



Executive, Leadership, and Management Coaching

Coaching is both a diagnostic and a developmental process. The coaching relationship begins with defining the desired outcomes in relation to the current outcomes, in order to determine the performance gap. Once the gap is understood, the behaviours causing the gap, and the leader's characteristics, such as skill, knowledge, personality, values, and beliefs leading to the behaviour, are diagnosed. After new behaviours that fit the leader's style and personality are identified, they will be practiced in order to achieve the desired outcome. This process takes place in a developmental relationship that assists coachees in understanding their patterns of behavior that are positively or negatively influencing the desired outcomes. Coaching is a developmental process to help managers and leaders work through the challenging tasks of managing and leading (Hargrove, 1995; Hudson, 1999; Ruzich, 2003).

There are several key components of this definition. First, coaching is a developmental relationship. This means that the purpose of the relationship is to develop new skills, knowledge, and / or awareness. The intent of the relationship is to gain insight that will help the coachee learn how to do something differently or better. Since the relationship focuses on understanding patterns of behaviour, the new skill, knowledge, and / or awareness should be visible by others in the behaviour or actions of the leader. Frederic Hudson (1999) suggests that helping leaders manage change is one of the fundamental functions of coaching. Similarly, Hargrove (1995) suggests that coaching is used by organizations to create a culture of high performance, change, and learning.

Furthermore, the developmental relationship is typically between a leader and a coach. The leader may have generated the relationship him / her, or the leader's manager may have determined the relationship. Finally, the purpose of examining the patterns of behaviour is to impact the outcomes a leader is generating. The outcomes can be anything from financial and interpersonal outcomes to impact on employees, or customer / team relationship outcomes. For example, suppose the leader was well liked by everyone in the organization yet was not producing the results required of his / her division. Coaching would help the leader identify the behaviours that were positively influencing likeability and also the behaviours that negatively influence results. Once identified, new behaviours to generate better results would be suggested and practiced.

Important to the definition of coaching is a theory of personal control (Bell & Straw, 1989). Bell & Straw's research introduced the idea that certain leadership characteristics lead to different leadership behaviors, which create different outcomes.

Effective interpersonal communication is one of the key Outputs of coaching at this level. A coach can provide such psychosocial functions as role modeling, acceptance / confirmation, counseling and friendship (Hudson, 1999; O'Neill, 2000). According to O'Neill (2000), the coach also provides three additional functions that pertain to the leader's responsibility:

- 1) to help the leader communicate in his or her territory;
- 2) to build relationships and facilitate interactions; and
- 3) to produce results and outcomes.

So it seems, as discussed above, that the function of a coach is to help the leader achieve specified desired outcomes for developmental or performance reasons. The coach should help the leader identify areas where they might not be doing well by providing them with feedback (Hall, 1999). The coach provides the process for diagnosing the gap, behavior, and characteristics that are keeping the leader from achieving the specified desired outcomes and then helps design a developmental process to close the gap.

We enable individuals, companies and organisations to transform from their current to their chosen desired state. The coaching process makes it possible to be more focused, and raise the level of performance, thus becoming highly effective. We facilitate personal mastery, the transformation of people's lives, personal reinvention, and enable people to achieve any, or all of their goals, and to lead purposeful, balanced and fulfilled lives.