

The Need for Business Coaching

Business Coaching may sound like a new fad, just a different way of providing training but wrapped up in a new suit. The reality however, is that companies across the UK are increasingly using Coaching as a way to develop their staff and boost their business performance.

There is a lot more to Coaching than simply passing on information. It focuses on the individual in different situations: how they interact with other people, how they learn, how they feel, and how they behave as a result. In fact Coaching can have a significant impact on an individual's personal effectiveness.

Coaches are hired for many different reasons. These could include helping individuals to become better managers, or improving someone's prospects for climbing the career ladder, or making a department more effective. Coaching will also help the client to make better decisions and faster. By helping to narrow down the options that are wanted, or achievable, the client is helped to make decisions in the most difficult of circumstances.

And there is evidence to show that it can deliver a significant return on investment. Indeed a CIPD survey in 2004 showed that 90% of managers believe that Coaching is a key method of transferring skills and training in the workplace, and 94% think that Coaching is an effective way to promote learning in organisations.

What is Business Coaching?

Quite simply, Coaching is about getting the best out of someone and enabling them to make decisions that will improve their performance. A coach's job is not to go over old ground, be past-orientated or force-feed information, but to work with clients and get them to find the answers themselves. Coaching works on the assumption that every human being has the capacity to grow. A good coach will listen and guide you in a non-judgmental way towards achieving your best. At each session the coach and the coachee work together closely to establish a plan for the coachee to follow to attain his/her goals.

All coaches have something in common, they are people who want to help others be the very best they can. Coaches help people set better goals by discovering what they actually want to achieve, using the clients own values and needs as reference points. Having set a goal, a coach will then help their client to reach that goal faster and more effectively than if they worked on their own. The coach provides a consistent structure of support and offers innovative strategies and approaches to help their clients reach their goals quickly.

Business Coaching is results driven, and therefore, not only has an impact on the bottom-line, but ensures personal achievements for the client. Coaching results can be many and varied but might include:

- Reductions in stress levels
- More valuable and productive time management
- Getting the work-life balance right
- Finding more sales through more improved marketing
- Improved staff retention



Why do organisations use business coaches?

Organisations use business coaches for many reasons – to help with business plans, increase profit, staff retention or to improve work and life balance. The reasons can be many and varied, but here are ten:

- 1. Coaching enables companies to improve their business performance**
 Good companies are always looking for new ways of enhancing their greatest assets– their people. Using Coaching as an integral part of their HR development programme has been shown to improve overall business performance.
- 2. Coaching enhances leadership development and responsibility**
 Coaching concentrates on the skills needed by the individual to perform their job well. By concentrating on developing those skills needed to provide good leadership, Coaching can move a person forward quicker and more effectively than conventional training.
- 3. Coaching improves team working and knowledge transfer**
 Good team players need to understand their role in the team and how to get the most out of each member. By Coaching both team leaders and members each individual will grow to work together more effectively.
- 4. Coaching ensures the individual stays focused on their key goals and strategies**
 Coaching is a results orientated activity and by concentrating on results a coach will help individuals towards their end goal one step at a time and help celebrate wins along the way.
- 5. Coaching helps managers to become self-reliant**
 Not all managers are always sure of themselves, particularly in a new role. Coaching will help them to become more self-reliant, make their own decisions and not always need others to hold their hand.
- 6. Coaching helps managers to stay committed**
 Because they want to achieve, managers have commitment to a project or goal. Occasionally though their commitment slips. A coach can empower them, helping them to stay committed and see a project through to the end goal.
- 7. Coaching maximises the benefits from training**
 Although training can be an excellent way of providing knowledge transfer, for some people there needs to be a follow-up process to ensure that they are maximising the learning points. It is also ideal for training complex issues which can't be dealt with in normal training sessions.
- 8. Coaching is a catalyst**
 Good coaches should act as a catalyst to help clients to achieve their goals.
- 9. Coaching can increase individual job satisfaction, higher productivity and staff retention**
 A job well done gives satisfaction all round, increases staff morale and helps staff retention. These in turn create higher productivity and a potential increase on the bottom line.
- 10. Coaching is based in the present and the future, not the past.**
 Coaching looks to the future and works with the client to move forward, whatever has happened in the past. Coaching is not counseling or therapy.



How can Coaching help me and my organisation?

There is no typical type of organisation who uses a coach. It ranges from SMEs to large corporates and public bodies. But it is one of the fastest growing industries at present as more and more organisations come to grips with the benefits that it can offer them and their staff.

Business Coaching can help both individuals and their companies by providing a combination of specialist skills training and the opportunity for individuals to discuss ideas and concepts with someone from a third party arena. A coach has no agenda, and can therefore provide an unbiased input to any situation.

Business Coaching concentrates on working with individuals within specific business contexts. These might include:

- Executive Coaching - working with senior level managers to resolve issues such as change management, innovation
- Management issues eg interpersonal skills or team building
- Conflict resolution eg by changing people's styles of behaviour to reduce conflict
- Specialist knowledge eg marketing
- Business needs eg strategy
- Individuals who are looking to change roles or for promotion

Getting ahead in business requires tenacity and drive. By being able to reduce the amount of time that you spend looking for answers, you can achieve more in less time.

Having someone to toss ideas around with, someone who understands the creative process, someone who expands your thinking, can significantly increase your creativity and productivity. Without this, your creativity can become limited. A coach then becomes a high-benefit, low-cost, collaborative partner.

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