**Why Coaching Works**

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Coaching is one of the most requested professional development methods of corporate leaders. In a 2001 study by the Corporate Leadership Council coaching was the 5th most requested method for development. In a more recent study by Ninth House, 95% of all the Fortune 500 firms that participated in the study utilize external executive coaches as a part of their leadership development program. So what’s the big deal about coaching? Why do companies spend time and money on coaching? Because it works! The Manchester Report, identifying the ROI of Executive Coaching, put the return on investment in the range of 500 – 1000% by those participants it surveyed. In a recent example with one of my own clients, a hotel General Manager, the client was able to increase employee satisfaction/loyalty by 52% and decrease employee turnover by 25%!!

But WHY does it work? How does it get those kinds of results? Here are five reasons why coaching works:

1. The Coach assists the client in clearly identifying their current and future state. As Stephen Covey says, “Begin with the End in Mind.” Coaching helps to clearly define where the client wants to go, what goals they want to achieve, and whether those goals are identified numerically, in behaviors or some other format. Have you ever said, “I’m not quite sure where I’m going but I’ll know when I get there?” Coaching helps to identify on the front end where you’re starting from so that the course plotted is one that gets you there in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

2. Coaching provides a customized approach to development and goal attainment. This is not a one size fits all methodology. Each coaching engagement is specifically designed for and by that client and coach based on the needs and objectives of the client. Have you ever gone to a training class thinking it was exactly what you needed to make the step in your performance or career only to find that much of what was discussed you already knew or, when you got back with your bag of new knowledge and skills, you got sucked back into your old habits by the work environment? The customized approach of coaching is designed specifically to address those issues so that it’s 100% applicable and offers you the support to implement new skills and behaviors.

3. Coaching is a focused on Action! The objective is to move the client forward towards the identified goal(s). It’s about what the client is going to do to get there. Contemplation, self-awareness, knowledge attainment, etc. are often aspects of the coaching process and then it’s about what action will be taken based on those gains. When working with a client after determining the goals and objectives he/she wants to achieve, we then turn our focus on the developing an action plan for achieving them. The coach then becomes an accountability partner to help hold you to the actions you agree to undertake.

4. Capacity building is one of the objectives, I, as a coach achieve with clients. The action undertaken is designed to achieve the goals as well as build the capacity of the client. Capacity building is one of the objectives, I, as a coach achieve with clients. Coaching facilitates learning, skill and competency development and does not attempt to deliver answers to the client. Having the client utilize their individual strengths, knowledge, skills and abilities, develop plans, take actions, and become self-sufficient and self-correcting are prime objectives. This is where coaching is different from consulting.

5. Consider having a trusted person working with you whose only objective is to help facilitate your success…no other agenda…Who you can say anything to without fear of it going beyond the two of you…Who is there to listen and offer honest, objective feedback…Who utilizes all their knowledge, skills and resources for your success. This is the coach /client relationship. It is like very few relationships in our personal or professional lives and has the ability to provide an environment for significant accomplishment in an accelerated manner.

The experience of Harmony’s coaching clients mirrors the results of professional studies as they site improvements in team effectiveness, productivity, retention rates, employee satisfaction, profitability, relationships with peers and direct reports, reductions in costs, career advancement, and cost reductions to name a few.

Executive Coaching is a very accessible and time effective development tool (that works) for busy organizational leaders. Is it time for you to incorporate it into your learning and development program?

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