

Developing A Successful Leadership Coaching Mind-Set

Leaders who adopt coaching as a mind-set and core part of their role are discovering that coaching is a critical business tool for achieving strategies and goals and helping to change a team or individual's behaviour to achieve specific business outcomes.

Having worked with many organizations, I will share with you some of the challenges and pitfalls that leaders need to be aware of as they strive to develop an effective coaching mind-set.

Coach as saviour

You have likely experienced this yourself: a talented individual is facing a tough situation. You believe in them and encourage them that they can do it. As coach, you need to be realistic and objective in appraising the situation, individual, timeframe, and overall expectations. Be aware of the need to manage your own optimism. Coaching is not about heroics: it's about establishing appropriate behaviour change goals with people and providing a sustainable level of support to them.

Coach as star

This is where the coach's ego takes over. It is easy to be driven by a compelling need to win, succeed or by a strong concern that the individual not fail. The risk is that the coach ends up 'owning' the change. An important part of the coaching mind-set is keeping one's ego in check and helping the people you are working with to understand and own the need for the change, to feel motivated to achieve it, and be capable of developing the required behaviours.

Coach as Machiavelli

By adopting a coaching mind-set, you will gain people's loyalty and trust. Leaders must be careful not to abuse or corrupt that trust. For example, a person aspires to the next level but the leader knows advancement is not going to happen yet allows the misperception to continue. With the coaching mind-set comes considerable responsibility: you need to be honest and upfront with people.

So how can you avoid these pitfalls?

First, you have to know yourself and be clear about your skills, the limits of your skills, your motives and time available. Second, you have to understand the coachee's mind-set and motivation and realistically assess their strengths and development needs. And finally, you need to be thorough and candid as you engage people in coaching work and clearly outline what you are trying to do, why you are doing it, what both parties are expecting, what success will look like, and how success will be measured.

To arrange a confidential meeting to discuss your organization's needs, call Meridien's President, Dr. Peter Stephenson at 416-972-0782.

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