

## Individual Coaching for Organizational Results

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Performance modification is the result of motivation – to gain something or avoid something. As organizations continue to increase expectations on the performance levels of their staff, employees can often find it challenging to adjust or modify their performance styles and their thought processes quickly enough to respond to these organizational expectations. Although most employees are motivated to gain the personal satisfaction, recognition and rewards that come from being successful in their jobs, they commonly use familiar or comfortable thinking, or performance behaviors that hamper their ability to accomplish exactly what they want most – success in performing to new expectations. Coaching is a concentrated way of helping an individual examine existing thought processes, behaviors, motivations and responses in the context of their redefined work responsibilities. The individualized coaching process then enables the employee to identify and establish new or more relevant performance paradigms and practices. The result for the employee is a quicker adaptation, and a deeper and more logical alignment of performance to organizational expectations.

The desired performance modification depends on two critical elements of the coaching process:

1. *The coachee believes the coach will provide unconditional positive support.* – The most effective way this trust is created is in the way the coaching work is started. There must be a clear coaching outcome – a way to know if the coaching work is getting the coachee what is needed in both an individual and organizational context. With this outcome in mind, the first coaching session includes the individual, his or her supervisor, and the coach. This session is to establish mutually-agreed-upon performance goals – define success. Facilitated by the coach, this initial three-way communication, a) allows the coachee and the supervisor to discuss and determine performance outcomes in the context of organizational goals, b) provides the coachee the primary voice, and thus the greatest buy-in in determining the coaching outcomes and, c) allows the coach to establish a supportive, specific and open relationship with both the supervisor and the coachee. All work done during the coaching work sessions can then be tied back to the original performance goals, and the coach is seen as a partner and sounding board against which the individual's current performance realities and future performance possibilities can be examined. Methods used by the coach to sustain the trust of unconditional positive support include:
  - a. Reinforcing the mutually-agreed upon performance targets

- b. Dedicating one-on-one time with the coachee to build on goals
  - c. Listening to the issues that are of most concern to the coachee,
  - d. Reinforcing the coachee for risking and trying new thinking and behavior
  - e. Providing understanding about the complexity of accomplishing the targeted change, but not accepting excuses
  - f. Being non-judgmental
  - g. Knowing when to push/challenge, and when to listen
  - h. Helping the coachee feel comfortable with and buy in to the identified strategies
  - i. Getting a commitment to implement the new skills and behaviors, or identify what is still preventing the person from moving forward
  - j. Helping the coachee identify and work through the reasons for resistance
  - k. Encouraging the coachee to share strategies with supervisor and delegate up for support and resources
2. *The coachee feels comfortable exploring and risking* – The coaching process forces the coachee to challenge his or her current performance, identify what is working and what is not, determine the reasons a change is needed, and develop new perspectives, skills and strategies to be more effective in the increased performance expectations. Rather than provide the answers, the coach is the facilitator of the coachee's self-discovery and redefinition. The intent of coaching is to help the coachee integrate both confidence and competence in using the new performance behaviors. By building on the first critical elements of coaching - the belief of unconditional, positive support - the coach helps the coachee push beyond a traditional comfort level, try new things, debrief the results for lessons learned and determine the next steps toward the performance goal. The methods used to push the coachee's growth include:
- a. Providing immediate follow-up assessment and feedback dialogue to examine how well the new skills are or are not being used
  - b. Persistently and incrementally pushing the coachee to examine current paradigms and practices

- c. Dealing with one issue/growth target at a time and building a behavior structure around that one issue. Success is obtained by breaking apart large issues into manageable pieces
- d. Creating a framework for self-evaluation of performance against organizational systems, goals and culture.
- e. Creating tension between the status quo and the desired performance behavior
- f. Using "self-discovery techniques" such as role reversal, assignments that take the individual outside of the comfort zone, questioning the cost and benefit of the current behavior, assigning them to interview key players in their area of influence, etc.
- g. Facilitating the development of skill application and behavior modification plans. The coach orchestrates the use of the coachee's knowledge of the situation, new insights into the "cost" of current behaviors, the innate creativity of the individual to help the person design a new strategy.
- h. Helping the coachee discover workable ways to accomplish the goals that align with her or his style.

Coaching is an effective tool to help individuals make sustainable changes in both their performance and the way they view their role in the organization's success: a net gain for all.