



Are You An Effective On The Job Coach?

The word "coach" in a business context is starting to be used so often these days that it is truly losing it's meaning and effectiveness. Too many managers/leaders (and consultants for that matter) are using the word in an attempt to separate themselves. Words and phrases, however, do nothing to separate those who can, and do, from everyone else. ACTION is the thing that does that!

Here are a few actions that you as a leader can do to stop talking it and to start walking it.

In a sporting context, the best coaches always make sure that every player on their team has a very clear and defined game plan for success. They realise that "focus precedes success" and if they can keep their team members focused on their key roles and accountabilities, that each player would have a much better chance of success. The teams that consistently win do so because they have a very clear plan that is broken into individual responsibilities. A coach will make sure that his players know what to do.

In a business context, a sales manager makes sure that the team knows what they are expected to achieve, what % of time should be spent prospecting, where their leads will come from, what they will say on the phone if cold calling, how to overcome the objections they may hear, what the goal of every call is, how many calls they are responsible for making, how many appointments they should attend during the day, what the goal of those appointments are, what they are measured on, what business development activities they are responsible for, what questions to ask customers to develop business, how to establish stronger business relationships with customers, what strategies they need for account development etc. etc. etc.

A good coach leaves nothing to chance. A good coach works with people individually on their plans so that they can improve skills as well as the need for personal expertise. A good coach realises that without a plan, how are we going to measure success when it comes along?

The essence of a coach should be in being a teacher, a mentor, a leader, not just an organiser, administrator and copper! Although there will be times when this may be appropriate. The best coaches are the ones who are on the field with their players every day working with them on their skills. It's no different in business today. The best coaches schedule time for skills training of their people. The skills necessary for success must be taught and practiced regularly. People do not learn these things intuitively, especially some of the EI (Emotional Intelligence) skills. Coaches realise that many players, given the choice, would rather not practice their skills. This is not to say that they do not want to succeed. They merely will take the path of least resistance most times. (It is human nature.)

How much time does a manager need to spend training staff on the job? 60% of the time is the expectation of managers in many progressive organisations today. That's 3 days a week!

The best teams in history did not stop practicing because they started winning. The best time to focus on skills development and training is not when things are going bad but when things are going well. It is probably too late to wait until things are going bad! Success requires a culture and discipline that encourages and rewards constant improvement and the primary catalyst for that is the manager/coach.



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