

Corporate Coaching Questions and Answers (Corporate Coach U 2005)

What is coaching?

Coaching is a collaborative partnership between a coach and a willing individual which connects at the deep personal level of beliefs, values and vision, and which enables, through a process of discovery, goal setting and specific action steps, the realization of extraordinary results. Coaching is also a body of knowledge, a technology and a style of relating that focuses on the development of human potential. Coaching is interdevelopmental in that the collaboration develops both the coach and the individual being coached.

What is corporate coaching?

Coaching in the corporate setting uses the synergy of the organization and its members to enable them to evolve their capacity for learning and renewal into achievement of extraordinary results. Corporate coaching is central to a cultural evolution process that shifts the landscape of the workplace from one where people receive direction from others to one where people commit to doing things they care passionately about. Everyone wins, and organizations achieve competitive advantage when organizational members' creativity and potential are realized.

What is the context for corporate coaching?

Intense global competition, advances in computer and telecommunications technology, product and service innovation, and the emergence of the customer as a central player in the organization, have created a new corporate imperative. To sustain competitive advantage, indeed to survive, organizations will be compelled to continually innovate with unprecedented speed.

Rapid responses to the marketplace will be possible only in those organizations which promote continual advances in knowledge within their cultures. To do this, organizational leaders and members alike must radically shift the way they think and act in relationship to work. They must place a new emphasis on learning and the harnessing of individual and collective creativity. This will require a new type of workplace relationship. Coaching provides both a technology and a process for such a relationship, and is one of the cornerstones for organizational evolution.

What are the benefits of coaching for the organization?

- Provides a platform for organizational evolution
- Results in improved workforce recruitment and retention
- Is applicable to all parts of the organization
- Uses a common language which everyone can relate to
- Emphasizes the unique potential of individuals
- Is relevant to individuals as well as teams
- Provides a vehicle for establishing internal and external networks and partnerships
- Enhances communication with internal and external customers
- Complements other improvement processes
- Has sustainable benefits
- Promotes focused performance discussions
- Promotes development of new skills
- Forms a basis for planning for career advancement
- Fosters entrepreneurial thinking
- Facilitates the building of shared vision

Are there any disadvantages for the organization?

The evolution to a coaching based organization requires commitment and sustained sponsorship at all levels of the organization. There can be unevenness in getting everyone on board, and this can be initially unsettling to the organization's culture. The process encourages the development of personal leadership throughout the organization. This can be difficult for those who remain vested in traditional organizational structures which emphasize direction and decision making from the top. There will invariably be organizational members who are reluctant to enter into a coaching relationship due to internal obstacles. Moreover, coaching is not a quick fix program for serious organizational or individual performance problems. Finally, those organizations which enjoy protected market niches may not have a compelling need or desire to introduce coaching as a vehicle for evolution.

What are the indications that a company is ready for coaching?

Some of the indicators that an organization may be ready to become a coaching based culture include the desire for:

- A system that promotes innovation and accelerates results
- Increased effectiveness of recruitment, development and retention of valuable organizational members
- Increased results from present quality improvement programs
- A more vital corporate culture
- A performance management system that's applicable throughout the organization and has meaning for organizational members
- A process to move vision creation and decision making throughout the organization, thus ensuring that organizational vision and goals are shared
- Improved organizational communication and team effectiveness
- Shared accountability for the success of the organization

How is coaching distinct from training?

Training is the process whereby a prescribed curriculum or body of information is delivered by one or more individuals with specific expertise to others, often for the purpose of preparing them for particular roles or skills. Training does not typically take into consideration the uniqueness of peoples' existing skills, motivation or commitment, and it does not usually result in radical shifts in people's thinking and actions. Training tends to reinforce traditional organizational structures and dependency on top down direction and decision making.

How is coaching distinct from mentorship?

Mentorship is a supportive relationship in which a more experienced individual passes on his or her knowledge, wisdom and experience to an individual who is a novice. Often, mentoring relationships are utilized to pass on informal organizational cultural norms and to assist the individual in making connections which are important to career advancement. Mentoring relationships are not usually interdevelopmental and may foster dependency on the part of both the mentor and individual. Mentoring tends to reinforce traditional organizational structures defined by hierarchy and top down decision making.

How is coaching distinct from performance correction?

Performance correction is a performance management process which addresses less than acceptable performance as demonstrated by a pattern of behaviours and/or attitudes that falls below standards established by organizational job descriptions, policies, procedures or standard

practices. The goal of performance correction is the resolution of problem behaviours and attitudes and re-establishment of consistently acceptable performance. It is not a collaborative, interdevelopmental process and it is hierarchical in its orientation.

How does coaching relate to other process improvement programs?

Coaching complements and enhances other process improvement programs. It does so because other process improvement programs typically focus on tools, techniques and work processes, but rarely on interpersonal factors. Coaching puts people into the process improvement equation and can dramatically increase the likelihood of success of those programs. As a technology for performance improvement, coaching also provides a structure for measurement of quantifiable results.

Who can be a coach?

An individual does not have to have any particular background, training or organizational status to become a coach. People who gravitate toward the role of coach are often those who are already natural leaders in their organizations. They are people who want more for their organization, and from their own performance, and they are eager to help others reach for more. Through their honesty and passion for learning and growth, they have a natural ability to inspire others to reach for new levels of performance. They see possibilities.

Can everyone in an organization be coached?

It would be nice to be able to say that the answer to that question is a resounding "yes". The truth of the matter is, though, that roughly 15-20% of individuals in an organization are probably not coachable. This could be because they are unwilling, have serious performance problems, or are planning to retire or move on to another job. The good news though, is that as the organization begins its evolution, these individuals won't find it very comfortable to remain because standards are naturally elevated, and the organizational culture expects more from everyone. The even better news is that the organization then attracts and retains higher calibre talent than previously.

Comparison Of Traditional And Coaching Based Organizations

<u>TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>COACHING ORGANIZATION</u>
Top down decision making	Multi-level decision making
Incremental learning leading to incremental improvement in products and services	Evolutional learning leading to product and service innovation.
Bureaucracy and management control systems	Organizational support systems
Segmented, vertically organized structure with explicitly defined job responsibilities	Cross-functional teams, horizontally organized or matrix structures with loosely defined responsibilities
Performance measured against top down goals, usually with limited commitment by employees	Performance measured against shared goals with strong personal commitment by organizational members
Organizational leaders plan, direct and react	Organizational leaders support, inform and influence
Career growth measured by promotion; relationships are competitive	Career growth measured by depth and breadth of expertise and strength of partnerships/networks
Organizational culture promotes employee dependence and entitlement	Organizational culture promotes interdependence and self reliance of members
Organizational culture defined by compliance	Organizational culture defined by commitment

Shifting The Organizational Culture From Compliance To Commitment

Factors which Reinforce the Traditional Culture of Compliance	Factors which Contribute to a Culture of Commitment
<p>Emphasis on business results overshadows the human side of the business</p> <p>Senior management is fearful of giving up control of business results</p> <p>Senior management's behaviour contradicts their message of empowerment</p> <p>Organizational members are reluctant to assume increased personal accountability, especially if past mistakes have not been well tolerated</p> <p>Failure of past change efforts such as TQM reinforce the belief throughout the organization that it's too hard or just not worth it to change the status quo</p> <p>The organizational culture is "risk averse", and people lack the skills and confidence to behave differently</p> <p>The effort required to change behaviour discourages deviation from the comfortable, familiar and the habitual</p> <p>Reliance on established policies, procedures, standards and protocols as a way to maintain accountability and control</p> <p>Performance feedback is top down</p> <p>Training and supervision which indoctrinate people in the skills and competencies to perform well defined job responsibilities</p> <p>No compelling business need to change the organizational culture</p>	<p>Recognition that the human side of the business produces the business results</p> <p>Straight talk by senior management and organizational members which surfaces ambivalence about change and examines "political behaviour"</p> <p>Active participation by senior management with organizational members in co-creating job descriptions, policies, procedures, standards, team affiliations and working conditions</p> <p>Realistic appraisal of what policies, procedures, job descriptions and controls cannot or need not be altered</p> <p>Elimination of unnecessary bureaucracy, policies, procedures and controls</p> <p>Wide distribution of pertinent market information and internal performance results</p> <p>Compensation systems that contract for and reward personal accountability for results</p> <p>Training and coaching which develop people's skills in self management, networking and creative collaboration</p> <p>Compelling business need for change</p> <p>Leadership which is invested in truth telling in the organization and in 360 feedback regarding leadership effectiveness</p>