Why Coaching Must Play an Integral Role in Leading and Managing in Today's Workplace

Beverley Patwell, 2013

In my consulting work over the last 25 years, I've seen a significant shift in the role of coaching in the workplace. During this time, coaching could not remain static. It had to evolve to accommodate the many changes and disruptions we have seen in the business world, such as new technologies, the globalization of markets and competition, the rapidly increasing pace of change, and new demands on employees to work faster, smarter and be more productive more efficient and effective. These forces have impacted how we, as coaches, coach corporate leaders (i.e., managers, leaders, and C-suite executives). In a more complex workplace, today's leaders must master as never before the dance of leading, engaging others, and delivering results. You can't pick up a business magazine, listen to a podcast, or read a blog that doesn't talk about today's new world of critical leadership challenges:

- How can leaders manage their companies through transformational culture change?
- How can they engage their employees to participate in leading, managing and implementing these changes?
- How can they be more creative and innovative?
- How can they make their companies more competitive in a global marketplace?
- How can social media help leaders grow their business?
- How can they leverage and honor the diversity of today's workforce?
- How can they develop their talent to best address their business needs?

It's obvious that the old model of command and control leadership and rewarding individual performance is not working in this new world. Contemporary leaders must learn to lead more with informal authority and influence. They must understand how to build strong organizational cultures that foster and reward knowledge transfer across the entire organization, promote cross-company team collaboration, cultivate employee engagement, and lead to success. Effective leaders must especially recognize that they achieve results through people, often creating networks that work at multiple levels within the organization and even in partnership with external stakeholders and key resources. Leaders must be able to ensure that managers and employees at all levels know their line of sight and play their part to contribute achieving the strategic goals of the organization. To accomplish this, leaders need to learn for themselves how to coach and be coached, focus on their own development, and contribute to the professional development of other team members. These challenges exist globally, in all industries and sectors.

In this article, I will explore the following questions, as they pertain to the new roles that coaches must play in helping today's leaders:

- Why must coaching play an integral role in leading and managing in today's workplace?
- What are the current trends in the field of coaching?
- What are the implications for our coaching work going forward?
- What role might technology and social media play in coaching?
- How can you create coaching cultures in your workplace?

Coaching: An Integral Competency to Leading and Managing in Today's Workplace

In the late 1990s, coaching was just starting to surface as a support for leadership development. Working with my mentor and colleague, Edith Whitfield Seashore, we developed a coaching model that we called *Triple Impact Coaching: Use of Self in the Coaching Process* (2006). Our model was originally designed for project and product support managers in high-tech companies, but it has since been used globally with leaders and managers in all types of businesses and industries in public, private, government, military, academic and not-for-profit organizations.

Triple Impact Coaching focused on the Use of Self as a leader's best instrument of change. Dr. Charles Seashore—renowned professor author, scholar-practitioner in applied behavioral sciences, a grandfather of the field of organizational development, and my teacher in the Masters of Human Systems Intervention Program at Concordia University—defined Use of Self in his article, *Doing Good By Knowing Who You Are. The Instrumental Self as an Agent of Change* (Seashore, Sawver, Thompson, & Mattare, 2004):

"Use of Self is a link between our personal potential and the world of change. It starts with our understanding of who we are, our conscious perception of our Self, commonly called the ego, and the unconscious or out of awareness part of our Self that is always along for the ride, and on many occasions is actually the driver. This understanding of Self is then linked with our perceptions of what is needed in the world around us and our choice of a strategy, and a role in which to use our energy to create change. Our focus here is on the potential for changing one's own world - the world as we perceive it, and to act on it and leave our mark and legacy for others to appreciate. "

At the time, Triple Impact Coaching was a unique approach to developing coaching as a competency for leaders and managers because it moved beyond coaching as a separate activity conducted mostly one-on-one, or in teams. Instead, we focused on the Use of Self to help leaders and managers understand the impact they had, or could have, on their entire team as well as on the organization as a whole.

The Triple Impact Coaching model is based on the belief that coaching must be an integral part of the responsibility of every manager and leader in the company and not a separate activity conducted by an external coach to correct behaviour. As such, it was, and continues to be, used proactively to enhance performance at all levels.

Triple Impact Coaching caught on and opened up some new perspectives in the organizational development field. In his book *Managing* (2009), Henry Mintzberg redefined the complex role of the manager in today's workplace. He describes leadership as departing from the top-down command and control model to one where the manager sits in the middle of his unit (and the rest of the organization), managing on three planes: Information, People, and Action. These planes require managers to think systemically and understand the context of their work as it affects those beyond their direct teams. As a result, the manager must lead, do, link, communicate, and control in order to achieve their objectives. Managers need to help the people in their units do what they need to do to be successful, and at the same time, communicate across the organization and externally to achieve their desired results.

For Mintzberg, coaching plays a critical role in the development and effectiveness of leaders and managers. They must learn how to be coached and how to coach others for success. Accordingly, it is impossible to look at leadership without coaching and vice-versa. Therefore, coaching is an integral role of leading and managing in the workplace and is an essential skill for everyone in the organization.

Current Trends in the Field of Coaching

We've all heard that over 70% of change efforts fail because they don't pay attention to the people side of change (Maurer, 2010). This is beginning to change, as leaders and managers have become more savvy and skilled at helping their organizations engage people at all levels of the organization in the change process.

Here is an example. Between 2008 and 2011, I worked with the City of Ottawa to develop an internal change team and cross-company service excellence leads network to help the City lead, coach, and manage employees through a city-wide change effort to foster a culture of service excellence in every branch and department. This project involved creating a multi-facetted coaching model that was instrumental in supporting the city's leaders and managers to achieve the culture shifts required to create a shared mindset of service excellence and implement it across the 18 branches of the City. The model succeeded by focusing on leadership development, project management, strategy, and behaviour change. They also developed an internal change team who coached leaders on how to coach their employees by providing them with tools and supports to lead, manage and implement the changes throughout the journey (Patwell, Kanellakos, & Gray, 2012 a,b).

Current research reveals some critical thinking on why people are becoming more successful at leading and managing change and how coaching is playing a key role in the process. For instance, Prosci Inc. publishes the Best Practices in Change Management, a benchmarking report representing one of the largest bodies of knowledge on change management in the world. Their research provides valuable information on the current trends and practices in change management around the globe. Recently, they surveyed 650 organizations from 62 countries to produce their 2012 *Best Practices in Change Management*. In it, they described some significant trends in organizations in the last five years that highlight the need for coaching in change leadership and change management. Below, I outline some of the report's key findings.

First, survey participants reported that creating a collaborative working environment was the most effective step to engage a project team. Collaboration had to be bi-directional. This finding creates a compelling case for the value of integrating change management and project management skills in the formation of the team and as key areas of priority that must be included in the planning and implementation of the change strategy.

Second, the greatest contributors to success were active and visible executive sponsorship, as well as frequent and open communications about the change. Survey participants indicated that during a change process, managers must communicate the change to their direct reports and act as advocates for the change. Lack of visible support and involvement was the biggest mistake made by managers and supervisors. Communication skills, change management knowledge, and coaching skills were the three biggest gaps for managers and supervisors in failed change efforts.

As for assessing the return on investment, survey participants highly acknowledged the people factor in the success of their change efforts. There was a direct correlation between change management effectiveness and performance through the speed of adoption, ultimate utilization, and proficiency factors. Generally, around 10% of participants reported exceeding expectations and around 50% reported results in line with expectations (p. 130).

Again, these results reinforce the need for leaders and managers to be more collaborative and develop more participative processes that will engage employees. In addition to their technical skill sets, leaders need to know how to coach, engage, and develop others.

In other research, the 2012 Executive Coaching Survey is the fourth edition of a biennial survey conducted by Lui, and Nair of The Conference Board. This survey explains the increased role of coaching in the workplace and focuses on how executive coaching is managed within organizations, by examining external and internal coaching practices of 162 for-profit, not-for-profit, and government organizations, representing 11 countries and a wide range of industries and global firms that vary in size from very small to very large in terms of both revenue and number of employees. The survey was conducted between late 2011 and early 2012. The report compares the results of the most recent survey with the 2010 findings to determine changing trends in the use of coaching.

The Conference Board's research revealed that executive coaching continues to grow, with an increased emphasis on internal coaching and standardization (p. 4). The top three drivers that will determine the use of internal coaching are: 1) the need to develop more leaders lower in the organizational hierarchy; 2) increased demand for coaching; and, 3) internal coaches that better understand the business and culture (p. 20). Interestingly, the need to cut costs was not the top consideration when companies decide to use internal coaches.

The most common types of internal coaching include 360-degree feedback debriefs, development-focused coaching, other assessment-tool debriefs, and performance-focused coaching (p. 25). Meanwhile, the most important criteria for selecting external executive coaches are business knowledge and executive credibility, reputation for coaching skill or specialty, and prior experience in specific type(s) of industries (p. 7).

While there is a push for certification, only 19% of respondents said formal coaching certifications and academic degrees are critical considerations when selecting external coaches (p. 7).

Unlike the past, when external coaching was used largely as a means to correct poor behaviour, organizations are now employing coaches for many positive purposes—e.g., to retain high potentials, improve performance and productivity, help leaders transition into new roles and business environments, provide career guidance, address leadership and succession planning needs, and promote employee and team engagement.

The Future of Coaching

Based on the research and my experience in this field, the fact that the practice of coaching is growing is a very good sign about the future of coaching. It means that more organizations are investing in their people. However, I believe organizations will need to go beyond building a dependency on internal and external coaches to support leaders and managers. In this new world, they will increasingly need to incorporate coaching as a key leadership and management practice within their own leadership cultures. This shift will build accountability at all levels of the organization and have a positive impact on how leaders and managers engage, develop, lead and manage their people.

As I have emphasized, coaching must be recognized as an integral role in leading and managing. It needs to be integrated in the leadership development strategy and the performance evaluation process for all employee levels. We must also begin evaluating the effectiveness of coaching on helping leaders and managers realize their business objectives by assessing its impact on the individual, team, organization and community.

The Conference Board's (2012) research confirmed that the coaching process needs to be supported within organizations in order to be successful. To do this, organizations need to develop and establish a coaching strategy, provide funding, monitor and evaluate coaching engagements, vendor contracting, the selection of external coaches, and the matching of coaches with coachees

(p. 6.). Indeed, providing funding for the coaching process is the only category that 70% of respondents said is overseen by the business unit (p. 6.); in every other category, over 60% of respondents said accountability rested at the enterprise level (p. 6).

In most companies, funding is at the business unit level while management is at the enterprise level. When we separate the responsibility of coaching from the leader and manager, it is all the more challenging to build organizational cultures where employees feel valued and equipped to do their work with leaders who engage and coach them. In this new world, leaders and managers have a responsibility to coach their people to develop their skills and abilities to perform. In many, if not most workplaces, coaching is overlooked, due to the lack of time available and the pressures to get results. It is sometimes handed off to human resources (HR) to deal with the problem and deliver results. This is an impossible task, since HR professionals are accountable for reporting on their client's performance and they are not experts in their client's business or operations and in some cases technical and or functional expertise. For this reason, it is crucial for some leaders who are having difficulty coaching their employees to work in partnership with HR to develop the best possible development plans for their employees. HR can coach the coach/manager on how to coach their employees and teams for higher performance.

One large retail organization that I worked with did not shy away from their coaching responsibilities. Their leaders created a coaching culture by making it an expectation for all managers and supervisors, regardless of rank, to coach their employees in real time, as issues or opportunities emerged. They did not have the luxury of scheduling time away from work to conduct workshops, retreats, and seminars in which coaching is often scheduled to happen. They transitioned people regularly through various jobs so that the employees could learn all the aspects of providing the total customer experience, along with learning about other specific retail business service areas, obtaining product knowledge, and developing skills. This approach helped the organization with its overall talent management strategy, as it fostered more people ready to be promoted and reduced turnover. This policy also became a real differentiator for the company among its competitors because people wanted to work there, since the company was known for providing excellent training and development to their employees and was considered one of the best places to work. To support employees' personal development as a coach, the organization posted tools, resources, and learning activities that could be pursued in one's own time and in self-directed teams for all employees to access regardless of rank.

The coaching mindset and practice must be incorporated in the disciplines of leading and managing. To be effective in the long-term, organizations need to conduct ongoing training and development to extend the role of coach from a select few to the critical masses. Coaching needs to be an integral part of management and leadership development strategies that support the master change plan and strategic priorities of the organization. In this way, coaching becomes a way of working, not an additional activity or add-on to work.

The Role of Technology and Social Media in Coaching

We've established that coaching plays a key role in the speed of adoption of new skills and competencies and the sustainability of change. But it is also important to recognize that today's coaching approach must be multifaceted, utilizing the tools and responding to the learning styles of various generations in the workplace.

There is increased use of web technology and video conferencing for coaching. For example, I recently conducted a Triple Impact Coaching workshop for participants who were working at their own sites in small teams of six to eight participants, connecting in with their colleagues doing the same workshop in 16 countries, using video conferencing technology. The approach worked well, as

this group was very experienced in using the technology and the process of breaking into their workgroups for application and then sharing their experiences with their colleagues using the videoconferencing technology. The face-to-face interactions with the onsite colleagues helped to make this type of coaching forum a success.

More of these types of coaching and teaching programs are occurring in university classrooms, as well as in publically available forums, such as webinars and teleseminars. While these mediums give us access to many people at the same time, the field of coaching is still in the testing phase of figuring out what works best and in what contexts.

When it comes to understanding the role of social media in coaching, let me explain my new position with a story. I recently had a discussion with a high potential leader in a health care system. She was a millennial who is "plugged in" to technology all the time. Her preferred method of learning is not in the classroom, as she is always learning—listening to her iPod, using her iPad, downloading podcasts, and reading e-books and Tweeting She was plugged in all time—learning on the go, all the time, while jogging, commuting to work traveling on a business trip, or even brushing her teeth in the morning.

This woman had taken my Triple Impact Coaching Program and, after the workshop, she approached me, curious about why I did not use or talk about social media as part of my program. She did not find me on Twitter, Facebook, or producing podcasts. She asked me how I got my information and research on what was new in my field and how could she "follow" me? I proudly told her I read newspapers and business magazines, am involved in various professional networks and associations, have some key resources that I admire who are my "go-to" people, and that I watched TV. She tested my hypothesis of being informed by going into her Twitter account and searched a few key people that I had identified as my "coaches and key resources." We discovered that they, too, are not out there using social media. I was enlightened that I was not alone. However, she pointed out the contrary, that their voices aren't being heard by the next generation—and neither was mine. This was a real "aha" moment for me, and from my *coachee* to boot.

She pointed out a big difference between our generations—I go after information, while her generation gets information sent to them and they have it at their fingertips 24/7. When I thought about this distinction, she was right. She was extremely well-informed about new leaders, influencers, movers, and shakers that I hadn't heard of and she was able to teach me a thing or two.

Since then, I've been reflecting on what she said and began observing myself even as I wrote this article. I realized that I too—even as an experienced coach—need to change and adopt the new technologies, so that I can be current and able to relate to the next generation of leaders. In my view, today's generations of "digital immigrants" (baby boomers like me) and "digital natives" (Gen Xers and GenYers like her) have a lot of coaching to do back and forth to benefit from each others' experiences. On the other hand, I also believe that there will always be a need for "high-touch, low-tech" coaching to develop, in real time, the critical interpersonal and group dynamic skills that everyone needs to master.

My biggest learning from this interaction was recognizing that we as coaches, need to reframe social media from being just a self-promotional tactic to seeing it as a powerful new tool for teaching, coaching, and learning. This experience has opened up more ideas in me on what could be next for the field of coaching—as I am sure there is even more innovation to come.

Creating a Coaching Culture in Your Workplace

Throughout this article, I have emphasized that the key to creating a coaching culture is to get people involved right from the start. Most of the coaching cultures that I have helped to develop were designed to lead and manage change by including people at all levels of the organization. In today's world, this is especially true when it comes to developing high quality, thoughtful, and engaged leaders who are willing to accept their coaching role.

When setting up an internal coaching program to develop such leaders, I recommend that an organization identify someone within the firm who can take the lead role in creating and implementing the initiative. This person must inspire and lead the program development. The initiative can then be aligned with human resources and existing change strategies, supported by the person or group responsible for organizational development. This creates a multi-disciplinary team that is essential to ensure coaching is embedded in the real work of leaders and managers, and monitored for impact and progress so individual and organizational development can be sustained over time.

I now summarize the various roles that an organization may want to establish when setting up an internal coaching program. I focus on the internal lead coach, senior management teams, cross company and task force teams, coach for the coaches and the role of the employee.

Internal Lead Coach

This person should have a strong coaching background and be responsible for the following functions:

1. Coach, develop, lead, and support the senior leaders and leadership teams to successfully implement their plans.
2. Be accountable for the design, facilitation, communication, and coordination of the organizational change plan and activities that support the organization's strategy.
3. Develop and design coaching processes, tools, and methods to assess, diagnose, design, and implement change.
4. Provide coaching on best practice research, methods, tools, and resources to support leadership, management, and coaching practices
5. Coach and provide hands-on, tactical organizational development and change support for initiatives to promote a healthy and productive workplace, to communicate the need for culture change, to diagnose and resolve specific issues that are interfering with productivity and the delivery of service.

Senior Management Teams

It is critical that management—both middle and top management—also be involved in the change process, as champions of change. In this role, they are responsible for coaching their direct reports through the changes, resulting in a ripple effect throughout the organization. Employees look up to role models to ensure they "walk the talk," and demonstrate the desired behaviours at the top.

In coaching programs, it is also important to involve the senior managers in critical check-point meetings, where they purposely reflect on the change strategy as a team. They must involve their task force teams to keep their finger on the pulse of what is happening throughout the organization, so they can learn about what challenges are emerging or what issues need focus. This creates a much deeper connection at various levels of the organization, and allows for a richer dialogue among the various levels of the company. In doing this, people tend to relate to each other as people

and not as objects to achieve a means to an end. Power dynamics begin to take on a much lower profile in the change process.

Cross-Company and Task Force Teams

These teams usually wear two hats, if not more. First, they play a role as managers, leading the change from their function, area of expertise or discipline, and business unit. But they also play the role of change agent in a project or initiative. This structure facilitates a deeper sharing of common experiences, interdependencies, and possibilities to work together as one organization to achieve the desired goals and objectives. Often, cross-company teams also become trusted advisors to senior management. Senior leaders begin to see how coaching upwards can become valuable as an intervention and informational process that can help with the next phases of the change process.

Here are a few guiding principles to keep in mind when selecting the cross company and task force teams. Ensure that participants:

1. Represent all areas of the organization's business and the key disciplines required to implement the organization's strategy.
2. Have a leadership responsibility in the implementation of the department or company plan and are required to report on its progress.
3. Have credibility in their area of expertise and can tap into their formal and informal network to influence and provide the voice and pulse of the employees.
4. Are encouraged to translate and align the company's direction and priorities into concrete actions and work plans.
5. Are supported to communicate and share their experiences, results, and recommendations with other parts of the organization to create a learning community.

Coach for the Coaches

"coach's coach" also has the objectivity to have a critical eye in evaluating the coaching approach because they usually don't have any emotional ties to the internal players or the organization. They can be far more effective in asking the difficult questions that can help the internal coaches test their assumptions, reflect on their behaviours, and make better choices, thus resulting in enhanced performance and more intentional impacts. However, the external coach must invest in understanding the organizational context and dynamics to be relevant and have impact.

The Role of Employees

Just as coaches need to understand the client's context, so do the employees. In order for them to be engaged and contribute, employees need to understand the context of their work, their roles and responsibilities, their line of sight on the design, development, and sales of a product or service, and their impact on the customer. Employees can't learn all this in just one day of orientation; they must be coached and developed consistently to be successful.

I often hear that leaders and managers don't have time to coach their people. This responsibility is frequently lobbed over to the HR department or an external resource. I disagree with this approach. It must be the responsibility of the organization's leaders and managers to coach their employees to be successful at all levels of the organization. In times of complex change, coaching must go up and down the organization and in real-time as we are often ALL learning and doing at the same time. So much of our work and learning is done through on the job experience and is dependent on working with and through others. Given this context, how can we not coach?

Further, there is often the added tension between how much work is done at the senior level that is strategic versus operational. In the middle level, there is a tension around the extent to which the middle manager can influence strategy and manage operations, while at the front-line, the tension is on how to eliminate red tape so the focus can be on providing service to the client or producing the best product. In my view, at each level, there is a need to coach so the whole organization can be effective. This is why I've always believed that coaching is an integral part of leading and managing.

Coaching Tools and Support for Large-Scale Change

What tools and approaches should organizations use to develop an integrated coaching program, such as the one I am recommending? These are a few of my suggestions:

1. *Individual Coaching:* I believe strongly in one-on-one coaching designed to support an executive or other individual leaders/managers for skill development, behaviour change, and/or to develop participative management processes and techniques. Such coaching may also include developing change leadership skills and the ability to think strategically, align, plan, direct, monitor, and communicate change.
2. *Team Coaching:* I am also a strong proponent of coaching the whole team, whether this be functional groups, project teams, or the people leading strategic initiatives to improve performance and achieve objectives. This type of coaching may include orientation and support for change management strategies, plans, and initiatives. It focuses on facilitating how others can adopt a new way of working, improve the transfer of knowledge to support and deepen the context and understanding of work, enhance project teamwork and performance, create stronger team alignment, and streamline process improvements and service delivery.
3. *Cross-Company Task Force Teams:* This is similar to team coaching; however, these teams are responsible for working on projects that cross over the organization, requiring high levels of collaboration, knowledge transfer, and cross-fertilization of ideas and results. These managers and leaders need to achieve results through influence without formal authority and power. They must learn how to be effective despite multiple layers of accountability and to work through others to achieve results.
4. *Organizational Networks, Learning Clusters, and Communities:* These are self-directed learning groups, ideally formed from cross-company teams to learn about the relevant theories of management and leadership as they relate their specific and company-wide leadership projects and challenges. By exploring their own issues through the lens of theory and their own experiences and practices, they quickly develop both a formal and an informal network and support system that helps facilitate change and results in increased performance at individual, team, organizational and community levels.

One example of a tool that can be used to foster such cross-company and large organizational networks is the products from a company called CoachingOurselves (CO). CO is a Montreal-based management development company founded by Phil LeNir and Professor Henry Mintzberg, Professor of Management Studies at the Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University. CoachingOurselves publishes a library of management "discussion topics" that are intended to be used as a focused self-study conversational tool among managers to develop their management thinking and skills.

The company is founded on the principle that (middle) managers are the key to the success of organizations and that dialogue and self-learning occur in the context of expert information amidst meaningful exchanges of ideas among a small group of managers. The CO courses are designed for self-directed teams and support the development of strong internal networks and communities of managers within organizations. In a Harvard Business Review article, *Rebuilding Companies as*

Communities (2009), Henry Mintzberg wrote: "We need to rebuild our organizations as communities. Companies must remake themselves into places of engagement, where people are committed to one another and their enterprise." (p. 1)

CoachingOurselves offers more than 70 topics, each one focused and self-contained. The CO modules are designed to be used without a coach, self-led by members of a learning cluster, which is usually composed of six to eight middle managers. Each module is intended to be completed within 90 minutes. The course discussion format is simple, yet rich, offering a natural way to develop and coach others. There is no pre-work before the group meets to discuss a topic. Their meetings are based around a print-out of a short PowerPoint presentation on a specific management topic that the group selects. The sequence of slides usually follows a prescribed formula:

1. *Management Happenings.* The session begins with a warm-up exercise in which participants are asked to share with each other what has happened in their work since their last session. They may highlight how they have used the concepts they already covered, what actions they took since the group last met, and what they learned through the process.
2. *Main Topic and Discussion.* This is the primary content and process portion of the meeting, focused on the specific content designed to help the group learn about the management topic they selected. The process invites participants to discuss questions and issues they face in their work. This presentation and discussion period represents about 80% of the 90-minute session.
3. *Resources for Further Learning.* Each topic includes some additional information where managers can get other related ideas, such as books, video clips, blogs, and so on.
4. *Reflections.* Since CoachingOurselves involves working as a self-directed group, a final self-reflection exercise wraps up the topic and helps participants reflect on the group's own development process and their individual learning.

In my work with the City of Ottawa, we used CoachingOurselves to help participants anchor their learning about best practices and issues that affected other managers and change agents across the City. We found that the CO topics enabled participants to talk about and share their own experiences through valuable conversations that normally would not take place in a team meeting or typical training session. Participants learned about their own personal influence and strengths in coaching and influencing and leading others. They gained insight that affirmed their strengths, helped reframe their challenges, and developed their own learning plan.

Recommendations for Implementing a Formalized Coaching Program

Coaching is a mindset and needs to be valued in an organization. In order to make this shift happen, organizations need to create a culture of coaching, incorporate it in training and development programs and performance review processes at all levels of the organization. In this way, the role of coaching and its importance as a management and leadership practice will be valued. If an organization is going to develop and implement a coaching program, the first task is to understand the context. That is, the organization needs to articulate why coaching and mentoring are important for both the development of people and the organization's success in the short-term and long-term. The organization must evaluate the capacity and support for coaching in the workplace. People need to understand why coaching is important, what the return on investment is for themselves, as leaders, and for the accomplishment of their work on a team or department level, and ultimately for their clients and community. If these questions cannot be answered, then I wouldn't consider a formalized coaching program. If you are ready to proceed, I would invest in conducting a needs assessment to determine what specific focus the coaching will take. Next, you must also be sure how you will measure the program's success. To ensure the program is viable, here are some recommendations:

1. Build in check-points to gain feedback from participants on their experience and the extent to which the program meets their individual needs and goals throughout the coaching process.
2. Design feedback and dialogue processes with your participants and your senior leaders who should be actively championing this shift in culture. This will mirror the culture that you are striving to achieve and also provide opportunity for learning on all levels. Measure what you strive to achieve.
3. Track the impact of the program and the return on investment against your stated goals. This means tracking more than just how many people participated in the program; you need to go beyond to find out what difference the program made on their management and leadership responsibilities and actions, the organizational objectives and ultimately, their lives inside and outside the organization and within their community.

Coaching, at an executive level, is really critical to help leaders transition into their new roles, and to take on stretch assignments. It encourages people to become more aware of their Use of Self and the choices they are making so that they can keep advancing in their work, and achieve their goals more consciously, quickly, and at a deeper level. This means leading change in a collaborative, participatory way that achieves buy-in across the organization.

Conclusion

Coaching is increasingly part of our everyday life and work. Parents, teachers, and front-line service providers, and individuals at all levels within the organization, have to learn how to coach on some level. Frankly, it is a critical and essential skill for everyone to develop. Some people will embrace coaching naturally and realize the impact and difference it can have on every aspect of their life; others will need coaching to become coaches.

I believe that we will see growth in more coaching programs, such as CoachingOurselves, as well as more organizations adopting learning clusters and self-directed and integrated coaching programs. Coaching helps to create and support a culture that is accountable, and enables organizations to build thriving organizational communities and realize their goals much faster and with deeper impact. I think that we will also see more innovative tools and processes using social media and technologies that make the coaching experience more engaging and participatory. I also estimate that our content, supports, and resources will be more diverse, have greater global reach, and even enhance the growing use of virtual workplaces.

There is no doubt that coaching has evolved as a professional practice and a discipline. In the International Coaching Federation and PricewaterhouseCoopers' (PWC) *2012 ICF Global Coaching Study Executive Summary*, based on a survey of 47,500 professional coaches worldwide, it was shown that the coaching field is growing fast, already generating close to $2 billion (USD) in annual revenue and income (p. 13). The study also revealed that three key issues for the future include: 1) dealing with untrained individuals who call themselves coaches; 2) the need for coaches to avail themselves of opportunities to increase awareness about the benefits of coaching; and, 3) answering the question of whether coaching should be regulated or not. (p. 13). With regard to the third point, more research on regulating coaching is clearly required. There are good reasons to hire skilled external coaches or hire internal coaches. However, the practice and discipline of coaching in the workplace must not be limited to a carefully trained few, but must become an integral competency of all leaders and managers in today's workplace. Developing the skills to coach others to coach within their professional and functional roles in today's complex workplace contexts is really the next major challenge for the field of coaching.

About the Author

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