

Coaching for Success

Analogies between sports and business coaching are abundant, but how realistic are they? An important place to start is to define what we mean by coaching in the business environment and to be clear about the benefits and value of coaching.

BlessingWhite offers a useful definition of coaching: “Helping others succeed”. Coaches can be either internal or external. External works well in some situations, but coaching is a powerful and vital tool that all managers should be applying as part of their daily approach to achieve performance outcomes.

A recent BlessingWhite study into the state of Coaching in organisations ‘*The Coaching Conundrum 2009*’ found that the benefits of coaching in the business context are recognised at all levels in Australian organisations:

- 70% of respondents reported that coaching improved both their job satisfaction and job performance
- 83% of Managers reported that they ‘love to coach’
- 71% of Managers reported that there is a belief in their organisation that coaching delivers greater business results

So, if staff feel more motivated and report improved performance when coached effectively by their managers, and Managers report that they actually enjoy coaching while organisations claim to see the benefits, then why isn’t it happening? Not surprisingly, 34% of Australian managers surveyed reported ‘takes too long’ as the key reason, while 30% stated that they didn’t coach as much as they should because ‘they didn’t have all the answers’. Both of these responses bring us back to the analogy with sports coaching – which is indeed a useful one.

Coaching in the sporting arena is seen as essential for success, it is not an optional extra, something that is only done when time permits. It is the key to high performance. It’s not focussed on managing performance gaps but primarily on taking high performers to even greater heights – all the best sports teams and individuals have coaches! And are sports coaches expected to be the very best players who get out there and kick the most goals? No, they’re expected to be the very best coach & leader who treats each team member as an individual and applies the right techniques to improve, sustain and heighten the performance of each individual.

So the real challenge for businesses to reap the benefits of coaching, is to create a mindset where coaching is not an optional extra for managers, but a key tool that is expected to be applied daily to achieve performance outcomes.

Coaching – not an optional extra

- Send the message from the top down (through words and actions) that coaching is expected and valued in your organisation
- Provide Managers with the skills and tools to coach effectively
- Build coaching into KPIs for Managers
- Reward and celebrate successes

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