

Why Coaching?

If one examines high achievers in the areas of Sports, the Performing Arts, Politics, and Business, one can conclude that even these achievers require ongoing coaching.

Whether it be an athlete coached on his hockey performance, a CEO being coached on her presentations, or a Political Leader being coached in the area of Media relations, it is clear that, regardless of one's level of performance, they never outgrow the ability to benefit from coaching. It is a process, when utilized properly supports sustainable and continuous improvement.

Studies on Coaching

- A study of U.S. and European companies conducted by the Conference Board identified poor or insufficient job performance feedback (a critical part of coaching) as the number one cause of individual employee performance problems in 60 percent of the companies surveyed
- Development Dimensions International, a Pittsburgh-based consulting firm, surveyed 1,149 people at 79 companies and found managers' feedback and coaching skills to be sorely lacking. Overall satisfaction with coaching and feedback was rated 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 5 by employees and managers alike. And the effectiveness of the performance appraisal process was given a rollicking 2.9 on the same scale. Hardly a ringing endorsement.
- A 1994 study of salespeople conducted by the University of Missouri found that, out of a wide range of skills, managers were rated lowest on their ability to give employees useful feedback on job performance.
- In 1992 frontline employees were asked what the characteristics were of managers who motivated them to do their best work, and it was learned that there are 10 traits the managers had in common:
 - Took time to listen to me
 - Saw me as a person, not just an employee
 - Cared about my personal problems
 - Set a positive example.
 - Let me know I was capable of more
 - Encouraged me
 - Never pulled rank-often pitched in
 - Let me know what was going on.
 - Praised me for a job well done
 - Was straightforward when I didn't do a job well.

Why are Managers Such Poor Coaches?

Most managers are weak coaches, and most employees know it. As do the managers themselves. Why so? To find out, we have been asking employees and managers in seminars and focus groups to tell us why, if good coaching is so important, good coaching is so rare. According to these employees and managers, there are at least four reasons.

- **Confrontation reluctance.** No one likes confrontation. And coaching can seem like an open invitation to wrangling and hard feelings. Managers preparing to discuss performance with even a highly competent employee conjure up scenes of dread in their minds. “I tell an employee that there is room for improvement, and then what happens? Tears. Recriminations. Accusations. No, Thank you! I’d rather skip the whole thing. This playing God, its not for me.” Reluctance is an especially important factor when the manager isn’t as expert as the employee. “I know I should be in there helping, but I don’t know this software half as well as some of the reps. How can I coach that?” One supervisor confided.
- **Fear of offending.** No one really likes to upset other people. Sometimes just the offer of coaching can be interpreted as a criticism of an employee’s performance. Look, some of these people have been on the phones here seven, eight seasons I start trying to give them advice and look out. They take it very personally. Like I was saying they were bad people or something,” observed the new manager of a mail-order call center.
- **Fear of Failure.** Coaching is a learnable skill, but one that most managers have never mastered. And they know it. “I know I should do it. But, hey, I’m not Kunte Rockne. I get embarrassed and flustered trying to give pep talks”: is the attitude! Employees routinely report that managers are better at pointing out job performance problems than at helping employees work through them. As one frustrated customer service employee we interviewed put it, “most of the time I know when I’m screwing up. Where I need the help is getting out of trouble, not knowing I’m in it!”
- **No time for coaching.** As businesses continue to downsize, consolidate, and ask people to do more and more, the time available for any task goes down. We frequently hear: “I’d love to be able to work with my people. But I’m on the line, too. There isn’t any time for coaching anybody anymore.”

Coaching is a process that , in fact, begins long before an employee has a performance problem, or needs help with a tough customer, or has developed a single bad habit. Coaching, done properly, is a positive, skill-building, confidence-affirming process that is only occasionally—and sparingly—about correction. Most of the time, coaching is about adding polish to already skillful performance, about increasing employees' problem-fixing options and repertoire, and about helping good employees take on new challenges.*

- excerpt form Coaching Knock Your Socks Off Service, by Ron Zemke & Kristin Anderson

EXCEL GROUP'S RealTime Coaching™ Process *Developing Leaders as Coaches for a Coaching Culture*

EXCEL GROUP'S RealTime Coaching Process is designed to equip leaders with a practical model, and skills to help their people develop from compliance to performance commitment. In a knowledge based economy with rapid technological change, organizations require effective leaders at all levels in order to achieve business objectives. In a world where loyalty is questionable and people have more choices, it is imperative that managers and supervisors lead people in a way that helps them and the organization excel. When you coach employees effectively, you improve their abilities and desire to perform in their current job and enhance their potential for future positions **EXCEL GROUP'S** RealTime Coaching™ is a management tool that helps managers align the behaviours of direct reports with the critical objectives of the organization.

Customized to your company's needs, the **EXCEL GROUP'S** RealTime Coaching™ process combines options that can include: online 360° Management Feedback, 3 month to 12 month development process, leadership coaching software driven behavioural profiles, leadership workshops, competency position analysis and individually tailored coaching.

The outcomes include: • Leaders/Managers/Supervisors become better Coaches for Performance Improvement with their direct reports • Stimulate Continuous Improvement in their Associates • Create a Culture for effective implementation of business plans • Improve Morale • Increased Productivity • Lower (negative) Turnover • Better Teamwork • Enhanced Succession Planning • Reduced Stress • Improved Communications • Improved Service Delivery to Customers/Clients.

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