

Here's Why Coaching is Becoming Result Driven

Coaching in the corporate world is becoming specialized, systematic and focused on personal effectiveness.

People, processes, and technology – these are widely accepted as the troika that drives organizations. It would appear that advancement in the inanimate ones among these is more measurable, predictive and rapid, compared to that in the animated ones. Further, the rate at which processes and technology change is nearly impossible to achieve with people. Do people usually lag on what they themselves create? Some would say no since the creator won't lag on the creation. Others would contend that they do because it is easy to adopt new processes and technology, while changing people isn't easy.

Why coaching?

The commoditization and easy replication of processes and technology make them readily available to anyone willing to search for them. Competitive edge would then appear to lie in improving the people aspect, i.e., human capital. Let us look at what we may be dealing with – a sense of overwhelm. When we talk to clients – and these are some very large companies across sectors, from consulting to manufacturing to IT – the most common refrains are (i) our people are under pressure and aren't able to cope with it (ii) relationships, both personal and professional, are frayed and negatively impact performance and collaboration (iii) managers have little empathy for their teams and attrition is high as a result.



At the leadership level, a lot of it appears to be about people losing poise under pressure, just not getting out of their comfort zones and being unwilling to take risks among other things. Very few people would contend that their managers or leaders lack the skills required to get the job done. It is almost as if there is an imbalance between their emotional make-up and their inadequate response to the overwhelming pressure. This does not bode well, especially considering the shortage of leadership talent in the country. Booz and Company shared that soon, 15-18% of leadership positions in the top 500 companies in the country will be unfilled, or will be filled by people underprepared for the jobs.

Now, we may look at this situation from the corporate lens, but all of these “managers” and “leaders” are people. It is not just a “corporate bloke” issue. Our teams often find that the same issues present themselves when engaging with women, students, businessmen, teachers – virtually anybody who find themselves having to deal with the pressure created by the breakdown of the general order of things in in the pre-nuclear family, or the pre-information age days. The same old story plays out repeatedly – things around people change faster than they can change themselves in response. The manifestation may vary – a feeling of lack of empowerment, low self-worth, lacking a purpose, or other challenges.

This is well understood. However, the resources we throw at the problem seem not to pay back adequately. This is because while one size may fit all the machines, it won't fit all your people. Different strokes for different folks!

The answer to your problem may lie in coaching, especially for your best people.

Why would coaching help? For the simple reason that it is designed to be a one-on-one engagement to help people live life by their own design, rather than by defaults created by their environment – this will include other people. It begins with working out what that individual design is.



Then, it encourages behavior to lead people out of their comfort zone into bringing about required changes through cultivated practices.

The intention is to help create awareness in the coached, about the connection and congruence among thought, feeling & action. This leads to an understanding of patterns and identifying the specific emotion that drives the coached to act in the moment and in the manner that s/he chooses to. Optimal learning, therefore,

integrates the head, heart & hands. Self-awareness has led to a deep understanding of their larger purpose and insights like never before. In fact, at a level that is akin to spiritual revelations.

So where do we see coaching go in 2018?

Coaching will witness the following broad trends:

1. Results orientation Organizations and individuals will expect coaches to deliver specific results from coaching engagements.
2. Systematic approach to talent development Organizations will increasingly try to develop a culture of coaching amongst their managers. In 2018, they are less likely to view coaching as a point solution.
3. Development tool vs perquisite As HR managers understand the power of coaching, the practice of using it as a leadership development tool will gain ground, rather than as a prerequisite for the leadership bench.
4. Specialization HR will increasingly look for coaches who specialize in specific streams, e.g. Emotional Intelligence, Executive Presence etc.
5. Engaging deeper into the organization Coaching techniques will become more mainstream; coaching interventions will move deeper into organizations, to the middle management level.

Within corporates, the key areas of focus will be on –

1. Executive presence In a globalizing and more demanding business environment, there is a need for quality leadership – leaders with poise, courage, and with congruence in their thinking, communications and actions.
2. Building trust This is the elephant in the room and is increasingly being identified as one. For businesses to succeed, there can be no greater fuel than an environment of trust – with team members, customers and partners. Trust is an outcome of behavior, and behavior can be learned.
3. Diversity The focus for 2018 will be gender diversity. Sensitivity to workplace related issues is low and leaders will be required to mainstream the issue and begin to address it at the core in their organizations.
4. Coaching as a management technique. The impact of federated learning through the internet and social platforms makes it difficult to manage using control structures of the past. Younger employees prefer to be a part of decision-making and planning for achieving results. Middle managers are likely to be introduced to coaching techniques to enable this participative approach, rather than the top-down approach.



Among individuals, the big coaching trends in 2018 will focus on the following –

1. Personal effectiveness Especially in managing time and handling priorities, dealing with conflicting demands.
2. Empowerment and finding purpose. There are multiple environmental factors driving this in 2018. The spurt in layoffs, the inability of the market to absorb talent especially at high compensation levels, the desire for alternate careers and increasing agency in taking control of one's destiny are all higher than in the last few years.

The coaching industry, in turn, will have to respond with improvements in the standards of coach certification and creating opportunities for specialization. We believe 2018 will mark a year where the demands of the market will put the requisite pressure on the industry and the industry will be challenged to offer adequate coaches of a high quality. The mismatch though, is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

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