

THE COACHING MANAGER

People Centered... Outcome Driven... Performance Focused



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Standing at the bottom of a snow covered hill in Lofer, Austria, I was working with the GB Alpine ski team; it was the 17th of January 2006. The team were training for the next set of competitive races and my role was to assist them on the psychological aspects of their performance, in order to help them compete to the peak of their ability. I became aware that a man was standing by my shoulder. I recognized him from earlier when I had noticed he was keenly observing us. He asked me what I was doing, I told him that we were working on developing their competitive mental skills ability. "I ask them questions which focuses their mind," I replied. Asking powerful questions is one of the keys to effective coaching. In this article we will explore some of the key pillars to effective of business coaching.

With the credit crunch affecting many aspects of business, savvy owners and employers recognize the value of having a really effective and efficient team; one which saves energy, time and money by working together and seeking innovative solutions to the problems faced by companies around the world. Coaching offers leaders and managers a different, powerful and flexible tool which can help members of their team to grow and develop both personally and professionally

"No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings"
William Blake

which in turn has a positive knock-on effect for the business. More and more coaching is being seen as the vital tool which is needed to make this happen. The realization that a goal or solution when given to you by somebody else will seldom be as powerful as a goal or solution you discover for yourself, because ownership increases your commitment to making it happen is changing the face of leadership within the workplace. Creating an environment that encourages innovation, the sharing of ideas and a zone of confidence is key to a successful, thriving business.

Developing Rapport

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care"
Zig Ziglar

Think of someone in whose company you feel comfortable. What is it about that person that allows you to relax and be yourself? This is very important for a coach, having the ability to put someone at ease allows you both to safely explore the opportunities and challenges ahead. When people are relaxed in one another's company they almost seem to move as one, matching and mirroring each others' movements. Rapport building is a skill some people seem to find easy, the "natural networkers;" but we can all learn simple body language techniques to develop our rapport skills.

The next time you go to a restaurant watch people. Study their movements, how their bodies relate to each other. What do you notice?

Listening Skills

"When people listen, listen completely. Most people never listen"
Ernest Hemingway

Listening is different from waiting your turn to speak! Coaches listen at many different levels to what is said. What is not said allows you to develop a clearer picture of your clients situation. The next time you have a conversation with a friend, be still and listen, don't rush to fill every quiet moment.

Curiosity and Questions

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing"
Albert Einstein

Develop an intense curiosity about people and their world. This will guide you to ask questions about their strengths, hopes, and challenges. Practice asking questions like "How do you do that? What would that get you? Where's your next challenge?"

As I moved away from the hill, I thought about the power of people finding their own answers to their performance challenges. Through having the courage to coach in the appropriate situations you enable others to find their own answers and solutions, and in turn helping them to grow a great team. In today's turbulent times self-reliant innovative and resourceful team players can be the lifeblood of a growing organization allowing them not to just survive but thrive and prosper. ■

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