



Build your coaching culture in context

To establish a coaching culture which has lasting positive impact, it is crucial to take a considered approach

Coaching is a way to empower and transform people and organisations through the art of conversation. There is something innately beautiful about this fact. However, to justify investment in a coaching culture, it is first important to consider what you want to achieve and the wider influences which will ensure sustainable and effective change.

In order for a coaching culture to create the desired impact, it needs a clear purpose and strategic plan, laddering up into business objectives. A company embarking on a series of random and uncoordinated interventions in the hopes of reaping the rewards of a coaching culture, is not likely to be successful.

The benefits of coaching

But why embark on instilling a coaching culture in the first place? A recent HRD article¹, cites useful data

from a study completed by City & Guilds. The most impressive finding reads: "84% of UK professionals say coaching should be part of every business' management and development programme." This is because these businesses find it useful for adopting new ways of working. Among many other benefits, it helps when experiencing periods of change; and in facilitating intergenerational working.

Top Five Attributes of Successful Coaching Culture

1. Sponsorship from the top
2. A considered strategy
3. A tiered approach
4. Support for internal coaches
5. Measurable KPIs

¹ <https://www.hrdconnect.com/2018/11/06/the-importance-of-coaching/>

Top five considerations

Knowing that coaching is effective, and to embark on a programme requires clear objectives and a holistic approach, what are the best steps to establishing an integrated coaching culture?

1. Sponsorship from the top: For coaching to become a true part of any working culture, it will only work with the support of the most senior management, both in endorsement and behaviour.
2. A considered strategy: Embedding a coaching culture requires a thorough plan, aligned with the overall business strategy. Coaching needs to be key in supporting one or more of a company's strategic goals.
3. A tiered approach: How you support and develop leaders at different levels within the business will not be the same. To be successful, you will require to engage external coaches and benefit from their related expertise, but also develop internal coaches to an accredited standard; and train managers in effective coaching conversation skills.
4. Support for internal coaches: Supervision is an essential component for any internal coaching team. It allows coaches to bring their challenges and difficult cases to a trained supervisor who will support, allowing them access to their expertise.
5. Measurable KPIs: The coaching programme must be measurable and accountable at an individual and organisational level. Clear expectations of what you want to achieve is required, to avoid running the risk of coaching culture remaining an aspiration rather than a tangible achievement. Demonstrating a positive effect - and ROI - is also important for internal stakeholder buy-in.

Maximising potential

If an organisation seeking to establish a coaching culture takes into account the above elements, then it will be well on its way to creating a more engaged and productive workforce. For instance, if talent retention has been an issue, this is likely to improve, and creativity and innovation will thrive.

An ICF Global Coaching Client Study from PwC² showed "86% of companies that use or have used

coaching report at least a 100% return on their initial investment." Yet companies have been slow to maximise the impact of coaching, again due to a lack of understanding of how to achieve sustainable culture change, which amounts to, beyond any initial outlay, creation of a self-perpetuating, integrated system.

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Don't go it alone

As coaching is a people-oriented discipline it is of course important to take care in embarking on related initiatives. Coaching is a practical skill and approaching it in the wrong way can be counter-productive to an organisation's aims.

The Institute of Leadership & Management's Creating a Coaching Culture (2011) states: "In order to deliver coaching consistently and effectively at all levels, organisations need to focus on developing their internal coaching capability. Coaching is a discipline, a complex practical skillset that requires hands-on experience, evaluation and refinement - it's not something you can learn and develop just by having a go. Untrained, inexperienced coaching may do more harm than good in many cases."

If you want to make coaching a deeply ingrained part of your business, and achieve the tangible, benefits of doing so, it's important to do it right.

For more information and support on establishing a coaching culture in your business, visit:

<https://www.mannaz.com/consulting/leaders-and-talents/coaching/>

About the Author



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² *icf global coaching pwc 2009*