

“Coaching: the key to personal and professional growth.”



By: Donald Hahn, President, Hahn Training

Coaching is the big buzzword in the corporate world these days. Everyone talks about it, but no one is sure exactly what it is and few people do it well. Most people confuse training, mentoring, supervising, managing and coaching. If you are a manager you probably trip over coaching opportunities all day long, but the frenzy of our day prevents us from pausing long enough to invest in our greatest asset...human capital. Most times we are too busy to even recognize the opportunity before us. Frankly, coaching is over hyped and underutilized by most managers.

As a long standing Certified Franklin Covey Coach and sales catalyst, I can confidently state that there is no more valuable tool for a leader than effective coaching. If done improperly, however, poor coaching can be a demoralizing and draining experience for all. Great coaches possess exceptional listening skills, and provide perspective which allows the student to raise their personal awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, and take accountability for their own personal improvement. Another way to view coaching is as it relates to training; whereas training is a transfer of intellectual knowledge, coaching is assisting the student in taking accountability for their own behaviors and managing their personal growth.

The commitment to coaching is a cultural phenomenon and comes from the very top. The good news is that corporations are now placing an enormous value on human capital. Increased competition, the globalization of our economy and the shortage of qualified workers is accelerating this trend. If you manage people, coaching should be a continuous part of your daily activity. Coaching takes many forms. It can be as simple as asking your people “what do you think we should do about the problem?” next time they descend upon you as you enter the office. It should also be time which is formally scheduled weekly or monthly in which you set aside 30 minutes to career path your people and provide performance feedback. The greatest complaint I receive from my clients is that they do not have the time to invest in coaching their people. This indeed is a conundrum. The fact is, the more time you spend coaching your people, the less time you will spend putting out fires, BUT for an interim period you will need to play coach AND “Smokey the Bear.” Good coaching starts with vision and leads to accountability and empowerment. Define what coaching is to you, and make a commitment to invest in your people. To get you started, my definition is below:

“Coaching is an empowering learning environment which leads to self-realization and self-actualization by the employee. The objective is to be a catalyst in affecting lasting personal growth, balance and contentment.”

- Don Hahn, Certified Franklin Covey Coach

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Franklin Covey
certified coach

PO Box 172
East Amherst, NY 14051
716-406-2148
www.champtrainer.com

