding of their own overarching philosophy. If being only reactive to the situation produces results, this may work for a period but given diverse challenges, reactions can cause as much damage as produce a performance culture. Coaching results lie on a continuum. On the left it is dominated by the 50's thinking on behavioural modification. This involves the assumption that people change through being offered reward or negative consequences. On the opposite end is the generative philosophy proposing that people need to be self-generative, integral or ontological. People need to question their role, their function and task in terms of the meaning they create and how effective they are.

...It is, regrettably, also the activity that managers perform least well



This approach focuses on building competencies that are resonating with the challenge at hand. Other work needs to be done to make sure that the competencies that are being created are these that the company needs to fulfil the role. When you teach someone to do a task, the lesson is broken into different actions that the "couched" repeatedly practices. This is what makes an outstanding sportsman. This is the skill of a coach - to separate processes into a series of practical "practices" and build competency through repetition. Competence is accomplished through struggle. The

coaching environment needs to stretch the individual and be "unbending" when the excuses start to flow. Coaches need to know when not to rescue.

What makes a good coach?

1. **Speaking:** a coach is there to help you see the problem in a new way with new possibilities. Does the person use metaphors, pictures, war stories, distinctions and questions to help you see the competency you are trying to build?
2. **Listening:** we hear but we do not really listen. Does the coach practice this art - and impart it to the client - so that together they can begin to understand the core issue?
3. **Assessing:** while the coach hears what you are saying, does the coach have the skills to assess that and visualise the end target.
4. **Designing:** the ability to design the Intellectual Property (IP) and assemble others ideas in such a way as to reach the end result. A large proportion of the time spent coaching happens outside the actual sessions.

It is important to evaluate the coach's values. Is there a fit between how they see the business world's challenges and problems? Does the coach have humility? Can they say with conviction, "I haven't dealt with this problem before, but I am prepared to walk the road with you?" Does the coach have patience? If I slip and fall, will they have the patience to go back with me and recover that ground? Is the coach rigorous? Will they question you when you did not do what you said you would? Do they hold you accountable? Are they compassionate not sympathetic!

In her Harvard Business Review article, "Are you ready for an executive coach?" Monci Williams reminds readers that unless you are paying the coach yourself, you are not the coach's client - your organisation is. There needs to be an upfront agreement on what the coach will tell your employee. This "confidentiality agreement" defines information that is appropriate to be shared. These will include goals set, whether you're showing up for your appointments, working at assignments and making progress. Inappropriate reporting includes personal problems and marital difficulties. These can have a direct bearing on performance and must be dealt with within the coach - client relationship.

It's all about the bottom line

In 2001, Manchester Inc., a provider of customised executive coaching programs, conducted a study to qualify the value of business executive coaching. The study included data on executive behaviour change, organisational improvements achieved and the return on investment (ROI) from the programs. The study included 100 executives mostly from Fortune 1000 companies who received coaching from Manchester.

Companies that received coaching realised improvements in the following areas: productivity, quality, organisational strength, customer service and shareholder value. They received fewer customer complaints and were more likely to retain executives that had been coached. In addition, the company's investment showed on average a ROI of almost 6 times the "direct" cost of coaching.

The coaching programmes were a combination of change oriented coaching (aimed at changing certain behaviours or skills) and growth oriented coaching (aimed at sharpening performance). The coaching programs lasted between six months to a year.

In another study commissioned by a Fortune 500 company and the Pyramid Research Group, a coaching service company, MetrixGlobal, determined the business benefits and return on investment for an executive coaching program.

"Coaching produced a 529% ROI and significant intangible benefits to the business. Including the financial benefits from employee retention, the overall ROI was boosted to 788%! Coaching was considered to be a key enabler for leadership development because the participants could work privately with a coach to develop specific leadership competencies without the fear and pressure of peer group compliance.

Out of 30 respondents, 77% indicated that coaching had a significant or very significant impact on at least 1 of 9 business measurements. Overall, productivity and employee satisfaction were cited as the most significantly improved factors. Respondents defined productivity in the context as related to their personal or work group productivity and documented annualised financial benefits. Employee satisfaction was viewed both in terms of the respondents being personally more satisfied as a result of the coaching as well as being able to improve the employee satisfaction of their team members.

What is coaching?

One would no more think of taking a team to the Olympics without a coach, as to try and win a gold medal without a team of athletes. However, many executives in their personal capacity (one of the loneliest functions in business) who have revenue responsibility for teams of "lateral thinking" sales people, try to "herd the cats" using traditional reward or punishment paradigms.

- Coaching is about unlocking what may be stuck because of the way we view the world around us. Coaching helps to expand that view and enables energy to be released that can be invested in reaching a new level of performance.
- Coaching often requires moving slowly and repetitively through a series of practical practices (experiential learning), designed by the coach to enable the mastering of a new way of dealing with a particular issue, person or set of circumstances.
- Something about how we see the world is limiting or restricting you from moving beyond the particular situation you are in. That sense of being stuck may be coming from inside you (personal) or it may have to do with the context you are in (situational).

Wherever these barriers reside, it takes an enormous amount of patience and creativity to resolve them. Something and individual cannot do alone.

- When you work with a coach you will become aware of old set patterns that restrict you. This is a key first step in the process of choosing and practicing alternative ways of being that can generate different outcomes and productive efficacious activities.
- The experience we have - of opening ourselves up and letting go - is one that allows us to come into contact with the deeper potential that lies dormant in us.
- A coach will work on a series of practical practices that are intended to allow the new way of doing things to become embedded - conscious competence.