

Creating a Coaching Culture

– Revised Edition –

**The first place to look . . .
to find the elements of coaching
identified and clearly defined**

**A valuable resource . . .
for coaches and others
involved in the coaching process**

**Provides the basic concepts . . .
upon which a coaching culture
can be constructed**

Dr. Allen Saville

Creating a Coaching Culture

— Revised Edition —

The purpose of this book is to encourage the extensive use of coaching to improve individual and organizational performance.

Think of the impact if we all took our coaching roles seriously and became proficient . . .

- Increased performance
- Greater realization of human potential
- Greater job satisfaction
- Higher profitability for business
- Economic growth
- Personal reward through helping others

The following basic concepts are covered to provide a foundation for building a coaching culture:

Vocabulary: This book creates a vocabulary for coaching by identifying and defining the elements and relationships of coaching. This facilitates common understanding and progress toward shared goals.

Relationships: The fundamental relationships among those involved in coaching activities are described and illustrated.

Models: The purpose, application and process of coaching are explained and models are provided to improve understanding.

Behavior: Guidelines for the behavior of coaches and others involved in the coaching process are provided.

Use this book to help create a coaching culture within your company:

- Cultivate superior coaching skills
- Improve individual and company performance
- Help people realize more of their human potential
- Leverage your training, learning and development activities

Books by Dr. Allen Saville:

The Elements of Performance • Creating a Coaching Culture



The Author: Allen Saville has a law degree from The University of Virginia and masters and doctoral degrees emphasizing planning and management systems from Virginia Tech. He has been consulting for almost 30 years in the areas of strategy, performance improvement, organizational effectiveness, executive coaching, leadership development, and change management. In most of

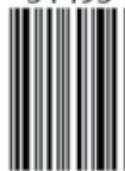
his speaking and consulting engagements he deals with realizing more of the potential of individuals and organizations. Typically, Allen works with CEOs and leadership teams in strategic planning and enterprise transformation efforts from goal formulation through strategy implementation.

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Acknowledgement

Having been a decent track athlete in high school, I decided to go out for the track team when I entered the University of Richmond as a freshman. That decision was both fortunate and serendipitous! I met Coach Fred Hardy and went from being a decent athlete to breaking a fist full of school records, State records, Southern Conference records and qualifying for, and running in, the NCAA championships. More than that, I learned the mental discipline and tenacity of purpose that have been the basis of my process of continuous learning.



Since those four years of undergraduate school I have often had occasion to ponder what the magic ingredients are that enable a coach and an athlete to work together to accomplish great things.

Since I work as a consultant in the field of strategic planning, change management, enterprise transformation, and organizational design and development, I have had a number of opportunities to provide coaching to executives, members of executive teams, and others. There are many areas of knowledge and skill that one must possess to be a good coach in either the athletic or business context, but the essential fundamental in both contexts is that *burning desire* a coach must have to help others realize their individual potential.

Thanks Coach Hardy. Thanks for being a good model and a great COACH!

Preface and Purpose

It seems that with the increasing use and influence of the internet and other forms of electronic communication the English language is changing more rapidly than ever. Much to the dismay of some students of the language, nouns are being used as verbs and new jargon terms are being adopted at an alarming rate. In fact, in some circles it seems to be trendy to make an effort to create and use new words. Others not “in the know” will be identified by the marked absence of these new words in their vocabulary and their clear lack of understanding of the new terms.

Although not exactly in the same fast lane as the language of high technology, the terms COACH and COACHING have taken on some new meanings within the span of a generation. In the 1500s the word COACH meant a large closed-in carriage with four wheels and seats inside and out. Since the mid to late 1800s the word coach has been used to identify someone who assisted another to prepare for an examination. This new meaning came from the fact that the coach, or tutor, was “regarded as a means of *conveying* the student through his examinations.”¹ Another meaning with which we are all familiar – one who trains others for an athletic contest – came later, but still has been around for a long time. Of course, this noun was then used as a verb meaning, among other things, “to train intensively by detailed instruction, frequent demonstration, and repeated practice.”¹

The newest meaning attached to the word is not in the context of a university or athletics, rather it is in the world of work and business. In this context, COACH is used to identify a person

¹ Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, MA, 1971, s.v. coach.

who assists another to improve their performance, usually in some type of vocationally related endeavor.

As might be indicated from the fact that there are several different contexts in which the same word has come to be used, there are many similarities in the function of a coach that cut across all contexts. In fact, there may be lessons to be learned by each coaching application from an appreciation of the other applications of coaching. Therefore, there may be techniques employed by the coach of an athletic team that are applicable, and very valuable, in the context of coaching a team working in a business situation. Likewise, a person coaching an individual CEO of a large company may use tools and techniques that are also valuable in coaching a star athlete.

Purpose

The purpose of this book is to encourage the extensive use of coaching as a means of improving individual and organizational performance and to accomplish individual and company goals and objectives. In this book the following basic concepts are covered to provide a foundation for building a coaching culture:

- Vocabulary: Common understanding and progress toward accomplishing mutual goals are difficult until there is a set of terms and definitions that everyone knows and uses. This book identifies and defines the elements of, and relationships within, coaching – thus creating a vocabulary of coaching.
- Relationships: The fundamental relationships among those involved in coaching activities are described and illustrated (see especially chapter two).
- Models: A number of models that explain the purpose, application, and process of coaching are provided. Individual coaches and companies seeking to create a

coaching culture can use these models in cultivating and providing coaching to achieve performance improvement.

- Objectives: The objectives to be achieved through coaching are clarified and various situations in which coaching is valuable are identified and discussed.
- Behavior: A few guidelines for the behavior of coaches and others involved in the coaching process are provided (see especially chapter seven).

The first chapter deals with the need for, and the characteristics of, a *coaching culture*. Beginning with the second chapter the essential roles and dimensions of coaching are defined and explained. Examples are provided throughout the discussion. Chapter two contains most of the definitions and terms that are used throughout the balance of the book.

Since the focus of coaching is performance, chapter three treats the nature of performance and defines the elements of coaching in relationship to performance. Chapter four specifically addresses *performance coaching*, and provides a solid coaching process model. Special emphasis is given to the element of *commitment* in chapter five. Chapter six is devoted to providing an understanding of *competencies* as they relate to coaching. And, the attributes of a good coach are enumerated and described in chapter seven.

The book is designed to be a *quick read* in that it is relatively short. Hopefully, you will find much contained in the book to add to your understanding and appreciation of coaching. Critical evaluation of the models contained in this book is encouraged – this is the way to integrate the valuable parts of this book into your own knowledge and skills.

Critical evaluation can also lead to improvement. If you have ideas or suggestions for improving the models and/or concepts in this book, please consider sharing those with me so

future editions can provide even more insight into the coaching process. You can reach me through the Saville Consulting Service website at www.saville.us.

Introduction

Given the definition of the word COACH offered in the previous section of this book:

a person who assists another to improve their performance, usually in some type of vocationally related endeavor,

a great many people qualify. Some might consider this definition overly generous. Certainly, one approach would be to limit the ranks of coaches to those for whom coaching is their primary activity. If the result of such a limitation were that only *real* coaches need pay attention to the dynamics and techniques of coaching, limiting the status of coach would be a mistake.

The truth is that, at one time or another, just about everyone has an opportunity to serve as a coach. Rare is the individual who has never had an opportunity to assist another in some type of improvement that relates to their work performance. The point covered mostly in chapter one of this book is that leveraging this coaching activity into a company-wide system contributes significantly to the performance improvement of individuals and the company and is rewarding to all those who participate in the coaching process.

Coaching is both an honor and a terrible responsibility. It is an honor to be called upon to help another person move closer to realizing their full human potential. It is also a terrible responsibility because the influence of a coach can be significant. Given the possibility of significant influence on others, all those who provide any form of coaching have a serious responsibility to provide the best and most accurate information and the most positive form of influence possible. If you are looking for a reason to take your coaching responsibilities seriously, other than personal satisfaction and service to your

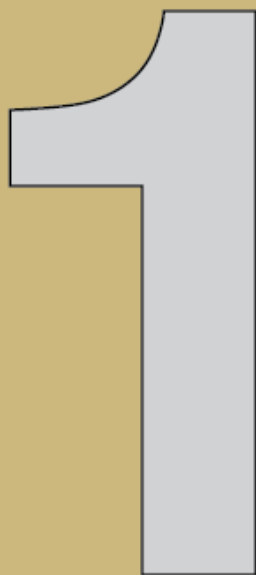
fellow man (be that person male or female), just remember that the person you coach today might possibly be your boss at some point in the future.

In the acknowledgement I stated that one fundamental of a good coach is to have a *burning desire* to identify, and help others realize, their individual potential. A good coach must have more than just desire. A good coach must also have the knowledge, skills, and attributes required to perform well in their coaching endeavors.

Think of the impact if we all took our coaching roles seriously and became proficient. How much more human potential could we help realize? What would be the positive impact on individuals – the people with whom we work? What would be the benefit to the companies and other organizations of which we are a part? What would be the collective impact on our economy? How much more would we enjoy our work and, how would we feel about our contributions?

The information and models contained in this book are intended for all who seek to take their coaching roles seriously and become more proficient. For those who are engaged in coaching on a professional basis, continuous improvement is an expected part of our vocational responsibility. For leaders, managers and supervisors, coaching is a part of our jobs – part of the reason why we receive a paycheck. We owe it to those we lead and manage, and the company that provides that paycheck, to perform well in our coaching responsibilities. For everyone, coaching is intrinsically rewarding and can be an activity that not only provides benefit to others but also pleasure, personal satisfaction and fulfillment to the coach.

Chapter One



Creating a Coaching Culture

A Coaching Culture

Creating a Coaching Culture

A Coaching Culture

The title of this book suggests that it is possible or advisable (or both) to create a culture within organizations in which coaching is valued and practiced well.

Why do it?

Creating a coaching culture is important for many reasons. The most compelling of these are the success and competitive position of the company that creates and maintains a coaching culture. If a company is successful in building a culture in which employees are good coaches and apply their skills to help others toward better performance this company will certainly out perform their competitors. This *coaching culture* will have the following significant benefits:

- Pervasive coaching activity will greatly facilitate a true *learning organization* in which there are both:
 - Constant learning, and
 - A shared desire for continuous improvement
- Employees taking on new responsibilities will get up-to-speed much faster
- Through coaching all company sponsored learning and development activities will be highly leveraged to others in need of new knowledge and skills
- People will perform their work responsibilities better and, as a result, customers and clients will experience higher levels of both technical ability and service quality

All of these benefits to the company also equate to greater perceived value on the part of customers and clients and translate to higher profits and greater market share.

In addition to these benefits to the company there are also benefits to individuals. Coaching helps people to realize more of their human potential – moving toward individual self-actualization. This has a very positive impact on individuals in terms of work satisfaction and should also result in the traditional benefits of better performance evaluations and greater income. In other words, with an active, high-quality coaching culture individuals will contribute greatly to the growth and profitability of the company and will enjoy doing so in terms of both personal satisfaction and improved income.

What is a *coaching culture*?

As suggested in the preface, a COACH is a person who assists an individual or a team in improving their performance, usually in some type of vocationally related endeavor. COACHING is the action or process of providing assistance to help an individual or team improve performance in their work related responsibilities.

The term *COACHING CULTURE* is used to describe a work environment in which the coaching process is used extensively at all levels in the company as a means of providing assistance to individuals and teams to help them improve work performance. In a coaching culture, people automatically help other people. In a coaching culture both giving and receiving help is normal and expected. It is okay to ask for help and it is part of everyone's job to provide coaching assistance to others. It is expected that everyone in the company may provide coaching at some point.

In order to create and maintain this type of coaching culture a company must consciously decide that coaching will be one of the primary vehicles through which learning and development take place. In essence, coaching will be a recognized strategy that the company uses to accomplish its goals and objectives.

In order to be successful in the execution of this strategy the company must actively encourage and support building good coaching skills in all employees. If everyone is expected to perform as a coach, everyone must cultivate coaching skills.

This means that the company will communicate to its employees that they are expected to serve as a coach from time to time to help others perform better. This communication could happen as part of an explanation of a performance evaluation system in which coaching is enumerated as a function that is part of everyone's responsibility and upon which everyone is evaluated.

Since coaching is part of everyone's responsibility it is only fair that the company provide training to all in at least the basics of coaching. Some people for whom coaching is an even more significant part of their job responsibilities will need more advanced coaching skills.

Building a coaching culture means creating a work environment in which people can expect to receive coaching. This is an essential and often overlooked cultural attribute. Some company cultures are sort of "macho," and in these it is not always okay to ask for help or to receive help even if you didn't ask. In a coaching culture it is not only okay to receive help – receiving assistance to improve performance should be expected, maybe even when a person isn't even seeking assistance. People must feel free to ask for coaching and people must feel free to volunteer to coach others.

Just allowing coaching to happen is not enough. To build and maintain a coaching environment companies must actively employ coaching as a part of the way the company operates. For example, including some specific coaching relationship as a part of any and all promotions and transitions is an effective use of coaching which also supports the quick acquisition of new skills needed for work performance. This type of assis-

tance also helps ensure individual success in taking on a new position.

The Primary Ingredient

The primary ingredient in building a coaching culture is having employees who are capable of both providing and receiving coaching. Both are required – not just one or the other. Even if all employees were excellent coaches, if no one were inclined to use coaching as a means to improve performance, coaching would not occur and there would be no coaching culture. The flip side of that also negates a coaching culture. That is, if people were receptive to receiving coaching, but no one in the company could provide coaching, again, no coaching would occur and a coaching culture would not exist.

There are many things a company must do to build and maintain a coaching culture, but the essential elements are:

- Cultivating among all employees an understanding and belief in the value and responsibilities of coaching
- Providing employees with a good grounding in coaching fundamentals – the basic skills used in providing coaching to help others improve their performance
- Having in place within the company the systems, structures, processes, and procedures necessary to support people in their coaching activities

The balance of this text is devoted to an explanation of coaching fundamentals – the basic concepts of coaching. Beginning with the next chapter the essential roles and dimensions of coaching are defined and explained. This establishes a coaching vocabulary for everyone to use. Chapter two contains most of the definitions and terms that are used throughout this book.

This book is about *performance-based coaching*, and chapter three treats the nature of performance and defines the elements of

coaching in relationship to performance. Chapter four specifically addresses *performance coaching*, and provides a basic coaching process model. Taken together the first four chapters provide the basic concepts upon which a system of coaching – a coaching culture – can be built.

Special emphasis is given to the element of *commitment* in chapter five. Chapter six is devoted to providing an understanding of *competencies* as they relate to coaching. And, the attributes of a good coach are enumerated and described in chapter seven.

Chapter
Two

2

**The Essential
Elements of
Coaching**

Creating a Coaching Culture

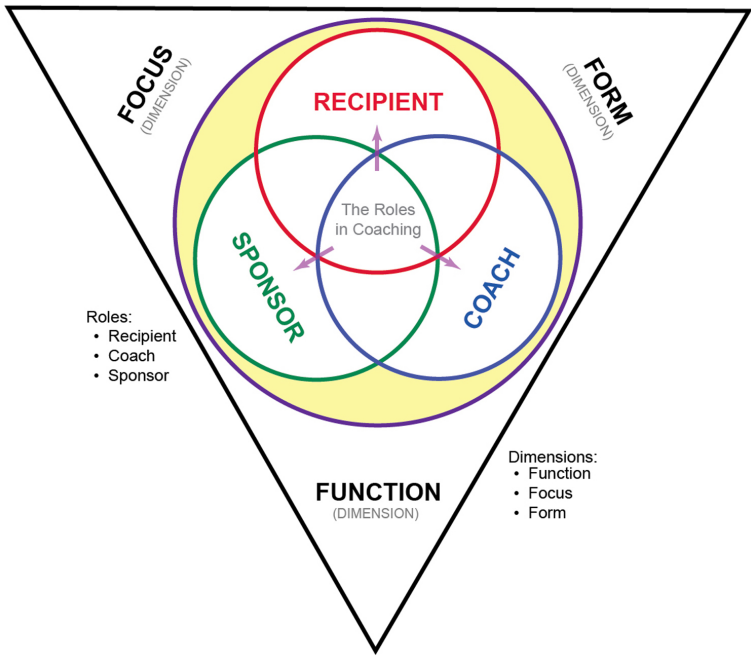
Creating a Coaching Culture

The Essential Elements of Coaching

A secure knowledge and thorough understanding of the essential elements of coaching and the coaching process are the foundation of a person's ability to provide coaching assistance. This knowledge and understanding is also required in order for a company to build and maintain a coaching culture.

The essential elements of coaching are all related to the fundamental players involved in the coaching process. Describing the roles of, and relationships among, each of these players reveals the essential elements of coaching. There are three roles and at least three additional dimensions of coaching that are essential to the coaching process. The diagram entitled *The Essential Elements of Coaching* presents these six elements in graphic format.

Essential Elements of Coaching



The Roles in Coaching

The first two roles to fill are the *coach* and the *individual or team receiving the coaching*.

Coach

A coach is a person with the knowledge, skills, and personal attributes required to provide assistance to another person or team in improving their performance.

The coach can be a professional – that is, one who is paid for the coaching services. The alternative is an unpaid coach – at least not paid specifically for coaching. Professional versus nonprofessional status is not necessarily correlated to the quality of coaching. Needless to say there are many who coach on an unpaid basis who are very good coaches. And, unfortunately, professional status does not always guarantee coaching excellence. The professional versus nonprofessional difference is very much related to the *form* of coaching (formal or informal) that is discussed later in this chapter.

Recipient

On the receiving end of coaching is an individual or a team in need of, and/or desirous of, improving their performance.

From this quick description, it is clear that a recipient can be one person or a number of people who have come together for some identified purpose. There are many instances of one-on-one coaching. This is a situation in which the coach works with a single individual to help that one person. Just as often coaching is provided to a group of people, or a team. Within the team context it should be noted that at least part of the fo-

cus of coaching is determined by the purpose that unites the team.²

Can there be more than one coach working with an individual or a team? Certainly. In the case of an athletic team, a single individual on a team may receive coaching from a number of different coaches. A large team, for example, an American professional football team, may have quite a number of people on the coaching staff. Similarly, a performer might have a voice coach, a drama coach, and maybe others as well. In the business context there is usually only one coach at a time, but it is conceivable that there could be more than one person providing coaching to either an individual or a team. In the case of multiple coaches, there should be a high degree of coordination among the various coaching initiatives.

Sponsor

In addition to the coach and the person receiving the coaching, there is a *sponsor*. The sponsor is an individual, group, or organization that causes the coaching to happen. The sponsor pays for the coaching, authorizes the expense or otherwise causes the coaching to happen. Identifying the sponsor is important because at least some attention should be applied to seeing that the objectives of the sponsor are met through the coaching endeavor.

Given all of the different contexts in which coaching can occur, the sponsor is most often someone other than the coach or the individual or team receiving the coaching. There are, of course, instances in which the individual or team receiving the coaching is also the sponsor. It is rare, but possible, that the coach is actually the sponsor of the coaching effort.

In the case of an athletic team the sponsor is the school, university, company, or other group that fields the team or is rep-

² See the discussion on the *focus* of coaching that begins on page 14.

resented by the team. In the business context the sponsor is usually an individual in a position to evaluate the benefits to be gained from coaching and has the power to authorize the expense. This might be the immediate superior of the individual or team that is receiving the coaching, or it could be someone in the human resource department. In the case of the CEO of a company, it is often the CEO him- or herself who is the sponsor, even though arrangements for the coaching might be made through the human resource department. In the case of a performer (like an actress), more often than not, it is the individual performer who is also the sponsor, although an agent or manager may be the one to make the arrangements.

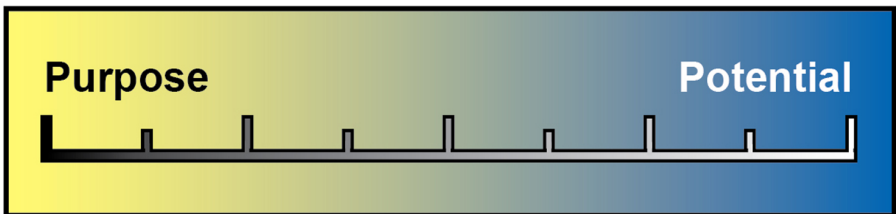
The Dimensions of Coaching

In addition to the three coaching roles, there are at least three dimensions that are essential: *function*, *focus*, and *form*.

Function

The first of the three dimensions included in the essential elements of coaching is the *function* that the coaching is to serve. Although there are a wide variety of coaching applications, they can usually be identified as one of two general functions. One is a *purpose*-centered function; the other is a *potential*-centered function. Coaching can be applied to accomplishing a particular *purpose* or to realizing more of the full *potential* of an individual or team.

The Function of Coaching



Of course, these two functional categories are not mutually exclusive, but there are differences that help us to understand the nature of coaching. A few examples will help.

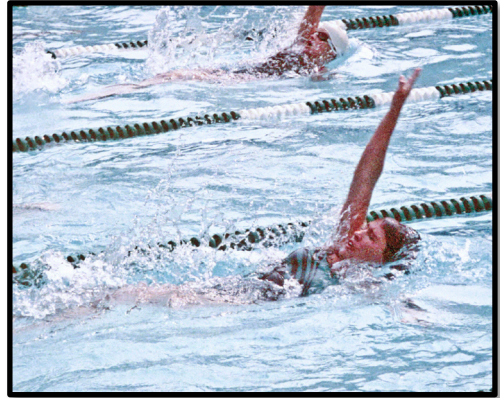
Example One: In the business context, let's say that a work team has a particular goal to accomplish and the manager determines that bringing in a coach to assist the team with team-building, communication and project management skills will accelerate the accomplishment of that goal. This is an instance in which coaching is being applied toward the accomplishment of a specific purpose. Actually, there are dual purposes: (1) the accomplishment of the overall team goal, and (2) improvement of teambuilding, communication and project management skills.

Example Two: Let's consider an example, also in the business context, of potential-centered coaching. A company leader notices a young employee who is very bright and performing well, but not nearly up to her full potential. In cooperation with the human resource department, the leader determines that some individual coaching would be very beneficial in helping the young lady perform even better and would get her on a "fast track" toward joining company leadership. This action is consistent with the company's continuing efforts to cultivate leaders and may contribute to the leadership succession efforts. In this case there may be a few notions about specific skills that a coach might work on, but the coaching is not applied to help the young employee accomplish a particular job related task or defined objective. In fact, the coaching may not even be applied to helping the employee with her current position. In this instance, the coaching may contribute more to moving the employee into another position within the company. In this example, developing the potential of the employee is the function of coaching.

Example Three: Examples in the athletic context can be instructive as well. A coach might help an individual basketball player prepare for a particular game in which he is matched up

against a specific opponent. This would be coaching for a particular *purpose*.

Example Four: On the other hand, that same coach might also work with the entire team to help them understand and better leverage the individual skills that are present on the team so that they can achieve a higher level of team play and realize more of the potential that they have as a team. This would be an example of potential-centered coaching.



Example Five: It is very important to define and honor the function that coaching is to serve. Sometimes potential-centered coaching and purpose-centered coaching accomplish the same thing. Helping an individual swimmer with techniques that improve her speed also helps the team win the next swim meet.

Example Six: But sometimes that is not true. Spending time with a soccer team in drills that build strength and endurance will help the team realize their potential, but may detract from play-making drills that are needed to help them win the next match against an opposing team with a particular style of play. In this case, emphasis on helping the team realize its potential may well compromise the purpose-centered coaching that may be required.



The coach, sponsor, and those who will receive the coaching, should all be clear about the function that the coaching is to serve. In the athletic context and in the business context in which a leader has adopted a coaching style, the coach is likely to have a continuing, long-term relationship with the individual or team being coached. In these cases, the coach may well need to fluctuate between purpose- and potential-centered coaching – maybe even quite frequently. It is the responsibility of the coach to be clear about his coaching function in each instance.

In many business applications of coaching, a person is retained to provide coaching assistance for a defined period of time, and is charged with a specific coaching function. Quite often the function is either one or the other – purpose-centered or potential-centered – not both. All parties involved in the coaching endeavor should be in agreement as to that function.

Focus

The next essential dimension of coaching is its *focus*. The focus of coaching is individual and team performance improvement (see the graphic at right).³ This dimension includes all of the specific items that will be addressed by the coach and the recipient(s) working together to improve performance. Although the number of items that the coach and the recipient may work on together might be significant,

The Focus of Coaching



³ A more detailed and complex model is provided later in chapter three.

all of the items will relate to either the *effectiveness* or *efficiency* (or both) of the individual or team.

Effectiveness: The ability to make good presentations and the ability to work well with other people are two examples of specific effectiveness items that an individual might need to improve, with the assistance of a coach, in order to improve his or her overall performance. A team might need work on understanding team and individual roles and how to work as a self directed work team in order to improve the effectiveness side of their performance.

Efficiency is all about properly balancing speed, quality, and economy. There are both knowledge and skill areas that both individuals and teams can cultivate to improve their efficiency, and as a result, their performance.

A much more detailed examination of the elements of performance is the subject of chapter three – *The Nature of Performance*. There, all of the elements that must be addressed by the coach and the individual or team for excellent performance are identified and defined.

Determining the Coaching Agenda

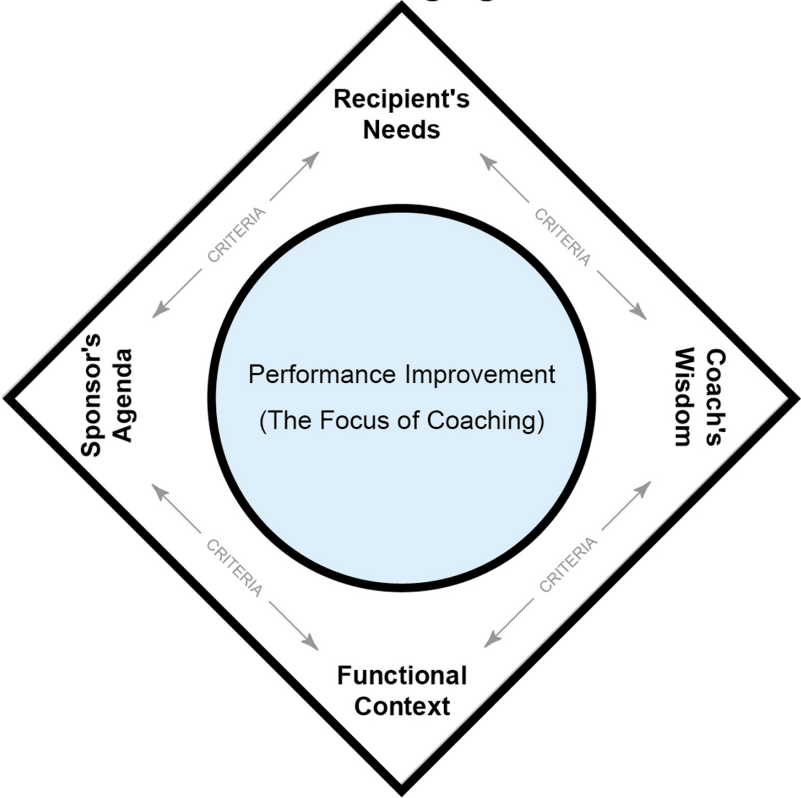
We know that performance improvement is the focus of coaching. Further, we know that effectiveness and efficiency are the primary contributors to performance. Still, that knowledge is far too general to implement a specific coaching initiative. The question that is of immediate importance is: “*How does one determine all of the specific items that should be addressed in a particular coaching initiative?*”

By far the most frequent scenario is that the agenda of each coaching initiative is set by some joint agreement among the *sponsor*, the *coach* and the *recipient* – all within the context of the *function* of the specific coaching initiative. In any given in-

stance one or more of these variables may have more or less influence on the coaching agenda than the others. These variables are really the criteria for determining the coaching agenda in any given situation. On the following page a graphic representation is presented to illustrate the interplay among these variables.⁴

It is seldom the case that a single element of coaching is 100% responsible for determining the focus; a few examples will help explain the manner in which these elements influence the focus of coaching.

The Criteria for Determining the Coaching Agenda



Example one: A company CEO is facing a complex and comprehensive initiative within his company, such as an enter-

⁴ In chapter three this model is re-presented in a more detailed format.

prise transformation. He determines that coaching would be both generally beneficial to his career and specifically helpful in the success of the enterprise transformation efforts. In thinking through the possibility of retaining, and working with, a coach, he lists only two improvement areas he knows he needs to address, but also realizes that there are probably one or more other skill deficiencies or personal attributes that are potential barriers to his effectiveness and success. The two improvement areas he lists are: consensus building and motivating the work force.

In this example, the recipient and the sponsor are the same person. [Yes, *the company* pays for retaining the coach, but the CEO is the one to authorize the expense.] The CEO does have a specific agenda with regard to the coaching. His agenda includes: (a) two specific areas for improvement, (b) the identification and improvement of additional skills and/or attributes that may be in need of attention, and (c) other assistance that may help him in accomplishing the enterprise transformation. Therefore the *recipient* of coaching, the *purpose* of enterprise transformation and the *potential* of the general effectiveness of the CEO – all contribute to the coaching agenda.

Does the *coach*, in this example, have a contribution to make to the setting the agenda? Probably so. Obviously, some criteria that should be used in selecting an appropriate coach have already been established. However, once the coach is selected, meets with the CEO, and has had a chance to interview some of those with whom the CEO works most closely, the coach will probably have an idea or two about other of the CEO's skill deficiencies and/or personal attributes that may be in need of improvement. So, in this case all the elements of coaching except the sponsor contribute to the coaching agenda.

Example two: A company that manufactures and sells a range of products that deal with the compression, handling, and transmission of gases is losing market share. Among the

reasons for the losses are that they have been very product focused and the market is shifting from a focus on individual products to a focus on integrated solutions that address larger components of the needs of client companies.

The company knows that it manufactures most of the products needed for these *integrated solutions* and that it can easily partner with other companies to obtain the other products needed. A number of special task forces are created within the company to help respond to their clients' demand for integrated solutions. One of these task forces is charged with identifying the various types of integrated solutions that are of interest to their clients at present and also those that will be of interest to clients in the future. This task force is chartered as a multi-disciplinary group that will continue to function as a normal part of the manner in which the company will conduct its business in the future.

The senior vice president of marketing, who has been designated as the sponsor of this task force wants the group to be successful and, among others, has the following concerns:

- Since most members of the group still report to one of the traditional business units, loyalties to these units may be a barrier to sharing the information needed to accomplish the task of the special task force.
- Creativity and innovation in terms of integrated solutions may be a skill area that needs improvement.
- Shifting from a product focus to a client focus will be as difficult for the members of this group as for everyone else in the company.
- Although the members of this group surely have the right collection of technical information, client data, and skills for success, do they have sufficient communication and teamwork skills to facilitate their task?

The marketing Sr. VP decides (with support from human resources) that bringing in a coach to help “jump start” this task force would be a good idea. The idea is carefully, and successfully, sold to the members of the task force, and a coach with appropriate skills and chemistry with the group is selected.

What are the elements of coaching that contribute to the agenda for this particular coaching engagement? The sponsor and the purpose centered function for the coaching are the most significant contributors to setting the agenda for this coaching engagement. Once the coaching activities begin the coach and the members of the group will certainly have some input to, and influence on, the coaching activities. But, that influence will all be filtered through the overall objective for the coaching – that of quickly helping the new task force to become effective at identifying integrated solutions that will increase the market for the company’s products both now and in the future.

Example Three: One more example may be useful. It is one that has several lessons for all parties involved in coaching. Jan, a senior person in a leadership position in the company has become increasingly concerned about Bob – one of her direct reports. Bob seems to have all of the right experience, knowledge, and technical abilities. He is very bright, innovative, and highly respected when it comes to crafting technical solutions. However, even though Jan likes him personally, many others on her team of direct reports do not seem to share her opinion. Sometimes this situation has led to instances in which Bob was unable to implement a wonderful plan because he was unable to obtain the support from other team members required to make it work.

Jan hits upon the idea of retaining an executive coach in an effort to improve Bob’s interpersonal skills and to help him in being more effective. Jan believes that Bob has great potential for becoming a very successful company leader if he can overcome these particular shortcomings.

At this point in this example the coaching focus has pretty much been established by the sponsor – Jan. The agenda set by Jan could be modified once Bob buys into the idea (or acquiesces to the plan), the coach is retained and conversations begin among those involved in this coaching initiative. However, Jan’s agenda would seem to be in control, at least in the beginning.

The possibilities for the ultimate outcome of this coaching example are numerous, and there are a few that are potentially disastrous. This is an example in which Bob could feel that he is being singled out to be “fixed,” and that it must mean that there is something wrong in him that needs to be fixed. He might feel resentful toward, not only Jan, but the coach and rest of the direct reports as well. One of the worst results could be that Bob would *go along* with the coaching, but would never really be open and honest with the coach and would successfully resist seeing the value in any of the coaching provided. There is the additional possibility in this scenario that a few issues that concern the other members of Jan’s team of direct reports would be masked (since Bob is not being open), not discovered, and therefore not addressed. All of this might cause Bob to apply his significant talents to *getting back* at the other direct reports through various forms of corporate sabotage. Given this scenario, it is doubtful that Jan’s original purpose would be accomplished.

Of course, it could go the other way entirely. Bob and the coach might end up working together wonderfully and Bob (and the company) may end up profiting significantly from this intervention.

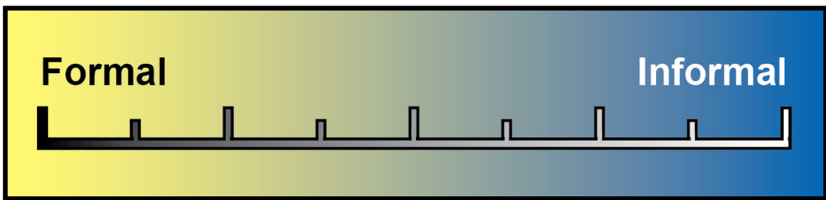
The key determiner as to the outcome in this example is the extent to which Bob’s agenda and *his* needs are successfully incorporated into the coaching agenda. Anyone who fills any one of the three coaching roles (sponsor, coach, or recipient) can act to ensure that the recipient’s needs are being addressed. *Assumptions* sometimes get in the way of a sponsor’s

good intentions. *Politics* and *intimidation* (even when unintended) can sometimes become a barrier too formidable for a recipient to overcome. As for the coach, there can be a number of blocks to adequately addressing the recipient's needs: inexperience, lack of coaching skill, lack of openness on the part of the recipient, and/or a misreading of the situation by the sponsor.

Form

The last of the essential elements of coaching is the *form* in which the coaching is delivered. The form of coaching can be either *formal* or *informal*.

The Form of Coaching



Formal: A formal coaching arrangement is one in which an individual or a team is paired up with a coach, and:

- The primary role of the person serving as the coach is just that – a coach
- There is some amount of attention devoted to defining the areas of performance improvement desired of the individual or team that is to receive the coaching
- The coach is selected on the basis of knowledge and skills that are specifically relevant to assisting others to improve in the performance areas that have been identified⁵

⁵ There are other selection criteria as well. One of those other criteria may be a certain level of “chemistry” with the individual or team to receive the coaching. See more on chemistry in chapter seven.

-
- There are specific performance improvement outcomes that are expected to result from the coaching activities, usually within a defined period of time

Informal: A coaching arrangement is informal when an individual or a team is paired up with a coach, and:

- The coaching activities are accomplished as time away from other (primary) duties and tasks permits
- The coach is selected primarily on the basis of familiarity with the situation and/or convenience to both coach and recipient(s)
- Performance improvement outcomes are general and/or unspecified
- The time period for the coaching activities tend to be open-ended or unspecified

Summary

Chapter two is full of definitions. The *roles* in coaching and the *dimensions* of coaching are enumerated and defined.

Roles:

- Coach
- Recipient
- Sponsor

Dimensions:

- Function
- Focus
- Form

When one considers all of these elements together, it is easy to see that the situations in which some type of coaching can occur are both many and varied. The possibilities are almost unlimited and many coaching situations just seem to happen without a lot of conscious planning.

The elements of coaching enumerated and defined in this chapter can serve as a sort of initial checklist for those who end up filling the role of coach. In fact, all parties in any coaching situation will be well served if, at the outset of a coaching initiative, they take the time to ensure that they can

identify each one of the essential elements of coaching in order to answer these simple questions:

- Who is the coach?
- Who is the individual or team who is the recipient?
- Who is the sponsor?
- Is the function of the coach primarily purpose-centered or potential-centered (these are not necessarily mutually exclusive) and what exactly is that function?
- What are the effectiveness and efficiency factors that constitute the focus of the coaching endeavor?
- Where on the spectrum from formal to informal does this particular coaching initiative lie?

Then, of course, there is the big question: *“How does one determine all of the specific items that should be addressed in a particular coaching initiative?”* A beginning for addressing this question is provided in this chapter in the section on ***Determining the Coaching Agenda***. In subsequent chapters ever increasing levels of detail are provided in order to provide coaches and others with a set of tools that are useful in identifying all that should be included in a particular coaching endeavor to assist an individual or team improve their performance.

Chapter Three

3

The Nature of Performance

Creating a Coaching Culture

Creating a Coaching Culture

Chapter Three:

The Nature of Performance

In this book we are dealing with performance-based coaching and the diagrams presented thus far have shown that improving performance is the *focus* of coaching. That is one of the primary concepts discussed in chapter two. In all but the most esoteric forms of coaching the standard that must be applied in measuring success is some objective and observable improvement in performance. In athletics this is usually easy to see. For a baseball team, check the win/loss record before and after the coach has had a chance to make an impact. For a track athlete or a swimmer the measures are even more plain – is the athlete running or swimming faster now than before?

In the context of business, the focus of coaching is still very much on performance and the ways in which performance can be improved. It stands to reason, then, that knowing about the factors that contribute to performance is very useful to all those involved in coaching – that is, helping an individual or team to improve their performance. Using a list of performance factors the coach and the others involved in the coaching initiative can identify the performance required for a specific individual or team to be successful in accomplishing their goals. Those requirements can then be compared against the performance attributes actually possessed by the individual or team that is to receive coaching. Those things required for accomplishment of the goals and objectives, yet not possessed by the individual or team are the topics that should be addressed in the coaching activities.

Performance: What is it? In the business context, performance is a history of accomplishment – usually indicating some level of capability relative to others and/or a measurable stan-

dard. The capability that is important in business is using the various resources involved in the production of goods and services to accomplish your goals and objectives with effectiveness and efficiency.

The factors of production include: Intellectual Capital (people), Capital, Information, Physical Resources (materials, equipment, space), Technology, Labor (people), Time, Products and/or Services, Organization, and Markets, etc. [See the diagram below.]

Factors of Production



There are both *effectiveness factors* and *efficiency factors* that are important in determining the level of performance.

The **effectiveness factors** include:

- Purpose
- Commitment
- Competencies, and
- Alignment

The **efficiency factors** are:

- Speed (faster)
- Quality, and (better)
- Economy (cheaper)

In order to improve performance through coaching it is necessary to determine which of the effectiveness and efficiency factors need improvement and to formulate a program that will bring about the needed improvements on the part of the individual or team receiving the coaching.⁶

A brief definition of each of these performance factors is helpful before proceeding with a more complete discussion.

Purpose: The goals and objectives of the individual or team – that which is to be achieved.

Commitment: The level of internal desire one has to achieve a set of goals or objectives, or a purpose.

Competencies: The knowledge, skills, and attributes possessed by, and/or needed by, an individual or team to perform an indicated action or to accomplish certain goals and objectives.

Alignment: Alignment is the degree to which the individual or team shares the same goals and objectives as the company and is working together with others in the company toward the accomplishment of *purpose*.

Speed: The rate at which tasks are completed, functions are performed, and goals are accomplished by the individual or team.

⁶ This is actually a more complete definition of coaching than the one offered initially on page 3.

Quality: The level of completeness, thoroughness, attention to detail, and responsiveness to the overall purpose with which tasks are performed, items are produced and/or services are provided.

Economy: The level of stewardship of resources (e.g., time, materials, labor, impact on the organization, etc.) applied in performing tasks, producing items, and providing services.

These performance factors are in fact the elements of achievement. Performance-based coaching contributes directly to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the individual or team receiving the coaching and the company of which they are a part.

The Effectiveness Factors

Effectiveness before Efficiency: In most instances, including most coaching situations, it is appropriate to deal with the effectiveness factors before the efficiency factors. Dealing with effectiveness first ensures that we are performing the right set of

actions and tasks required for the accomplishment of our goals and objectives and applying the right knowledge, skills and attributes to these tasks. If we begin by concentrating on the efficiency factors we might help people get better and faster at doing the wrong things. Concentrate on effectiveness first – doing the right things. Then, move on to efficiency – doing the right things faster, better and cheaper.

The Elements of Performance

- ❑ **Effectiveness Factors:**
 - **Purpose**
 - **Competencies**
 - **Commitment**
 - **Alignment**
- ❑ **Efficiency Factors:**
 - **Speed**
 - **Quality**
 - **Economy**

Therefore, the sequence of the discussion that follows will begin with the effectiveness factors, then, move on to a treatment of the efficiency factors.

Purpose

The first element of performance (and, remember, performance is the *focus* of coaching) is *purpose*. Understanding the purpose of the individual or team that is in need of coaching is the key to understanding all of the other aspects of performance. Purpose is that which we want to accomplish – it is the very reason for performance. It defines the nature of the performance required for achievement (functionality) and it provides the standard or criteria for measuring performance.

Certainly, purpose includes the challenges, goals, and objectives that an individual or team is to accomplish. In a more complete understanding of purpose all four of the following elements might be included:

- Values: those things in the context of the business that are valued by the individual or team above all others
- Vision: an appreciation of the true potential of the recipient of coaching that is articulated in the form of a desired future state that is very exciting and just realistic enough to engender the enthusiasm and commitment of all participating in the coaching initiative
- Orientation: the tasks and functions required of the individual or team in their contribution to producing the services and/or products that provide value to the company's customers and clients
- Responsibility: the value and stewardship that is owed to all those who have a stake in the company, including customers and clients, investors and shareholders, employees, communities in which the company operates and many more

Why is purpose so important to performance? Purpose is the ultimate standard by which performance is measured. Without a clear articulation of purpose it is impossible to know what kinds of performance are appropriate and/or what levels of proficiency are required. A thorough understanding of the purpose is the first step in identifying all of the many tasks, functions, processes, and procedures that are required to achieve that purpose.

A clear articulation of purpose is also an essential ingredient in building commitment. Commitment is another element of performance, and we cannot expect anyone to be committed without a thorough understanding of the goals and objectives (“*Purpose*”) to which they are expected to commit.

Competencies

When thinking of the focus of coaching, many people think first of the competencies that the individual or team might need to improve in order to perform better. Using the athletic analogy, this would be the basic “blocking and tackling” needed to play the game (in this case American football). In the context of business, competencies are the types of functions and tasks that need to be performed in order to accomplish the specific challenges facing the individual or team in need of coaching. Strategic planning and formulating a marketing campaign are examples of specific competencies.⁷

Competencies are an important factor in performance. Even though you might have a very clear purpose (knowing exactly what is to be accomplished), and have wonderful commitment (level of desire), the correct set of competencies is required to actually make it happen. Competencies are central to the coaching process. It is rare that coaching will not include

⁷ See chapter six, *Working with Competencies*, for a more detailed discussion of competencies, including a list of the business competency groups generally required within the business context.

some attention to competencies in the efforts to improve individual or team performance.

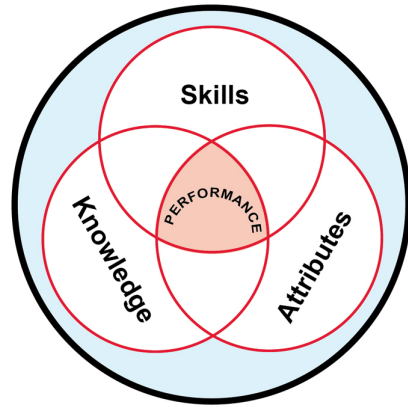
In business, as in athletics, both team and individual competencies have three components: *knowledge*, *skills*, and *attributes*. A proper balance of all three is essential for the desired level of proficiency in any given competency.

Knowledge: Does the individual or team have the right kinds of knowledge to accomplish their goals and objectives? This knowledge can come from education and/or experience. Examples include: knowledge of an industry, knowledge of a discipline (engineering, marketing, financial accounting, etc.), and conceptual knowledge (the components of teambuilding, the elements of a strategic plan, etc.).

Skills: Does the individual or team have the necessary level of proficiency in processes, procedures and other learned behaviors to apply their personal knowledge and use the company resources to accomplish their tasks? Are they skilled in their work? Can they get the job done? Examples include: project management skills, interpersonal skills, delegation, etc. *Skill* implies a desired *level of proficiency*. This is different from conceptual knowledge. It is very possible to have very good conceptual knowledge of something like delegation, but not be very skilled in actually doing it. The skill level of a person or team is the extent to which they can make it happen on a consistent basis – not how well they can discuss the concepts.

Attributes: Attributes are neither knowledge nor skills. Attributes are more of a quality, special feature, or characteristic of an individual or team. These attributes, or characteristics,

Competency Components



can be beneficial or detrimental to performance. Examples that apply to individuals (and collectively to a team) include: innate intelligence, common sense, physical stamina, resilience, tenacity of purpose, mental discipline, and confidence. Examples of attributes commonly needed by teams for successful performance include: cooperative atmosphere, bias toward synergy, self-direction, and mutual accountability.

Having the correct set of attributes is just as essential as knowledge and skills to performance and accomplishment, but they are often overlooked. Lacking some personal attribute needed to perform a specific task or fill a particular role will compromise the effort just as surely as lacking the knowledge or skills. Lack of common sense, change resilience, confidence or mental discipline can block the performance of an individual or team just as effectively and completely as lacking the required knowledge and skills.

Some attributes are very difficult, if not impossible, to cultivate. Innate intelligence is one that fits into this category. Others, such as physical stamina, mental discipline and confidence can be amplified and improved with proper coaching and practice.

The focus of coaching is performance and competencies are a central element in performance improvement. A coach will be well advised to adopt a very disciplined approach to identifying the specific competencies required of the individual or team he will be coaching. Such an approach will add a great deal of structure to the coaching process and will greatly facilitate a true consensus among sponsor, recipient and coach about the topics that will be included in the coaching activities.

Commitment

The starting place for many people in a coaching role is appreciating the difference between motivation and commitment. The difference in the meaning of the words **motivation** and

commitment has become blurred and distorted. This lack of differentiation has resulted in the inconsistent and inappropriate application of coaching tools and techniques.

Motivation defined: I suggest that *motivation* is really more limited than most people intend by their use of the term. Motivation is something one person can do *to* another. A coach can *motivate* a person to do something they want them to do. There are two ways to motivate others:

- ❑ **Negative motivation:** A coach can threaten an individual with a baseball bat (or some other politically correct “or else...”) in order to *encourage* them to perform. For example, “I can’t make you do this, but I can make you wish you had.” Occasionally, it may be appropriate to use some form of negative motivation to get something done in a hurry when there is absolutely no time to explain why.
- ❑ **Positive motivation:** A boss in a coaching role could just as easily offer to pay lots of money to encourage a team to perform some task. A promised raise, a promotion, or some other reward – these are examples of positive motivation.

Both forms of motivation are short term in their impact. Nevertheless, both are perfectly appropriate tools in a coach’s skills repertoire (okay, maybe not the baseball bat).

Commitment is what some people call “self motivation.” As opposed to mere motivation, the impact of commitment is longer term. Commitment comes from within each individual rather than from some external source. It differs from motivation in that there is no way another person can make you committed. Commitment is not something someone else can do for you or to you. It is something that happens internally. Commitment is a personal decision that no one else can command.

Notwithstanding the fact that commitment is something that happens internally, it is very appropriate for a coach to work with an individual or team to help them with commitment issues. In fact, even though *purpose* and *alignment* (the other effectiveness factors) are extremely important to improving performance, these two items are many times viewed as contributory to cultivating competencies and building commitment.⁸

Understand why commitment is necessary: Commitment – not merely motivation – is what is needed today for continuing success. It is commitment that is required in order to achieve the high levels of customer focus and service quality that companies need to survive and thrive in the increasingly competitive marketplace.

For example, when TQM (total quality management) finally received widespread interest in the USA, it was implemented by many companies only to fail to produce the results desired. TQM fell out of favor. Then there was a resurgence of interest. In this second coming of TQM there was much more emphasis on gaining the commitment of the work force to TQM and it worked much, much better. It is commitment that is required in order to actually realize the benefits of Total Quality Management. When the work force is truly committed to TQM, the benefits derived far exceed those attained from just fulfilling the process and procedural aspects of TQM and “continuing quality improvement” measures because someone else insists on it.

It is much more difficult to build commitment in people than it is to “motivate” them. The factors that lead to commitment are more numerous and complex than in the case of motivation. Nevertheless, there are a number of things that can be done to build commitment. Actions that a coach can take to build commitment are covered in chapters four and five.

⁸ See the models presented in chapter four about the dynamics of commitment and competencies to improve performance through coaching.

Alignment

Yes, alignment is something the garage does to the car when the front end is out of whack. However, within the business context it is not exactly the same thing. Within a company or other organization, alignment is the degree to which everyone is working together toward the accomplishment of the same goals and objectives. To achieve high performance, individuals and teams must be aligned with the strategic goals and objectives of the company of which they are a part. One of the responsibilities of a coach is to evaluate, and improve, if necessary, the degree of alignment between the company and the individual or team that he or she is coaching.

Alignment in Two Parts: The initial work of the coach on alignment has two parts.

Congruent Goals and Objectives: The first part is checking to see that everyone has the *same goals and objectives*. Obviously, an individual or a team that has been assigned specific job related responsibilities has a narrower set of goals and objectives than the company as a whole. Even so, the specific goals and objectives of the individual or team should contribute toward, and be very much aligned with, the overall goals of the company.

Link to Purpose: Sometimes stating the obvious is useful. Purpose is that to which everything else must be aligned. The company's purpose (which includes vision, mission, goals, objectives and strategies) sets the direction for the alignment of all aspects of the company – including the work responsibilities of individuals and teams.

Earlier in this chapter we briefly covered the *purpose* of the individual or team that is in need of coaching as being one of the elements of performance. There are at least two levels of alignment that are associated with purpose. First, the specific purpose of the individual or team should be aligned with the overall purpose of the company. Second, in order to accom-

plish that particular individual or team purpose the following should be aligned toward the accomplishment of that specific team or individual purpose:

- The work functions assigned to, and/or under the control of, the individual or team
- The company resources available to the individual or team
- The formal and informal reporting structures within which the individual or team operates

If these three aspects do not enable the individual or team to accomplish their goals and objectives (their purpose), or if they constitute barriers to the accomplishment of their purpose, there is no alignment. Early in the coaching process, the coach must assess alignment. If alignment is a serious issue, the coach must deal with that before moving on to other issues. Unless alignment problems are repaired, improved performance against the standard of accomplishing goals and objectives will be seriously compromised. Also, if the recipient of coaching comes to understand that alignment is flawed, building commitment to performance and improvement will be difficult at best.

Working Together: The second part of alignment to be addressed is that everyone is *working together* toward the accomplishment of the goals and objectives. Even when the goals and objectives have been established and are quite thoroughly understood, there can be multiple paths toward accomplishment. Having everyone pursuing their own course of action to accomplish the company's goals and objectives is not alignment. It may well be chaos and at the very least it is extremely inefficient and most likely ineffective.

Therefore, the coach must ensure that the individual or team involved in the coaching effort is *working together* in concert with everyone else in the company. That means that the individual or team knows (and appreciates the need for) the specific strategies formulated by the company to accomplish its

goals and objectives. It also means that they are aware of, and actively engaged in, their own part in pursuing this particular set of strategies and action plans toward the accomplishment of the company's goals and objectives.

That completes a brief treatment of the four effectiveness factors that need to be addressed through coaching to improve performance.

The Efficiency Factors

We will move on to a brief discussion of the three efficiency factors of performance: speed, quality, and economy.

When purpose, commitment, competencies, and alignment are appropriately addressed performance will be effective. Not surprisingly, that alone is not enough. Individuals and teams also need to be efficient. We are all expected to become

faster and better at what we do, and we are also expected to get it done cheaper as well. This push for “faster, better, cheaper” is what creates value for the company, its shareholders, and its clients and customers.

Obtaining the right product or services is great. Getting that product or service faster than other companies can provide it is better. Still better is obtaining a product or service faster that is also higher in quality than that provided by the competition. And, the best is getting a higher quality product, faster and also at a lower cost. Being able to provide your clients and customers products and services faster, better, and cheaper than your competitors makes your products more valuable. Some of that value goes to your clients and customers; some

The Elements of Performance

☐ Effectiveness Factors:

- Purpose
- Competencies
- Commitment
- Alignment

☐ Efficiency Factors:

- Speed
- Quality
- Economy

of that value goes to the company, its employees and its shareholders. That makes your company more successful through growth and profitability.

Creating value for both the company and customers is why performance must also be measured in terms of efficiency. Individuals and teams that perform more efficiently (faster, better and cheaper) are more valuable to the company and their performance is (or, should be) valued more highly than others that are merely effective.

Speed

Speed – doing things faster – is concerned with the time it takes to get things done. If your challenge is to put a great marketing plan together, your performance is judged superior if you can do that faster than others. Doing the same work as others in a shorter period of time on a consistent basis is what *speed* is all about.

Coaches can help increase the speed with which individuals and teams perform. Examples of things that a coach and the recipient(s) can work on together to improve speed include: improved organizational skills; better communication; and templates, processes and procedures to routinize tasks.

Quality

With all of the emphasis on quality in business throughout the world, very high standards of quality have become almost a “given” in business today. And, there is an expectation of *continuing* improvements in quality. Every one of your company’s competitors is constantly working on quality. So, a sincere and effective focus on quality is just a part of doing business in today’s marketplace.

We all know quality translates into value to the customer and that equates to growth and profitability for the company. It is, therefore, appropriate that the company should place a pre-

mium on those individuals and teams that consistently contribute to increasing the quality of the products and services of the company. Composing a great marketing plan faster than others can is wonderful. Basing that marketing plan on an analysis of the market that is more thorough than ever before is even better.

Coaches can assist individuals and teams to find ways to increase the quality of their performance. Sometimes the first place to look is an internal quality program that the company has already implemented. Many times the quality methodologies, processes and procedures that have been tailored specifically for the company are very good and extremely helpful. Sometimes it is as simple as facilitating a fuller and more complete integration of these quality principles and measures into work tasks.

Economy

Economy is doing more with less – doing things cheaper. It is all about the amount of resources – economic or otherwise – that are applied to getting the job done.

Speed is one way toward economy. If you can do more of the same quality of work than others can in an equal amount of time, and with the same amount of resources, you have just saved your company some money. You have, in essence, reduced the cost of production. Multiplied many times over, this cost reduction can be shared in terms of a lower cost to the customer and higher profits for the company.

In addition to doing things faster, there are many more vehicles for lowering the cost of production. Automation, outsourcing, low-cost manufacturing, and the application of best practices are all used to decrease the cost of production for a company. Process re-engineering can also be used to decrease costs. Each of these techniques has an analogy for in-

dividuals and teams in completing their tasks and accomplishing their goals.

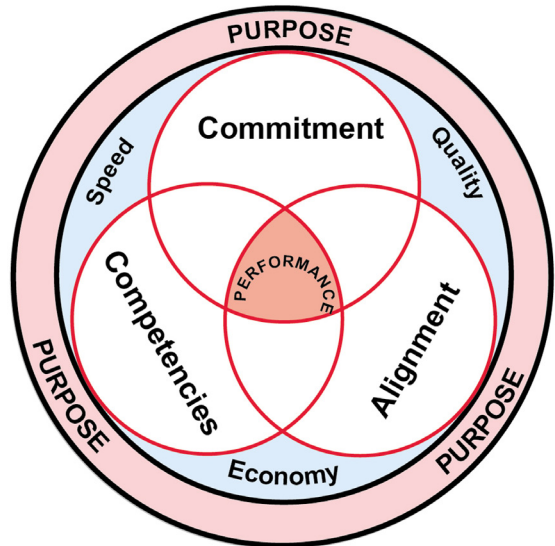
Again, a coach can be helpful in assisting individuals and teams to pay more attention to economy in the way they do things. Paying closer attention to finding others within the company (or even outside the company) who can complete blocks of work faster or cheaper (or both) than the team can is one way. Another would be to devote an appropriate amount of time and energy to managing resources better – obtaining things at the most reasonable price and reducing waste. Better communication and coordination with others to reduce duplication, eliminate waste, and achieve higher economies of scale is yet another measure.

Summary

In the beginning of the book a simple model was used in order to set out the essential elements of coaching before all of the factors of effectiveness and efficiency were enumerated and explained.⁹ With the identification and definition provided in this chapter we can now re-present that model in a much more detailed manner.

Presented here is a model that illustrates the various components that are impor-

The Focus of Coaching



⁹ Compare the diagram on page 14.

tant in determining the *focus of coaching*. Performance is still at the center of the diagram, but the diagram also includes all of the effectiveness and efficiency factors that are important to achieving, and improving performance.

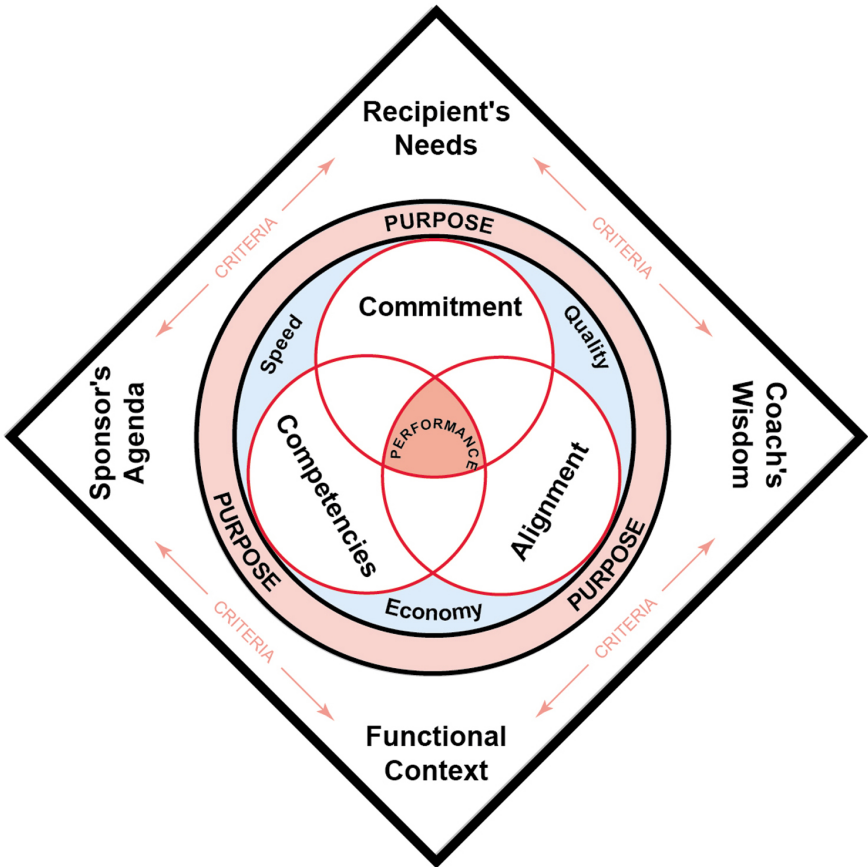
Chapter four contains more information about coaching to build commitment, coaching to expand competencies and coaching to promote alignment.

Another simple model also presented in chapter two was provided to highlight the factors that are important in determining the coaching agenda. Those factors were the needs of the recipient, the agenda of the sponsor, the wisdom of the coach and the functional context.¹⁰ Since the center of that diagram was merely a circle with “performance improvement” written in it, we can now re-present that model in order to portray the rich context that exists in the process of coaching.

This model includes most of the major variables that a coach needs to consider in setting up a particular coaching initiative. The model also graphically presents the basic relationships among these major variables. The model is fairly easy to deal with and has now been re-titled to reflect its broader application.

¹⁰ See the diagram on page 16.

The Coaching Variables



Chapter Four

4

Performance Coaching

Creating a Coaching Culture

Creating a Coaching Culture

Performance Coaching

From the discussion of performance factors in chapter three it is clear that there are a significant number of areas that a coach might need to address in providing assistance to an individual or team. As one might also suspect, there are numerous interrelationships among these performance factors, and a coach must deal with these interrelationships adroitly to be effective.

Providing a model or two that suggest some of the basic relationships among the performance factors should be helpful.

Models

One important purpose of a model is to suggest a helpful way to examine the relationships among key elements in a particular situation.

The formula $E=mc^2$ is a model that Albert Einstein offered in order to identify and understand the relationship among three key building blocks of the physical world: Energy, mass and velocity (expressed in terms of the speed of light). In suggesting this model Einstein provided a new way of looking at the world in which we live. That model has proved very helpful in enabling physicists and others to explore and ponder some of the important physical relationships that govern the operation of the physical universe.

There are other famous models that help us understand, and think through, a variety of situations. Here are a few examples:

Murphy's Law: "If anything can go wrong, it will." The expanded version reads: "Nothing is as easy as it looks; everything takes longer than you expect; and if anything can go

wrong, it will and at the worst possible moment.” Laugh if you will, but this tongue in cheek wisdom has provided many an event planner rules to live by. We would all be well advised to consider its essential elements when planning an important event – especially one that is very public.

Parkinson’s Law: “Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.”¹¹ This model of bureaucratic inefficiency offers a humorous counterpoint to the speed and economy elements of our performance model.

The Peter Principle: “People tend to be promoted up to their level of incompetence.”¹² This is a funny, but thought provoking, way to present the observation that some have made that people tend to receive successive promotions until they arrive at a position in which they do not perform well and there they stay. This sage observation reinforces the need for coaching.

A Performance Coaching Model

Nowhere are the inter-relationships among performance factors so strong as between *competence* and *commitment*. The relationships at play between these two performance factors also serve to highlight many interrelationships among the balance of the performance factors. Therefore we will begin with a model that illustrates the relationship between competence and commitment in the context of coaching.

The performance coaching model is really two models pushed together to make one. Let’s take a look at the two component models separately; then put them together.

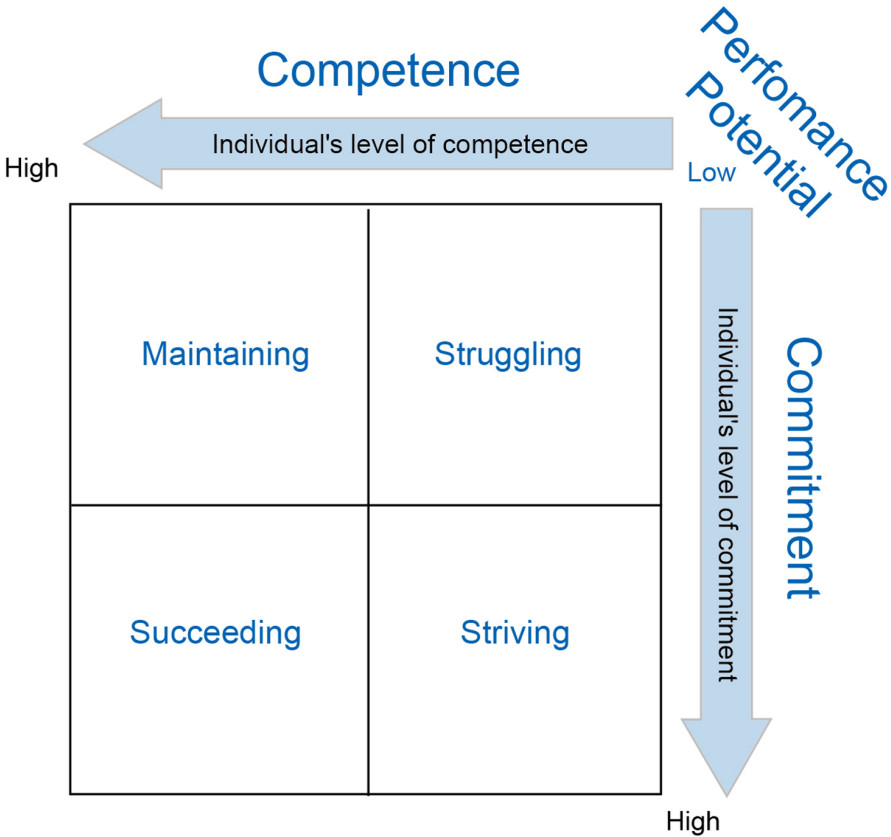
The first of the two models uses four quadrants to label the basic levels of performance that result from various combina-

¹¹ Parkinson’s Law and Other Studies in Administration. C. Northcote Parkinson, Balantine Books, New York, 1957, p. 15.

¹² This principle was suggested by Laurence J. Peter in his book The Peter Principle.

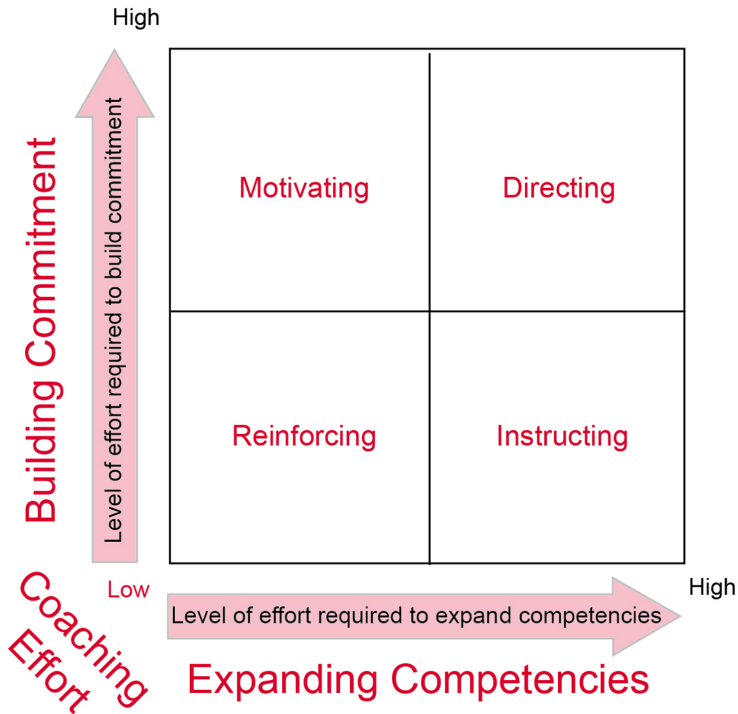
tions of competencies and commitment. Using an over simplified high or low assessment of both competence and commitment the performance potential of an individual or a team can be illustrated by the following model.

Performance Potential



Using the same variables of competence and commitment and the same high or low scale, the second of the two models indicates the level of coaching effort required to expand competencies and to build commitment. Depending on the degree to which the two factors of competence and commitment are emphasized in the coaching endeavor, the four quadrants are used to characterize the coaching efforts.

Coaching Effort

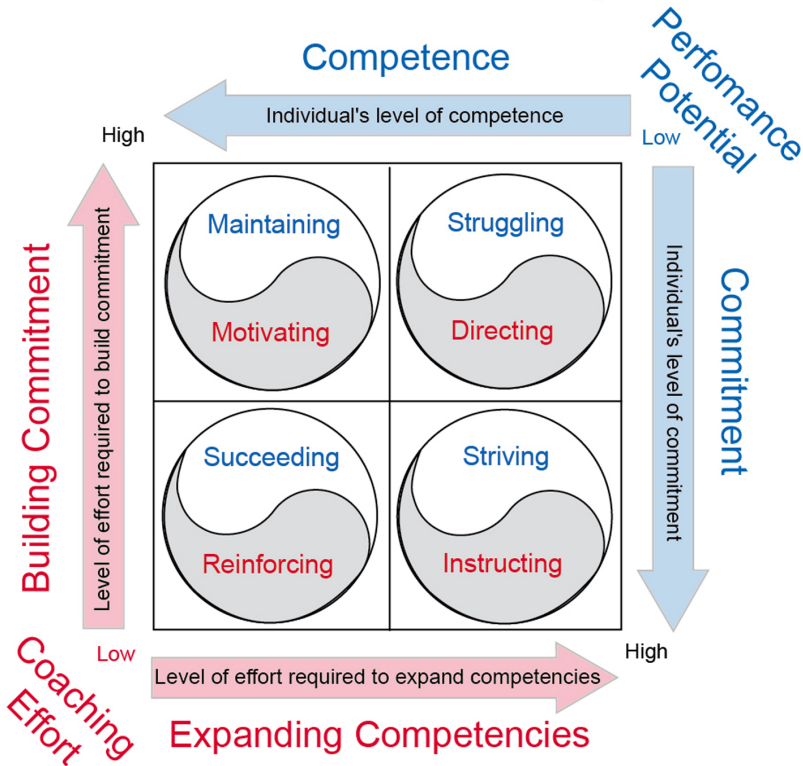


These two models can be combined. They both use the same four quadrants based on the same high or low evaluation of the same two performance factors: competence and commitment. Combining the two models emphasizes the following:

1. Coaching must be designed in response to the performance level of the individual or team to receive the coaching.
2. The level of coaching effort has a direct (and inverse) relationship to the level of competence and commitment possessed by the individual or team to receive the coaching. For example, if the commitment of an individual is very low, the level of effort on the part of a coach to build commitment must be very high.
3. The proportion of a coach's efforts devoted to building commitment and expanding competencies must vary in

relationship to the amounts of commitment and competence possessed by the individual or team. For example, if a team is highly committed but lacks the competencies to accomplish their purpose, the coach will have to work mostly on competence issues and not very much on building commitment.

Performance Coaching Model



The result of placing the two models together gets a little busy, but it does illustrate some of the fundamental relationships in coaching.

A quadrant-by-quadrant examination of this relatively simple model can provide additional insights into the interrelationship of the other performance factors and the appropriate coaching approaches.

The Lower Right Quadrant: In this quadrant the recipient of coaching is highly committed, but possesses only low levels of the competencies required to be successful. This could be the case of an enthusiastic beginner who is very excited about their job and has the desire to perform well, but who needs to learn almost everything about a new job or set of responsibilities. In this situation the coach must respond to the need to learn. The coach must emphasize the instructional side of their coaching responsibilities, perhaps concentrating on imparting specific types of knowledge and cultivating certain skills required for achieving the goals and objectives.

There is a danger here of the coach becoming only an instructor. If the commitment side of the equation is neglected, the recipient(s) of coaching could slip back into struggling mode. Many times learning new knowledge and skills is difficult and time consuming. Even those who are initially very enthusiastic and committed can lose momentum, fail to obtain the positive feedback of early successes and begin to lose commitment. A good coach is always alert to the need to address both commitment and competence issues simultaneously. In this case a coach might need to set realistic expectations for seeing performance improvements. The coach might also try to design a program that provides frequent opportunities for the individual or team to demonstrate positive results on incremental improvements. A coach should also reinforce the individual's or team's vision of success and what that success will accomplish for them and the company of which they are a part.¹³

The Upper Left Quadrant: This quadrant is as close as it gets to the exact opposite of the lower right quadrant. The issue here is mostly commitment. The individual or team knows what they need to know to perform, but for some reason they

¹³ For a review of additional actions to expand competencies see later sections of this chapter.

are not performing well – they are in maintenance mode or a hold pattern. This can happen when an individual or team has been performing a specific set of responsibilities for a while and just doesn't seem to be going anywhere. They may have lost touch with their original vision of accomplishment, or that vision may no longer seem to be achievable in light of changes within the company, and/or the industry, and/or the marketplace.

In this quadrant the coach must concentrate on building commitment. However, in order to provide a jump start to performance a coach may have to resort to motivational techniques in the short term. As noted in chapter three motivation and commitment are different. *Commitment* must come from within an individual or team, but an individual or team can be *motivated* by others to perform. There are both positive and negative motivational techniques and both are legitimate tools in the coach's kit. A good coach will find ways to provide the proper motivation without compromising the work required to build the foundations for commitment.¹⁴

The Upper Right Quadrant: In this quadrant those in need of coaching have both significant competency and commitment issues that require attention. In this instance the coach must work intensely with the individual or team to build commitment and expand competencies in parallel.

A situation in which we might find an individual or a team in significant need of both commitment and new competencies is, unfortunately, easy to imagine. Let's say that a company is in the beginning stages of undertaking some bold new initiatives that require doing a number of new things within the company that have not been done before. Among a number of other actions, the company creates a task force and charges them with the responsibility of designing and implementing a

¹⁴ For a review of actions to build commitment see later sections in this chapter and parts of chapter five.

set of new business processes to accomplish one of these new initiatives. As members of this task force the company selects talented people who are otherwise very busy trying to maintain the company's success under the old business model.

The members of this new task force could well find themselves with a new set of responsibilities in addition to their existing duties. They could also discover that they need both new knowledge and a number of new skills to complete the task they have been assigned. And, it is also possible that the company's new initiatives have not been clearly defined, explained, or justified in terms of continuing the success of the company in the marketplace. In this situation, the members of the task force and/or the leader of the task force may well have neither the commitment nor the competence required for successful achievement of the assigned task.

Sometimes individuals and teams will figure it out by themselves. Sometimes having some assistance is very helpful. It is even possible that providing some coaching assistance will greatly accelerate the work of the task force, significantly improve the quality of their work products, and save the company time and money.

When working in this quadrant the coach must design and conduct a program that builds both commitment and competencies in a balanced manner. Many times in these situations commitment and competence are very interrelated. Individuals and teams may be unwilling to allocate the time or energy required to learn new skills until they are committed to the accomplishment of the goals for which the new skills are required. Once commitment is secured work on new competencies can proceed.

Many times a coach's work in building commitment and new competencies is not sequential at all. Rather, it is much more complex and interdependent. Sometimes a key element of building commitment is some successful results that can only

be obtained after an individual or team learns and applies new competencies. Here a coach must employ motivation, instruction, and commitment building simultaneously to accomplish the desired results.

The Lower Left Quadrant: The need for professional, formal coaching is not as great for an individual or team functioning in the *succeeding* quadrant. However, there are coaching responsibilities of both managers and mentors to succeeding individuals and teams. Here again, a coach must balance between issues of commitment and competence as needed in the particular circumstance. The coaching efforts to be applied in this quadrant are usually far less intense than in the other quadrants. The coaching that is needed here can be accomplished through gentle reinforcement of competencies that have already been mastered and by occasional reminders about the importance and relevance of goals to be accomplished.

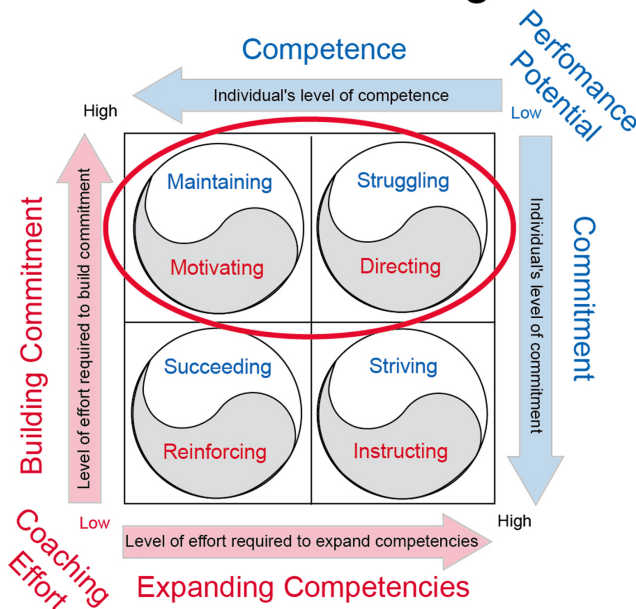
About Moving from One Quadrant to Another: The *Performance Coaching Model* should not be used to permanently characterize a person or team. Many factors can conspire to cause individuals and teams to move from one quadrant to another. Individual initiative, desire, and coaching can help people move toward a quadrant reflecting improved performance. Major changes within a company or an industry can sometimes move people to a quadrant reflecting poorer performance.

The *Performance Coaching Model* is an analytical tool that can be used to help determine the coaching needs of an individual or team at a particular point in time. An understanding of the model can help in mapping out a coaching program responsive to those needs in order to help people improve their performance.

Coaching to Build Commitment

We have learned that *commitment* is always an important factor in good performance. It is particularly important in the circumstances depicted in the top two quadrants in the *Performance Coaching Model*. Sometimes in assisting individuals or teams who are *struggling* or *maintaining* it is required that the coach build commitment from the ground up – not merely reinforce commitment that already exists. In these instances the coach must begin with the foundations of commitment.

Performance Coaching Model



The Foundations of Commitment:

There are a few items that are the foundations of, or prerequisites for, commitment. It is essential for the coach to work with the individual or team to clearly identify that to which commitment is required. The exact description of the object of commitment varies from situation to situation, but it always

relates directly to the purpose and strategic goals of the company. Therefore, an essential part of the foundation of commitment is a *clear and compelling* company purpose. That would include the vision, mission, goals and strategies of the company. How can we expect others to commit to the goals of the organization if there is no clarity about what those goals are? The prerequisites for commitment are clear goals and a strategic and lofty vision.

Clear goals: The process of commitment within each individual involves a comparison of the goals of the organization with their own personal goals, aspirations and sense of responsibility. In order for this comparison to occur every individual must clearly understand: (a) the goals of the organization, and (b) the things they are expected to achieve in their position within the company.¹⁵

It's really very logical. If the company wants to achieve their strategic business goals, it can't keep those goals a secret. How can people be expected to commit to something that is not identified or explained? Whether the company goals are clearly and accurately stated or not, the coach must ensure that:

- The individual or a team thoroughly understands the company's goals
- They know where they stand in relationship to the purpose or mission of the company, and
- They know how their job or function contributes to the accomplishment of the goals of the organization

This is an essential first step in the process of building commitment.

Strategic and lofty vision: People don't commit to something they can't believe. If people believe that the company goals or the vision is impossible to achieve there will be no

¹⁵ See also the explanation of the Peak Performance Model found in chapter five.

commitment. Conversely, people rarely *get committed* unless there is a certain amount of challenge and excitement involved in realizing the company vision. Therefore, to encourage commitment the company vision must be both strategic (based in reality) and lofty (a challenge).

First, let's define *vision*. There is an element of vision that should be discernible in the goals and strategies of an organization. "Vision" is a little hard to define, but, if I had to define it succinctly, I might define it as:

A highly desirable future state for your organization that you think might never happen but is exciting and just barely possible – close enough to being attainable that you would actually work toward its realization.

Strategic: Having a *strategic* vision involves staying focused on the needs of clients and/or customers, and basing company strategy on strengths that the organization already has or can readily acquire. In other words, the vision has to be based on reality. Having goals that make sense in terms of probable success and responsiveness to the existing marketplace is essential.

People within any organization have a fair amount of knowledge about the market(s) in which their organization is active. If people do not believe the organization's goals and strategies are achievable in the current marketplace – they will not *buy in*. Would you *commit* to something you believe to be impossible?

Lofty: The vision needs to be *lofty* in order to capture the imagination and engage the spirit. A lofty vision encourages commitment and leads to inspired performance, and that is what a coach is there to facilitate. A lofty vision is one that provides challenge and requires people to stretch and grow. One of the important roles of a coach is to convey the loftiness of the company vision to the individual or team. This will encourage commitment – commitment not only to the company vision, but also the specific goals and objectives of the

job requirements and/or the special challenges for which the individual or team is responsible.

Also, the challenge of a lofty vision, especially a significant challenge, is the clearest and best reason for the need to cultivate new competencies. A truly lofty vision usually calls for improved performance on a company-wide basis. Specific improvements are usually measured in terms of quality, growth, profitability, and the like. Most of the time these specific improvement goals cannot be met by doing more of the same things that people did in the past. More often than not new strategies and new actions are required. This means that new competencies are required of individuals and teams. The commitment inspired by a lofty vision contributes to improved performance in two ways.

- First, it enables an individual or team to improve performance by appropriate application of competencies they already possess.
- Second, commitment contributes to the desire that must be present to learn and cultivate new competencies that are required in order to perform their tasks and functions better and accomplish their specific goals and objectives.

When coaching to build commitment is blended in this way with coaching on competency topics people feel supported in their pursuit of lofty goals. This reinforces the commitment of the company and communicates that the challenge is important and worth achieving. Individuals and teams who have been given important challenges and the support to accomplish them derive a sense of accomplishment from their efforts because they believe that their work is important.

Two other factors that a coach should address in building a foundation for commitment are *meaning* and *authenticity*. The point about people believing their work is important relates to *meaning*. The points about the company providing support to people pursuing lofty goals and reinforcing the importance of achievement in other way relates to *authenticity*.

Meaning: In the process of commitment, work that has *meaning* is very important. Individuals will want to feel that their individual functions and the overall work of the company have meaning both at the personal level and in the external context.

In terms of the overall work of the company people want the direction, goals, and strategies of the company to coincide to some degree with their own goals, aspirations, and sense of social responsibility. In the external context they want to feel that their company provides value to clients, customers, and the business community – maybe even to society in general.

In terms of the specific job related responsibilities and/or special challenges that have been assigned to an individual or team, people also want to see meaning in two ways:

- External: their job responsibilities should make a meaningful contribution to the accomplishment of the overall goals and objectives of the company, and;
- Personal: their job responsibilities should have at least some meaningful congruence with their personal goals and values.¹⁶

In building a foundation for commitment a coach can help an individual or team to discover the ways in which the company's goals and their specific job related responsibilities link to their personal goals and values.¹⁷ Also, a coach can help people to understand how company goals and job responsibilities relate to what is needed within the business environment.

When people are doing things that coincide with their ideas about what has value, they are more likely to be committed to their work. If asked to do things that are meaningful and have value and importance they will also work toward, and become

¹⁶ The explanation of Peak Performance in chapter five also relates to the congruence between job responsibilities and personal goals.

¹⁷ More information on this topic is presented in chapter five in the explanation of the concepts of Peak Performance.

committed to, the accomplishment of the organization's goals. With this kind of commitment people will perform well, and with good performance comes personal reward and advancement.

If people are asked to do things that have no meaning for them there will be no commitment. Lack of commitment results in a lower level of performance. When performance levels go down the individual's value to the organization decreases and ability to advance within the company is limited. This is a road that leads only downhill.

Authenticity: Authenticity means that the organization itself is really committed to the accomplishment of its goals and objectives and is behaving in accordance with that commitment.

The actions of leadership and management must affirm the goals and direction of the organization. It is fine, and even necessary, that each individual leader and manager within the organization can describe the direction and goals in a manner that is accurate and exciting. It is more important that their actions *authenticate* the vision, direction and goals. Their everyday actions must exhibit a commitment and faithfulness to the accomplishment of the direction and goals. This also holds true for the organization's policies and procedures. They must enable people to accomplish organizational goals and should not be perceived as obstacles that make accomplishing those goals more difficult.

In building the foundation for commitment a good coach can highlight the evidence of authenticity that can be found in the day-to-day behavior of leaders and managers. A coach can also help people to see the other ways in which the company is supporting the accomplishment of strategic goals and objectives. A coach can help facilitate commitment by noticing, and highlighting, the evidence of organizational authenticity.

People are two steps closer to commitment when they believe that they are doing meaningful work and when they under-

stand that the company support they receive is evidence that the company is being authentic to its direction and goals. Providing coaching for individuals and teams is one way for a company to demonstrate authenticity. Coaching is support for the achievement of the company's goals and objectives through improving the performance of individuals and teams in their specific job responsibilities.

Imbedded in the discussion of *meaning* and *authenticity* is the fact that there is an expectation that the recipient of coaching should be encouraged to commit to two things:

- The achievement of the company's vision, direction, goals and strategies
- The accomplishment of the specific job requirements, special challenges, etc. that have been assigned to the individual or team

There is a third element to which commitment is desired. That is commitment to the coaching process. For coaching to produce the desired results the coach and the recipient(s) must both invest time and energy. For coaching to have a real impact and result in improved performance those receiving coaching must be convinced about the need for, and benefit of, coaching. Coaching will be rejected if those to receive it see no need for coaching and do not believe that it will be beneficial to them in the conduct of their present and/or future responsibilities with the company.

All three of these areas of commitment are related. For example, without commitment to the strategic goals of the company or the specific job responsibilities there will be no perceived need for coaching and therefore no commitment to the coaching process. If there is no commitment to the coaching process, it will be difficult for a coach to have much impact on building commitment to company goals or individual job requirements. Lack of commitment to the overall company goals will also compromise the ability to commit to any set of individual job responsibilities that are designed to help achieve

company goals. Failure to address any one of these three areas will almost always do damage to the other two areas. Therefore, a coach must constantly pay attention to all three areas of commitment, and seek to build commitment in all three areas simultaneously.

In addition to directly addressing each of the elements of the foundation of commitment there are other activities a coach can use to build an environment in which commitment is encouraged. Some of those activities are covered in chapter five: *Creating a Commitment Enabling Environment*.

Coaching to Expand Competencies

Between *competence* and *commitment*, it seems that most coaches have an easier time dealing with competencies.

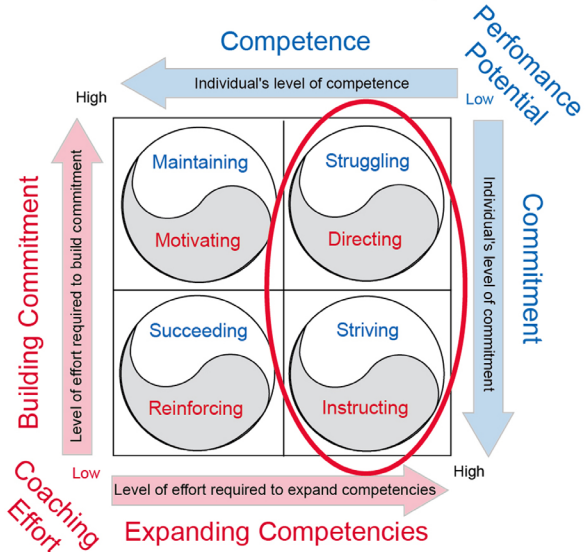
Commitment is such a personal thing and dealing with it can get very subjective and non quantitative. Then too, commitment often involves emotions and is not nearly as logical as the competencies side of the equation. Many coaches heave a sigh of relief when they can concentrate on the competencies. Still, providing the correct competencies to individuals and teams is demanding work and requires focus and care.

Concentrating on competencies is particularly important in the circumstances depicted in the top and bottom quadrants on the right side of the Performance Coaching Model. Assisting individuals or teams who are *struggling* or *striving* requires that the coach accurately identify the competencies needed for performance improvement, then design and successfully complete a program to cultivate those competencies in those in need.

A Competency Cultivation Partnership

Coaches work *with* individuals and teams to cultivate competencies. Just about any reading on the topic of the principles of adult learning will emphasize the desirability of *self-directed learning*, or a learning process in which the people learning initiate and/ or control the learning process. Cultivating new or improved competencies within a coaching relationship contains a healthy measure of adult learning. People learn better (and faster) when they want to learn. They want to learn when they

Performance Coaching Model



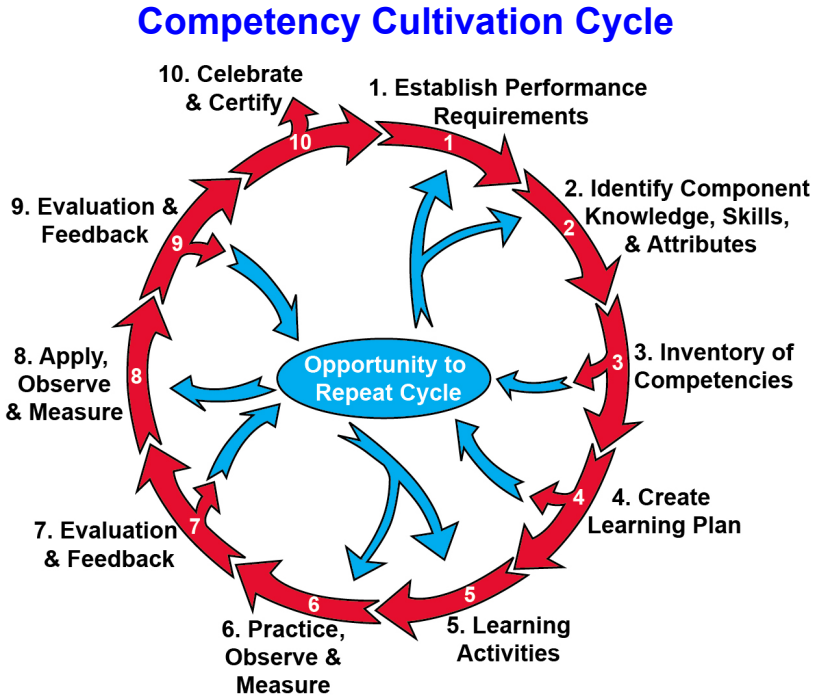
understand the need to learn and are learning things that they believe will help them do what *they* want to do.¹⁸

Good coaches, even those with a great deal of relevant knowledge to impart, work exceptionally hard to involve the coaching recipients in every step of the process of cultivating new or improved competencies. Involvement of those who will be learning new competencies is especially important in the parts of the process that relate to selecting the competencies to be cultivated and designing the learning activities and the manner in which those activities will be evaluated. Truly, in the culti-

¹⁸ Obviously, commitment is a big part of the desire to learn new competencies.

vation of competencies the coach and the recipient must establish a partnership for learning.¹⁹

The Competency Cultivation Cycle: There are a number of definable steps in the process of cultivating competencies.



The steps in the process are more or less sequential, although there are a number of points in the process at which there can be iteration (sometime repeated iteration) of a number of steps within the process. These steps are graphically represented in the *Competency Cultivation Cycle* diagram and briefly explained in the paragraphs that follow.

Using a much over simplified model, the process of cultivating new and/or improved competencies involves figuring out what competencies need to be acquired, learning those competencies, then applying them. As indicated in the model of this

¹⁹ In chapter five an environment for cultivating commitment is described and explained. Those attributes also support the competency cultivation partnership that is required for learning.

cycle, there are a number of intermediate steps in this process to which we must devote significant attention.

The Cycle – Part One:

The first part of the cycle is devoted to determining the specific new competencies, and/or competency improvements that are needed in order for the individual or team to succeed in their job requirements and/or other responsibilities to the company. The first three steps of the cycle depicted in the graphic are subcomponents of this activity.

1. Establish Performance Requirements: The first step in cultivating new and/or improved competencies that a coach and the recipient(s) must take together is to identify and define the total set of competencies, and levels of proficiency, that are required for a person to successfully perform the particular job requirements, or other given responsibilities. This involves looking at the particular job, position, or other set of responsibilities, in the context of the purpose of the company and breaking it down into a detailed set of competencies required to perform successfully, and the level of proficiency required for each of those competencies.

In this step the competencies possessed by the individual or team are of no consequence. The entire emphasis is on the competencies required by the position or responsibilities. The product of this activity is a detailed list of competencies that will be used in later steps to compare against the competencies and proficiency levels already possessed by the individual or team that is receiving coaching.

It is expected that the skills of the coach in performing this type of functional analysis are much more refined than those of the recipient. However, the coach must involve the individual or team that is receiving coaching as much as possible in these activities. At the very least the coach must thoroughly review the results of the work in this first step with the recipient(s). Through this review the recipients must come to un-

derstand the cause and effect relationship between each required competency and being able to perform their responsibilities properly and successfully.

2. Identify Component Knowledge, Skills & Attributes:

From the list of competencies formulated in step one above an even more detailed list of the specific knowledge areas, skills, and attributes (KSAs) required for these competencies has to be prepared.²⁰ This step and step three (Inventory of Competencies) could be reversed in order to narrow down the number of competencies that must be broken down into KSAs.²¹

The objective of this step is to obtain a thorough understanding of exactly what is required to perform all of the responsibilities of the particular position or set of challenges in question. In order to perform a single competency well a person may be required to have knowledge of several different subject areas, have a number of different skills and one or more specific attributes. Specifying the KSAs required for each and every one of the competencies required by the position yields a master description of what it takes to be successful in this position.

This level of effort is probably much more intensive than any job description ever written, but it is necessary in order to identify the competencies that need to be cultivated and/or improved. Again, the coach is expected to be much more capable of conducting this type of analysis than the recipient. Even so, the coach may well enlist assistance from a number of others in the process of this analysis. Beginning with a job description (if one exists) is a good idea. Consulting with people in the human resources department who have experience with competencies and knowledge of the target position is a great idea (if those resources are available). The best source of

²⁰ See the discussion of knowledge, skills and attributes in chapter three.

²¹ See the discussion on this point after the description of step three of the process below.

information may be previous incumbents of this position (if there are any). There are also a number of functional analysis tools that the coach may apply to produce the desired results.

Keeping those receiving the coaching involved through the course of this analysis can be a wonderful education. In this way those who are to perform the responsibilities of the position help compose a catalog of all of the knowledge, skills and attributes required for their success. They also come to understand which specific areas of knowledge, which skills and which attributes are applied to specific competencies and how those, in turn, relate to the successful performance of their job responsibilities.

This level of involvement and the education achieved through this involvement directly contribute to an appreciation of the direct relevance between competencies, knowledge, skills and attributes and success on the job. This appreciation greatly facilitates the commitment of those who will be participating in the learning process.

3. Inventory of Competencies: This inventory step includes identifying the competencies already possessed by the individual or team and comparing those against the competencies needed by them in order to perform well in their position or company assigned challenges. The desired result from this step is a list of those competencies that the individual or team needs to cultivate, and/or improve, in order to perform well in their position or challenges.

One way to conduct the inventory would be to identify *all* of the competencies, and the level of proficiency in each, possessed by the individual or team and then compare that list with the competencies and proficiency levels required by the position. There is a useful shortcut. Begin by using the competencies and proficiency levels required by the position as a starting place. Then determine whether or not the individual or team has those competencies and levels of proficiency.

This saves time by not assessing competencies that the individual or team might possess that have no particular relevance to the set of responsibilities under immediate consideration.

If a complete inventory of all competencies possessed by the individual or team is to be conducted, this activity could be started before, or at the same time as, the work in steps one and two above. The exigencies of each particular coaching initiative will determine the approach that is most appropriate.

As a practical matter, there may be advantage in a certain amount of interplay among these three steps. Having a good idea of the competencies required by the position or set of challenges may be the best starting point (step one). Knowing at least some of the most important specific knowledge, skills and attributes required for these competencies (step two) may also be good to have. This preliminary information (along with an initial comparison as described in step three) will provide the coach with an introductory understanding of the specific coaching needs of the individual or team with whom they are working. This allows the coach the possibility of beginning some substantive work on expanding competencies while the balance of the analytical work is continuing.

Practicality and an appreciation of the way things happen in the *real world* lead to another observation. In most instances in which coaching is considered for an individual or team, there are some initial ideas concerning the specific deficiencies in competencies that need to be addressed. Further, there are usually opinions about at least some of the specific competencies that need to be cultivated and/or improved. With the understanding that these ideas and opinions are not always correct, it is still possible for a coach to use these indications as places to start looking. A mini version of the process described in the first three steps of the *Competency Cultivation Cycle* can be applied to these targeted areas.

The Cycle – Part Two:

The second major part of the cycle includes steps four through seven and is directed toward designing, conducting and completing a program of learning that will provide the recipient(s) with all that they need to cultivate and/or improve the competencies required in their job or other responsibilities.

4. Create a Learning Plan: The identification of the specific competencies (and included areas of knowledge, skills and attributes) that are needed by the recipient is a beginning point for the coach and the recipient(s) to work together to design a program of learning for the recipient(s). This program of learning should build on the experience and existing competencies of the recipient(s) and should concentrate on those competencies that are most relevant to the accomplishment of the goals and objectives concomitant with the position responsibilities and/or challenges assigned to those receiving coaching.

As you will recall from previous mention of the principles of adult learning, it is essential that the learner (the recipient) be as involved as possible in the design of the learning program. This includes at least the following:

- The competencies that will be covered in the learning program
- The learning resources that will be available and used in the program²²
- The format(s) in which learning is presented and/or accessed
- The criteria for, and process of, evaluating the progress and proficiency of the learner

In most coaching initiatives it is expected that the coach will be heavily involved in the design of the learning program, and that the coach will be the primary link to involving the recipi-

²² These resources can be instructors, texts, expert systems, and many other materials, data repositories, etc.

ent(s). In some cases, it is possible for the coach to bring in other resources to assist in the design of the learning program. It is even possible that significant portions, or even most, of the design of the learning program could be completed by resources other than the coach. In such cases, the coach should certainly play a coordinating role in the process.

5. Learning Activities: Once the program of learning for cultivating, and/or improving, competencies is designed the learning activities can begin. It is during these learning activities to expand competencies that the coach and the recipient(s) usually develop a true coaching relationship.

Many assume that the coach provides all of the learning that occurs within the entire learning program. Sometimes this is true. However, in cases in which there is extensive work to expand competencies, it may not be possible for the coach to provide all of the instruction. There may other learning resources that are utilized as a part of the learning activities. Even though the coach may not supply 100 percent of the instruction, the coach continues to be primarily responsible for assisting the recipients in applying what they are learning to their position responsibilities, assigned challenges and life goals. The coach is also the one to ensure continuity within the program of learning and to constantly attend to nurturing the commitment of the recipients – commitment to the program of learning and ultimate commitment to accomplishing the goals associated with their position responsibilities and/or challenges.

In order to fulfill these coaching responsibilities there are a number of things that a coach can do. One very important thing is to ensure that the coaching relationship is an environment in which commitment is constantly encouraged. The characteristics of such an environment are treated in chapter five under the heading *The Attributes of an Environment that Encourages Commitment*. Those attributes include mutual trust, sin-

cere positive regard for others, integrity and a number of others.

Another thing that the coach must do is to ensure that the learning program is characterized by certain features that facilitate learning and help build and maintain a sound coaching relationship. These features include:

- Respect for those who are learning – a respect that encourages active participation
- Opportunities for the recipient(s) to utilize, integrate, and reflect upon their experience in relationship to the subject matter contained in the program of learning
- An openness to an exchange of all kinds of feedback among recipient(s), coach, and other instructors (if any) about content, values, experience, beliefs, information, and philosophy
- Real life problems and concerns should be used within the learning program to require analysis, the formulation of multiple solution options, and the critical evaluation of alternative solutions.

These features should receive attention during the design of the learning program (step four above), but must also receive careful monitoring to ensure that they are respected and emphasized throughout the entire course of the learning activities.

6. Practice, Observation and Measurement: In reality steps six and seven are probably a part of the learning activities (step five), however both are identified separately in the model in order to highlight these functions individually. Frequent opportunity to practice what you are learning is an important part of any program of learning. These practice opportunities are also an excellent opportunity for the coach to observe and measure the progress and proficiency of the individual or team participating in the learning program. This observation and measurement is one means of assessing the level of proficiency that the individual or team has gained in the competencies through the program of learning. This also serves as an

evaluation of the learning program to provide an opportunity for changes in the design and/or conduct of the program of learning if required to improve effectiveness and/or efficiency.

The coach and recipient(s) work together in the design of the learning plan (step four) to specify the ways in which the progress and proficiency of the recipient(s) are measured and evaluated. Even so, measurement can sometimes be a sensitive issue and the coach must constantly balance a number of factors to ensure measurement is conducted appropriately.

An athletic analogy provides food for thought. A track coach always has a stopwatch – it is *the* ultimate measure in running events. It measures *how fast*. A tape measure is *the* measure in the field events. It measures *how far*. A runner is constantly barraged with the readouts from the stopwatch. Whether in regular work outs, running a race for time in a practice session, or in an official track meet, the coach or someone designated by the coach is always there with a stopwatch. That information, taken over time, indicates, in an unequivocal manner, whether there is improvement or not.

Like it or not, it is information that both coach and runner need. Without such information there would be a subjective debate:

“Gee coach that last race felt pretty fast. What do you think?”

“Well, you looked a little slow in the second lap to me...”

The readout on the stopwatch provides an objective measurement. With those results the runner, and especially the coach, can then begin to determine what things might have contributed to a slower than expected time, and what needs to be done to go faster. The coach needs both measurement and observation. The stopwatch readout tells what happened, the coach’s experienced observation tells why it happened. The stopwatch tells us that the second lap was too slow. The practiced and experienced observation of the coach will notice that

the runner's form was off in that his stride was too long and he was holding his arms too low – both of which inhibit proper running style.

The same things apply in the business context. Both coach and recipient(s) need the objective measurement, and the coach needs the opportunity to observe performance in a practice setting. In this way the feedback from the coach is far more credible and useful to the recipients.

“It took a hour and a half for you and your team to resolve that issue. That is much too long. You should have been able to do it in thirty minutes.”

“How can that be, coach. We were working as fast as we could.”

“Glad you asked. Your listening and facilitating skills need work. One of your team members actually tried to provide the key information that led to the solution only twenty minutes into the meeting, but you were so focused on continuing to explain the dynamics of the situation that you didn't notice. It took another forty-five minutes for that same team member to get back to providing the critical information and have it recognized by you and the rest of the team.”

In this quick example that could come from a practice opportunity in a role play, the coach is able to provide both measurable results and observation about how to improve.

7. Evaluation and Feedback: Here again, it is sometimes hard to separate the activities in steps six and seven. The observation and measurement of performance in a practice opportunity take place in step six. The comparison of the measured results with other performance standards and past performance and the communication of those results and other information take place in step seven.

Observation and measurement of practice opportunities could take place without any communication about those results between coach and recipient. Sometimes this might even be appropriate. For example, when the people in learning mode are making good progress and the coach is just gathering information to identify specific skills, behaviors, etc. that might need special attention.

Conceptually, at least, evaluation and feedback are two different things. Evaluation usually involves comparing measured results and observations against standards and/or past performance to determine (a) improvement, or lack thereof, and/or (b) some rating of proficiency. The key concept here is comparison. It is very hard to evaluate without some type of comparison. The observation, “She ran that race well,” has little meaning without some other information that lets us know, “as compared to what?” Statements that provide the comparison we seek would include:

- “That was her best time ever for the 800 meter dash.” This is a comparison only to her previous efforts. She still might have finished dead last in the race.
- “She came in second in the race.” This is a comparison only to the other runners in the race. The time may have been far below her previous personal best.
- “She won and her time is only one second away from the women’s world record for 800 meters.” This comparison to both the other runners and the ultimate standard lets us know that this was a spectacular performance.

Feedback indicates that the evaluation is communicated to the person whose performance was measured, observed, and evaluated. Feedback can range from bare bones information to an extensive and valuable critique.

Feedback can be presented in an enlightened and positive manner, and (unfortunately) feedback, even good feedback, can be communicated very poorly. Most people would agree

that feedback, whether it is good news or bad news, can be very valuable if presented properly. Few of us relish receiving feedback that indicates that we have a lot of work to do in order to perform at desired levels of proficiency. However, that is exactly the news we need if we are to continue to improve our performance. Of course, we also need specific information that helps us to identify, and correct, those performance deficiencies that are blocking our efforts to improve.

In coaching on the topic of managerial skills one learns that the percentages are very high (nearing 100%) around the opinion that people never get enough feedback and that they always want more feedback. One also learns that the percentages are much lower when it comes to the percentage of people who are proficient in providing and/or receiving feedback properly. There are numerous texts and other materials that deal specifically with providing feedback in a helpful and valuable manner. Suffice to say that feedback is an extremely important tool with which a good coach must be proficient.

By the way, the coach is not the only one who can provide evaluation and feedback. Given that we are striving to maintain a *competency cultivation partnership*, those who are in learning mode should be participating as much as possible in the evaluation and feedback process. It is great to hear evaluative comments from a good coach. Those comments may be received as true, accurate, and valuable. Even more valuable is when the recipient(s) participate in the evaluation and feedback. Compare hearing from a coach to studying a video tape of our own performance, providing a critique of that performance based on agreed upon criteria and standards, then discussing our observations with the coach. There are many ways in which the individual or team can actively participate in the evaluation and feedback process.

There is yet one more manner in which evaluation and feedback must be applied. The coach must invite, and graciously receive, feedback from the recipients. Through this type of

feedback to the coach learning programs can be improved and accelerated and the skills of the coach can be improved as well. This two-way feedback is also positive indication of respect for the experience and ideas of recipients and the value that they can bring to the process of improving competencies.

At this point of evaluation and feedback one of the results that must be expected from the process is a determination about the need for additional learning and/or practice. One of the main objectives to be achieved through coaching is having the individual or team ready to function successfully on their own. At some point that individual or team must be judged ready to apply their new competencies on the job – not merely in practice situations. If a determination is made that additional work is necessary to obtain the desired levels of proficiency in one or more competencies, an appropriate plan of action can be formulated. Both the determination and the formulation of the plan should be a cooperative effort including both coach and the recipient(s). If there is a *sponsor* involved in this coaching initiative, it may be appropriate to have them involved in this determination as well. Additional work means that there will be some iteration of portions of the cycle. If no iteration is required or desired, we move on to part three of the cycle.

The Cycle – Part Three:

The last part of the *Competency Cultivation Cycle* addresses applying what has been learned, evaluating that performance, and determining whether or not any additional action is required.

8. Application, Observation and Measurement: Steps eight and nine are related in the same way that steps six and seven are linked. The application, observation, and measurement are addressed in step eight. Evaluation of the performance and feedback about that performance are the subject of step nine.

At some point in the part two learning activities and associated evaluation of competencies and proficiency a decision is

reached that the individual or team is ready to apply the new and/or improved competencies on the job.²³ This is probably somewhat analogous to the first solo flight when learning how to pilot a plane.

Hopefully, it is possible to structure this first application of new competencies so that the coach can be present to observe and to measure results. Observation by the coach is not always advisable or possible. Consider coaching a CEO on the competencies involved in handling very sensitive issues with members of the top team. Observation by the coach is probably not a good idea. If it is not possible or desirable for the coach to observe the application of new competencies, it is usually possible to structure some type of opportunity for the coach to review the performance in another way. One commonly used vehicle is for the recipient to review their subjective observation and evaluation of the performance with the coach. Usually, by the time that this occurs the coach and the recipient are in agreement about the critical performance factors that are most difficult for the recipient.

Having the coach there to observe can be extremely valuable. One reason that this step in the cycle is separate from the observation of practice (step six) is that there are real differences between performing live and on the job versus in a practice situation. In many instances a person who does fine in practice will not do as well in an actual on-the-job application. Why? Stress, pressure, stage fright, the admixture of other personalities – there are many reasons, and a good coach will be able to observe and address those with the recipient(s).

It is an important point that there may well be entirely different factors that affect performance on the job versus performance in a practice situation. Denying the coach the opportu-

²³ Of course, depending on the particular competency in question, it is certain that the individual or team has been making their best efforts to incorporate all of their new skills to their job performance throughout the entire learning process. And, this is as it should be in most cases.

nity to observe an on-the-job application of new competencies also deprives the recipient of new and valuable information that can improve on-the-job performance.

9. Evaluation and Feedback: The process of evaluation and feedback in step nine is the same as in step seven. All of the discussion about step seven applies here as well. There may be additional feedback topics addressed in the step nine feedback session because the performance observed in the on-the-job application may be different – maybe even very different – from that observed in the practice opportunity.

Here, as in step seven, there is the possibility that the coach and the recipient(s) may agree that some iteration of the cycle is desirable. Examples might be: brushing up on some of the fine points, accessing some additional learning to address something that didn't crop up until the latest performance. The desired iteration may be just another opportunity for the coach to observe on-the-job performance or some cycling back through additional learning activities, or just some additional practice opportunities.

10. Celebrate and Certify: Although some coaching relationships do seem to continue for a long time, at some point it is appropriate to change or end the coaching relationship.

Unsatisfactory results *are* possible. This would be a case in which the coach and the recipient(s) working together could not achieve the results desired. The reasons for such results could be a lack of ability on the part of the coach, a lack of capability or desire on the part of the recipient(s), some combination of these two, and/or external factors that compromised the endeavor (lack of proper sponsorship, etc.).

Fortunately, most outcomes are positive, but there does come a time when the success of the coaching partnership and the newly cultivated, and/or improved, competencies should be celebrated and the recipient(s) should function independent of coaching assistance. Usually this is a happy occasion in which

both coach and the individual or team can point with pride to measurable improvement in competencies, stronger commitment, and solid steps toward the accomplishment of position related goals and/or assigned challenges.

The results are usually the real reward for all concerned. More frequently than not there is no formal certification of satisfactory completion of a coaching program. Typically, the approval of the coach and the coach's acknowledgement that the recipient(s) have done well and achieved the results that all had hoped for is more than enough certification. That said, just as there are medals and trophies as rewards in athletic competition, some type of celebration and recognition of the achievements of the recipient(s) is always welcome, appropriate, and appreciated.

Many times the coaching initiative ends at this point. The coach moves on to other challenges and the individual or team progresses toward their future accomplishments. Sometimes, it is appropriate or desirable for the coaching relationship to continue, but to be reconfigured. This coaching initiative is complete, but there are other areas of personal growth in which improvement is important for the individual or team. If the skills of the same coach happen to be appropriate for the follow-on work, a continued coaching partnership can be beneficial. In those circumstances, continuing to build on an existing coaching relationship can also be efficient, because the trust, mutual respect, and working environment are already in place.

Coaching to Promote Alignment

In addition to *commitment* and *competencies* there is also *alignment*. Alignment is the third major component that is necessary for performance effectiveness (all three must be applied within the context of *purpose*).

In chapter three *alignment in two parts* is treated briefly: (1) congruent goals and objectives, and (2) working together. Ensuring that everyone has the same goals and objectives and is working together toward the accomplishment of those goals and objectives using the same basic strategies are the alignment basics. There are additional aspects of alignment that must be addressed in coaching to improve performance.

In order for a coach to be truly effective in facilitating improvement in the performance of an individual or team, the coach must pay attention to all five facets of a company or organization that need to be aligned: (1) Purpose, (2) Resources, (3) Functional systems, (4) Structures, and (5) Style.

Purpose

Purpose has been discussed earlier in a number of different contexts including alignment. It is that to which everything else must be aligned. Purpose (which includes vision, mission, goals, objectives and strategies) sets the direction for the alignment of all other aspects of the company.

Resources

Every company possesses a different collection of resources. These are the basic building blocks that are available to achieve its goals. Resources can be grouped into the following categories: intellectual assets, capital, information, physical resources (raw materials, equipment, space etc.), technology, labor, time, products and services, organization, and markets. To achieve success a company must ensure that it has all the resources needed, and must marshal that unique collection of resources toward the accomplishment of its particular purpose – this is alignment. And, for an individual or team within the company to be successful, they too must have the resources required for achievement. A coach must help define the resources required and sometimes a coach will need to intercede with the com-

pany, on behalf of the individual or team, to ensure that appropriate resources are made available.

Functional Systems, Processes and Procedures

Functions are the vehicles through which resources are applied to a purpose. The functional systems present within most companies can be divided among the following generic categories: direction setting, planning and budgeting, information management and monitoring, resource administration, marketing, sales and fulfillment, production, production support and client relationship management. Part of coaching to promote alignment includes being able to help an individual or team apply resources toward the accomplishment of their purpose. A coach should be familiar with these functional subsystems and the manner in which they work with the company. With this knowledge the coach will be able to help individuals and teams identify specific company functions needed to augment their efforts and to work effectively within the context of their company.

Specific processes and procedures employed within functional systems vary widely from company to company. In some cases these processes and procedures are what set one company apart from another in the same industry in terms of quality, efficiency, market share, etc. Individuals and teams should appreciate the uniqueness of the processes and procedures within their company, and a coach must gain at least a basic understanding in order to be helpful.

Structures

The structure of a company is determined by both the formal and informal reporting relationships. Perhaps the best evidence of this structure is the manner in which business units are organized and report to, and through, the top level executives of the company. Sometimes this is accurately reflected in

a company organization chart. More often the manner in which the top level executives obtain information and cause things to happen departs from the structure depicted in the organization chart (if one exists). A coach must understand the structural aspects of the company well enough to help position the individual or team being coached for effectiveness and success within the company.

At the company level, both the formal and informal structures should be arranged in a conscious and purposeful manner so that they better enable senior executives, managers and the work force to communicate and cooperate toward the accomplishment of company goals. At the level of the individual or team receiving coaching, the coach should assist in the work to position the individual or team so that they can communicate with other people and business units within the company in order to accomplish individual or team goals and objectives.

Style

Such things as operational philosophy, company culture, organizational behavior, and management style reflect the style of the company. Taken together these elements of style determine the tenor and quality of the interaction within and among all levels within the company. In order to be effective within the company or organization any individual or team must be aligned with the style of the organization, therefore a coach should assist with *style alignment*.

An example is useful. A company that implements a strategy of innovation and intends to leverage the creativity of its work force must have a culture that supports free expression of ideas rather than one in which self-expression is inhibited. In the context of this strategy of innovation individuals and teams must also do their part to support creativity and encourage self-expression. A coach can help an individual or team to see the need to adopt this style feature and should also help in cul-

tivating the competencies associated with encouraging creativity. In this way a coach is promoting alignment between the individual or team and the company of which they are a part.

Alignment work is not easy, it takes time and it is not as *concrete* as other coaching topics such as competencies. A coach must work to ensure that individual and team behaviors support the culture, competencies, and commitment that are required to accomplish their goals. A coach must also honestly confront and actively discourage behaviors that are not aligned with team or individual goals and objectives. And, a coach should work with recipients to cultivate consistency over time – a very important behavioral aspect in achieving alignment.

Summary

Many of the “how-tos” are provided in this chapter. Specific directions for coaching to build commitment, to expand competencies and to promote alignment are covered. The model presented in the *competency cultivation cycle* and the explanation of each of the ten steps in this cycle suggests a very usable approach for coaches to apply in designing and moving through a program of learning with those receiving the coaching.

The importance of *purpose* is worth restating. There are a number of reminders throughout this chapter that all of the coaching approaches and methodologies included here are applied within the context of *purpose*. The purpose that is at the heart of all of the coaching is the purpose of the individual or team receiving the coaching and the purpose of the company or organization of which they are a part. This purpose is the context for the entire coaching effort.

In chapters five and six that follow additional material is provided on commitment and competencies. Chapter four provides a few sound conceptual models about the nature of commitment and competencies, how they relate to perform-

ance and an approach for coaching to build commitment and to expand competencies. The next two chapters provide additional detail that will provide the coach with insight into the finer points of dealing with competencies and commitment.

Chapter Five

5

Commitment: From Concept to Reality

Creating a Coaching Culture

Creating a Coaching Culture

Commitment: From Concept To Reality

Chapter four, *Performance Coaching*, includes material on building the foundations of commitment. Establishing and maintaining on-going commitment requires more than attention to the foundations. A good coach knows that the various aspects of commitment demand constant attention throughout the coaching endeavor.

There is still a lot to learn about facilitating the process of commitment. We know that commitment is a very individual thing, and we are just beginning to appreciate how much building commitment within individuals differs from merely motivating others.²⁴ These facts support the special value of coaching as a vehicle to performance improvement. Coaches have two interrelated responsibilities in converting commitment from a concept into reality:

- Coaches must create, implement and maintain an environment in which individuals and teams are encouraged to make a personal commitment to their own success and that of the company.
- Coaches must work with sponsors to ensure that individuals and teams fully understand the vision, goals and direction of the company and how their job responsibilities contribute to the success of the business.

Both of these responsibilities are treated in this chapter.

²⁴ See the distinction between motivation and commitment at page 33-35.

Creating a Commitment Enabling Environment

Creating and maintaining a healthy and consistent coaching environment in which the commitment of the individual or team receives constant nurturing is key to achieving progress in any coaching endeavor. Although the coach has some influence in this endeavor, cultivating a commitment-enabling environment is ultimately the responsibility of the sponsoring organization.

As we know, there is nothing that a coach can do to *make* someone else committed. Commitment is very much a personal decision on the part of the person who becomes committed. Neither a coach, nor a boss, nor anyone else can *command* commitment. It is possible for a boss or a coach or some other person to obtain *obedience* from someone, but this is not commitment. In rare situations it may be correct to require obedience, but commitment is the preferred option. When people have commitment, they perform well because *they* want to, not because of someone else's wishes. Commitment shows – it makes a difference. Wouldn't you want your customers dealing with people who were committed rather than just being obedient?

The Attributes of an Environment that Encourages Commitment

Although it is not possible to make someone else committed, it is possible to build an environment in which someone is more likely to make that personal decision to become committed. Building a coaching environment that encourages people to become committed is the challenge facing every good coach. Each situation is different and there are no simple rules about how to build a commitment-enabling environment, but it is possible to paint a picture of what such an environment looks like.

An environment in which people are more likely to make a personal choice to become committed has a number of characteristics, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Self-expression
- Mutual trust
- Integrity
- Positive regard for others
- Mastery
- Enlightened self interest
- Making commitments and expecting others to make commitments
- Individual responsibility for the success of the business²⁵

Self-expression: Perhaps the single most important thing that a coach can do to encourage commitment is to encourage *self-expression* on the part of the individual or team with whom he or she is working. This self-expression is vitally important among all those involved in the coaching relationship.

Having a continuing dialog that allows individuals to put into words how they feel about what is happening within the coaching initiative is key for two essential reasons:

- Encouraging self-expression is proof that the input, experience and ideas of both coach and recipient(s) are valued and respected throughout the coaching endeavor.
- Maintaining this form of dialog is one of the best ways to ensure that the program of learning and other activities included in the coaching initiative are relevant to the accomplishment of the goals and objectives specified at the outset of the coaching endeavor.²⁶

²⁵ Peter Block discusses some of the concepts in this list in similar, yet different, ways in his book [The Empowered Manager](#), Jossey-Bass Inc., San Francisco, 1987.

²⁶ And, that those goals and objectives continue to be relevant in light of the overall business context of the company.

Encouraging self-expression also facilitates an exchange of views on the value and meaning of the application of specific competencies and of overall job related responsibilities. This helps the coach understand the extent to which people are finding meaning in their work.²⁷ Likewise, this provides the coach with the opportunity to help others understand the links between their individual work and the value that the company provides to its clients.

Commitment is fostered when an individual finds meaning in his or her work. If people do not feel free to express their true opinions about the value and meaningfulness of their work, the coach is without vital information about how to facilitate the process of building commitment.

Mutual Trust: Mutual trust is another essential attribute within the coaching relationship. Consider the link between mutual trust and self-expression. If people express themselves, and then someone comes down on them like a ton of bricks as a result – the next sound you hear will be self-expression evaporating. Everyone becomes a turtle and pulls their head back in their shell. The result is that the part of the coaching relationship that encourages, and benefits from, self-expression instantly dies.

In order to reap the benefits of self-expression the coach must actively guard against the potential negative use of the information gained through self-expression. Consistency in this policy will build trust within the coaching relationship, and people will come to know that self-expression is valued. Individuals and teams will not be visited with consequences adverse to their career when they happen to express a view that may be perceived by some as negative. This builds into a true *open door policy*. An individual can go to the coach and say what

²⁷ See the discussion of meaning as one of the foundations of commitment in chapter four.

is really on their mind – not say only what they think the coach wants to hear.

Personal Trustworthiness: Every coach has to cultivate *personal trustworthiness* in order to build a culture of mutual trust. Consistency of conduct is mentioned above and in total there are seven elements – all seven are essential in establishing trustworthiness:

- Character is about who you are as a person. Others must be able to trust in the standards of fairness and ethical principles that guide the coach in their actions. Is it important to consider character and ethics in matching a coach and an individual or team in need of coaching assistance? Only if you want to cultivate mutual trust within the coaching relationship!
- Competence in this instance relates to the skills of the coach and how well those skills are applied in their coaching activities. In order to cultivate mutual trust people must have confidence in their coach's ability to perform their job well. People might trust a coach's character and believe that they have the best of intentions, but if they don't think the coach can perform the work, the coach's personal trustworthiness is compromised.
- Commitment – the personal commitment of the coach – is a strong force within the coaching relationship. A coach's commitment is demonstrated through their craft – by the manifestation of that *burning desire* to help people realize more of their human potential.

In context of helping people do their job better within a company there is another important demonstration of commitment. A coach is there to assist an individual or a team to perform better in their work and thereby, help the company accomplish its strategic goals. In essence the coach will be facilitating the *alignment* between the purpose

and goals of the individual or team and those of the company. To earn the full trust of others, the coach too must demonstrate commitment to accomplishing the goals and objectives of the company. Without this type of commitment the coach lacks a credible position from which to advocate and encourage others to commit to the accomplishment of the strategic goals of the company, and, once again, personal trustworthiness is diminished.

- Congruence: There must be substantial commonality in the vision, value proposition, values, beliefs, and practices advocated by the coach and those of the sponsor company or organization.
- Consistency means applying the same standards in a fair and uniform manner.
- Constancy – all of the above demonstrated over time.
- Organizational Support: The last of the essentials of trustworthiness must be demonstrated by the sponsoring company or organization. The *trustworthiness* demonstrated by the company reinforces the personal trustworthiness of the coach – or not. If the company demonstrates its own kind of character, competence, and commitment to the shared vision and commonly held principles, it supports the trustworthiness of the coach. If the company, in word and deed, does not appear committed to the accomplishment of the vision, goals, etc. this will compromise the personal trustworthiness of the coach.

An individual coach may be very trustworthy and may be trying to do all of the right things. An individual or team in need of coaching may even trust the coach personally, but if the company is not trustworthy – there is no trust. If the individual team members do not trust the company to stand behind the actions (or intentions) of the coach, mutual trust will prove to be an elusive goal.

The actions of leaders are the most visible indication of a company's commitment. To be successful in building commitment to company goals there must be widespread trust that leadership is truly committed to the vision, direction and goals, and not just paying lip service to some pretty words on the wall.

Integrity: Integrity within the coaching relationship is telling the truth about what is happening, only making promises that can be fulfilled, admitting mistakes, and knowing that the authentic act is always best. It is putting into practice by demonstrable actions the authenticity you have to the purpose of the coaching relationship and the strategic direction and goals of the company.

Some might wonder why this level of candor is necessary or desirable. The candor that the coach adopts with the recipients and others within the company is really a way of living the principles of the coaching relationship and goals that are shared among the coach, the recipients and the company. It is a concrete way for a coach to affirm that he or she believes in what they are doing and is confident in its value to the company and ultimately to customers and clients. It is also a forthright assertion that being serious about the accomplishment of organizational goals is more than OK – it is necessary in order to accomplish this meaningful work.

Through integrity the coach demonstrates personal commitment to the value of coaching, the purpose specified in the particular coaching initiative and the vision, direction and goals of the company. Manifesting integrity in this way is yet another way to build commitment because attesting to the importance and value of the work helps build commitment.

Positive Regard for Others: Having sincere positive regard for others means wanting what is best for them and their ca-

reer and knowing that this is best for the company and the accomplishment of its strategic goals. This is at the very heart of coaching. It is another way of stating that a good coach must have that *burning desire* to help others identify and realize more of their human potential.

Actions that demonstrate a coach's sincere positive regard include: meaningful positive encouragement, truly constructive criticism, confronting people with reality, and sharing the coach's feelings about people's work products and their actions. All of these actions must be conducted in the context of a real and demonstrated desire to help others improve their performance, realize more of their personal goals *and* accomplish the goals of the company.

Coaching cannot be accomplished without a sincere positive regard for those whom you would help. How else can you give another person both meaningful positive encouragement and truly constructive criticism and have them both well received? If the person you are trying to coach does not believe in your sincere positive regard for them, their interpretation of your coaching is: "I can never get it right" and "they're always picking on me."

Positive regard for others also encourages commitment. When a coach is brought in to assist an individual or team in a business context and exhibits this level of positive regard, it is a living example of the fact that the company cares for people as individuals. When the organization shows that it values positive regard for others through its support of coaching programs (and other programs like career planning, etc.) this is further evidence of an organizational concern for individuals. This creates a work environment that encourages commitment.

The application of this philosophy of sincere positive regard for others benefits the company in more ways than just fostering a higher level of commitment within coaching relation-

ships. When wide spread within the company, sincere and mutual positive regard enables individuals to provide one another with the kind of job related feedback that leads to real performance improvement. This leads to improving the performance of the company as a whole. Another result is that people learn their jobs better and faster and more frequently make innovative improvements in the ways they do their work. This creates a coaching culture.

Mastery: To learn something or perform some task simply because somebody else wants you to is usually only marginally rewarding. This reason for performance provides feeble motivation and usually does not lead to commitment.

Performing a function as well as we can in order to satisfy our own sense of accomplishment and pride is much more rewarding.²⁸ There is a pride and satisfaction in understanding our function better than anyone else, in *being the best*, that is its own reward and is in our own best interest.

Think of this sense of *mastery* in the same terms as Olympic athletes do. They compete at a truly peak level of performance for little else than the self-actualization they experience from the mastery of their skill. Sure, there are the potential commercial endorsements and the gold medal – but there are very few of those in comparison to the number of Olympic athletes. What really keeps an athlete with Olympic potential practicing day after day at peak performance levels is his or her desire to realize the best that is in them. Isn't that the feeling that we all want in our work? Isn't that a legitimate desire – one that we should attempt to cultivate and realize for ourselves and for others?

²⁸ Proudly performing a function well usually indicates that there is an understanding of the meaning and value of the work. See the discussion of *meaning* in chapter four.

Understanding and cultivating this desire for mastery is essential for a coach. This is especially true when spectacular achievements are sought through a coaching relationship and there is exceptionally hard work required on the part of those receiving the coaching. In such cases, just as in the case of the Olympic athlete, unrelenting performance at the highest level is required and only the intense internal desire of the one from whom such performance is required can sustain the effort.

When a coach creates an environment in which *mastery* of skills is supported and valued this also helps build commitment. When organizations support individuals in becoming masters in their competencies, people see that their skills are valued, and know that their competencies are important to the success of the organization. This emphasizes the value and meaning of their work, which in turn fosters commitment within individuals.

Enlightened self-interest: One concept to help us understand more about the art of creating commitment to work, rather than merely sacrificing to get it done, is called *enlightened self-interest*.

Having a strong and sincere desire to serve the organization is the essence of enlightened self-interest. This may sound like the “company line,” but the reality is:

The achievement of each individual’s work related goals and aspirations is inevitably linked to, and interdependent with, the interests of the business.

At anything deeper than a surface level this is a difficult concept for many to understand, and equally difficult to explain convincingly to others. To act in accordance with the concept of enlightened self interest, individuals must understand, and truly believe, that their personal success and highest personal self interest is directly linked with the success of the organization – or the office, or the department, or the team.

This promise will sound very hollow (and will, in fact, be empty) unless there is a work environment in which individuals have good opportunities to talk about, and explore, their personal goals, and how these goals tie in with the work they are doing, *and* the direction and goals of the company. Obviously, this is an environment that a coach should cultivate.

Even with a healthy coaching environment that provides opportunities to compare personal goals with company goals it is many times difficult for individuals to understand and realize a true enlightened self-interest attitude on their own. A coach can make a significant contribution to this attitudinal shift. There are two key activities involved in this type of coaching assistance:

- To ensure that the recipient(s) understand how specific aspects of their job responsibilities are valuable to the company through contributing to the accomplishment of the company's goals and objectives
- To ensure that the recipient(s) appreciate the links between their personal goals and aspirations and each facet of their job responsibilities

To accomplish these two responsibilities a coach needs to know at least three things:

- All of the job responsibilities of the individual or team they are coaching
- The goals and objectives of the company
- The personal goals and objectives of the individual or team they are coaching

Armed with this knowledge the coach is prepared to help an individual or team to understand their job responsibilities and other assignments in terms of functions and tasks that coincide with things they believe in and want to do. This facilitates a true desire to help the company achieve its strategic goals through *enlightened self-interest*.

Make Commitments and Expect Others to Make Commitments: How do you view the work you do each day? There are always choices. To many people meeting the demands of work is a *sacrifice* that they make in response to external demands. They speak of their actions in terms of: “*I have to...*”

A preferable attitude is one of *desire* instead of sacrifice. To do something because we want to is to affirm: “*I’m going to do this because I want to, and I commit to doing it out of my own choice.*” All very well and good you say, but isn’t this suggesting that we change our attitude by a simple exercise in will power? No, it is not merely a conscious decision to arbitrarily change our attitude. Getting from “*I have to...*” to “*I want to...*” involves appreciating aspects of the work that coincide with our own best interests and our own personal goals and aspirations. This is the essence of *enlightened self-interest* discussed above.

Getting from “*I have to...*” to “*I want to...*” is not enough. We have long known that in the area of helping people in being successful at making changes – in actually making improvements and/or doing things differently – a public statement of intent is an important step along the way. People who state out loud, in the presence of others, that they are going to undertake something or are going to accomplish something are more likely to actually get it done. Making commitments to do, or accomplish, something, and expecting others to make commitments as well is an important attribute of an environment in which performance goals are achieved.

A coach can help cultivate this environmental attribute by directly encouraging public affirmation on the part of others and by incorporating this in his or her own personal behavior. Modeling the behavior might include:

- On occasion, publicly verbalize the reasons for wanting to undertake a particular task.
- In defining the reasons identify the value of the work to the company and its clients and customers.

-
- Explain the manner in which the completion of this work will contribute to personal goals – not the performance goals that the company may have set.

Individual Responsibility for the Success of the Business:

The concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM) advocate that all individuals within the company ought to be intently focused on the real business needs of the company's clients and customers. In explaining TQM, some even say that we should become partners with our clients and customers in doing everything we can to help their businesses be successful. Why shouldn't we apply the same philosophy for our own organization? That is, doing everything we can to ensure the success of *our* company.

Some suggest that we adopt the attitude that each individual in the company should personally *take on a responsibility for the success of the business*.²⁹ It is one thing for the concept to be advocated in business literature; it is quite another to make it happen in our company. To make it happen, each individual in the company must make the decision to take on some measure of personal responsibility for the success of the business.

Getting over the hurdle of *enlightened self-interest* helps. Once people begin to live in accordance with the concept of enlightened self-interest, it is not a big jump for them to begin assuming responsibility for the success of the business. Without belief in the concept of enlightened self-interest, failures, lost opportunities and little glitches that might compromise the quality of the work product have no personal significance. Those little things that compromise the success of the company take on significance to individuals only if they are discovered by others, and chances are that discovery will not occur.

²⁹ What Peter Block, in his book, The Empowered Manager, calls "being our own authority."

When individuals know that the success of the business also means their personal success, they will not accept failures, they will make opportunities, and they will repair those “little glitches” on their own.

They do this on their own authority because they have assumed personal responsibility for the success of the business. They are committed to the vision and goals of the company and they are working for their own success as well.

A good coach encourages and models this behavior of taking on a personal responsibility for the success of the business. The coach must communicate their personal expectation and that of the company that individuals and teams take on personal responsibility for the success of the business. From time to time the coach should also model the desired behavior by ensuring that others understand the reasons for the coach’s personal stake in the success of the company and the coaching endeavor. By so doing, the coach is modeling what it means to be committed and is asking for the commitment of others.

In many situations a coach uses these attributes of an environment that encourages commitment in two ways. First, a coach is responsible for creating a working environment that builds commitment among those receiving coaching. Second, in many coaching situations the coach is also helping an individual or team to learn about their responsibilities of building commitment within their teams and their company. Therefore, in this second perspective, a coach is modeling the commitment building techniques so that they can be learned and applied by those being coached.

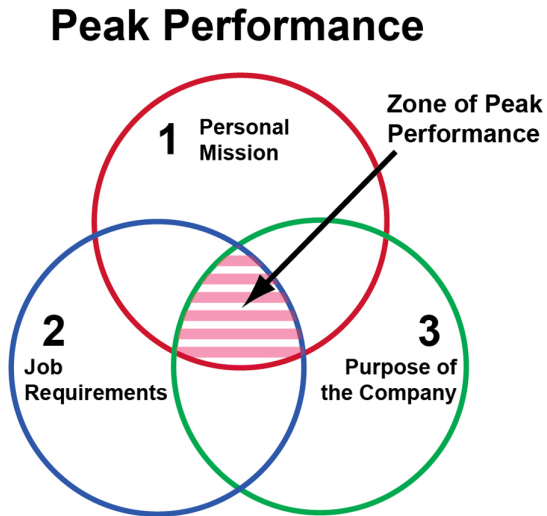
Using the Concepts of Peak Performance

The purpose of coaching is the accomplishment of specified goals through performance improvement. The goals vary in individual coaching situations, but the one constant is performance improvement. A coach and the recipient(s) work

together to improve performance by building commitment and expanding competencies. In a real way what we are requiring of the recipient(s) is *change* – change through personal growth, learning, and application of that learning. Change is a difficult thing and is greatly facilitated through commitment.

In this context commitment is part of providing some answers to the questions, “Why should I go through the difficulties of personal change?” and “What’s in it for me?”

In 1986 Charles Garfield wrote a book entitled Peak Performers that reflected 18 years of research on people who were top achievers.³⁰ One of Garfield’s concepts that is useful for coaches in working with others to cultivate commitment is his concept of the zone of peak performance. With apology for some over simplification, Garfield’s thesis is: *truly exceptional performance most frequently occurs when there is congruence among: (1) what an individual is most passionate about, (2) that person’s actual job responsibilities and, (3) the mission and purpose of the organization of which he or she is a part.* With only slight modification to Garfield’s own original diagram,³¹ a graphic representation of the zone of peak performance concept might look like this.



³⁰ Charles Garfield: Peak Performers, New York, William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986.

³¹ See page 278 of Garfield’s book. He used the term “organizational environment” for circle three and his three circle model was turned so that circles one and two were at the top and circle three was at the bottom.

Taken as a whole, Garfield's work supports the notion that commitment is extremely important in peak performance. One interpretation of Garfield's work might be that one way to assist in building commitment is to ensure that individuals and teams fully understand the vision, goals and direction of the company, how their job responsibilities contribute to the success of the business, and how both of those coincide with their own personal mission. This model constitutes good direction for coaches in their role of building commitment.

Expanding the Zone of Peak Performance

Many times increasing the amount of peak performance is one of the specific challenges that a coach faces – helping an individual or team toward excellent performance in new areas of responsibility. By taking the concept of peak performance a step or two further, a coach can use these concepts to help increase the opportunities for peak performance.

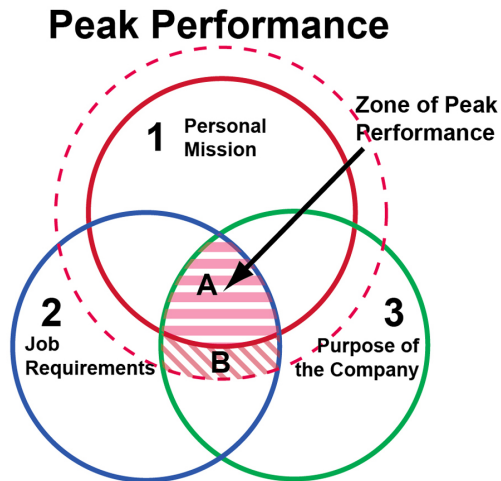
There are at least two ways of expanding the zone of peak performance that are fairly straightforward. The first of these two is to help the person or team better understand their personal mission and to find ways to expand this personal mission to include more. This is a task that is performed quite often by a coach. A coach is in a unique position to identify those things about which an individual or team is truly enthusiastic (their *personal mission*) and to suggest additional items that might also excite the passion of those being coached.

This is an instance in which the coach's experience really comes into play. The coach must be able to see those functions and work related responsibilities that are truly exciting to those receiving coaching, and be able to suggest other functions that might also be exciting. These new functions may well be similar or related to ones presently enjoyed, or they may be functions that require many of the same competencies that the individual(s) currently enjoy exercising. Fear of trying

something new and being *comfortable* in present responsibilities often inhibits a person from trying new things. A coach can facilitate personal growth into new areas by helping individuals acquire new competencies that will enable them to be successful in performing new functions and tasks. Facilitating personal growth can also come from providing *safe* practice opportunities in which a person can experiment with new tasks and functions without dire consequences for initial imperfections in performance.

This action to expand the zone of peak performance by extending individual horizons so that additional interests are included in their personal mission can be graphically presented using the peak performance diagram. The new diagram, shown here, reflects an expanded arena for personal mission (circle one) and a resulting increase in the number of tasks in the job description that are now included in the personal mission.³²

It is a good idea for the coach to reinforce the accomplishment reflected in this diagram by ensuring that everyone understands the following:



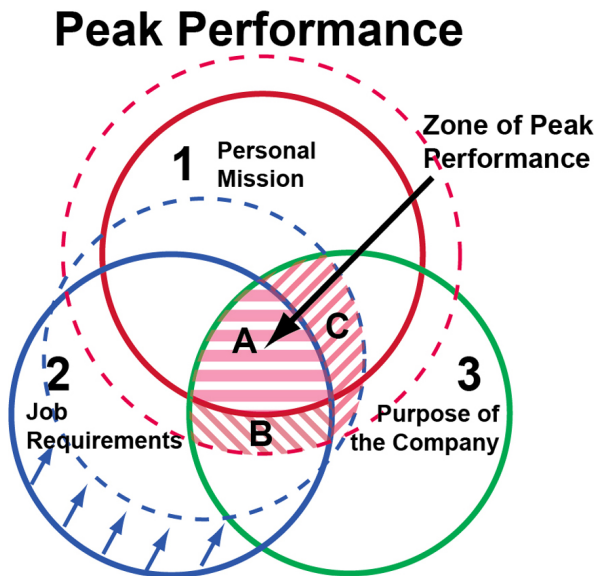
- The extent to which the improved performance is beneficial to accomplishment of company goals (that is, the increased overlap between circles two and three);
- The contribution that the expanded capabilities and improved performance can make to the value and promota-

³² Represented by the shaded area labeled “B.”

bility (or marketability) of the individual (this helps answer the question, “What’s in it for me?”);

- The increased personal enjoyment and reward experienced by the individual(s) by virtue of having more of their job responsibilities included within their personal mission – the things about which they are truly enthusiastic, maybe even passionate (increased overlap between circles one and two).

The second approach a coach can take to expanding the zone of peak performance is through facilitating an effort to modify the job requirements for an individual or the challenges assigned to a team to more closely coincide with their existing (and/or expanded) personal mission. When a coach is successful in working with people to tailor individual job requirements and/or team assignments the diagram showing this result might look like this:



In this situation the job requirements are changed – new ones added and others subtracted – to gain a greater overlap between circles one and two.³³ The items in the personal mission

³³ Represented by the shaded area labeled “C.”

have not changed, but the tasks and functions in the job requirements have, so circle two moves to have a greater overlap with circle one. Once again, this results in an expansion of the zone of peak performance and creates benefits to the company and to the individual or team.

Summary

The fact that many people consider building commitment to be a difficult task has been mentioned previously in this book. This chapter provides two additional perspectives that a coach can use in the important and difficult work of building commitment. The first perspective is that of the work environment and the various attributes that can encourage commitment. The second perspective is performance (again) and the factors that are important to cultivating peak performance.

Creating and nurturing a commitment supporting work environment and consciously working toward greater overlap among the personal mission and job requirements of those receiving coaching, and the purpose of the company can significantly amplify a coach's success in building commitment.

Chapter Six

6

Working with Competencies

Creating a Coaching Culture

Creating a Coaching Culture

Working with Competencies

Chapter four, *Performance Coaching*, presents a model that suggests a coaching approach that is responsive to the needs of those who are being coached. The model simplifies matters (as most models do) in identifying the two major areas for coaching assistance as commitment and competencies. Chapter four also addresses some of the basics of coaching to build commitment and to expand competencies. Chapter five, *Commitment: From Concept to Reality*, describes additional coaching activities that help build commitment. This chapter provides further materials on coaching to expand competencies.

Competency Categories

In a given coaching initiative it is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that the competencies in need of attention are identified and addressed in order to facilitate performance improvement. The beginning point must be an understanding of the nature of competencies. The root word, *competent*, is defined as possessing the knowledge, judgment, strength, and/or skill needed to perform an indicated action. In the context of business, *competencies* are the functions, tasks, and skill areas that need to be performed and/or applied in order to accomplish specified goals.

Given the diversity of the industrial landscape that makes up our global economy, there are thousands of competencies that are applied by individuals in order to achieve the collective business goals of companies around the world. It is neither practical nor possible to list all of the competencies that might be candidates for coaching attention. However, it is possible to suggest and define a number of general competency categories.

ries. These categories can be used by a coach as a starting place in determining the specific competencies that need to be addressed in helping a particular individual or team to improve their performance.

In any coaching engagement a coach must look at competencies from at least two different perspectives. The first of these is the perspective of the individual or team that is receiving the coaching assistance. The second is the perspective of the company, or organization, of which that individual or team is a part. A coach must examine both *organizational competencies* and *individual competencies* in order to determine what competencies the recipient needs to work on to be successful in their job responsibilities. Reviewing the organizational competencies helps the coach identify the functions and skills that are most important to the company in achieving its strategic business goals. This also helps the coach begin to understand the overall functional context in which the recipient(s) will be applying their individual competencies. Reviewing the various categories of individual competencies assists the coach in being thorough in identifying all of the competency areas of a particular individual or team that are in need of some improvement.

Organizational Competencies

Just as individuals are (or are not) competent, companies either do well or they get bested by their competition. Companies need to have a certain collection of functional capabilities, resources, methodologies, information, organizational structure and the like to perform well against the competition and accomplish their goals. Companies must have the correct, and constantly up-to-date set of organizational competencies required to produce the products and/or services to serve their customers and clients.

The objective of the coach in reviewing organizational competencies is to gain an understanding of the specific types of

competencies most needed by the company in order to achieve its strategic business goals. This will assist a coach in helping the recipient(s) to apply their individual competencies in ways that are valuable to the company. There are several steps that a coach should take in this review process. The first step is a careful examination of the vision, purpose, goals, objectives, and strategies of the company. The second is to sketch out the relationships and contributions that the job responsibilities of the recipient individual or team have to the accomplishment of the company's purpose, etc. With this knowledge the coach is now ready to review the various categories of organizational competencies and to begin to identify the requirements that the company has for competencies within these categories.

There seem to be just over a dozen groups of competencies that are required (in varying degrees) by almost all companies in order to successfully achieve their goals. Of course, each company must then apply individual talents and other resources toward the provision of the specific combination of organizational competencies that they require. To facilitate the coach's review of the company's requirements for specific organizational competencies a set of competency groupings is suggested below:

- Direction and Strategy
- Growth and Renewal
- Product Development
- Sales
- Production
- Communication
- Administration and
and Production Support
- Customer Satisfaction
- Planning and Implementation
- Marketing
- Decision Support Systems
- Resource Management
- Fiscal Management
- Performance Improvement
Quality

Direction and Strategy: In this group are organizational competencies that relate to the manner in which the strategic direction of the company is formulated and managed at the top levels of the company. Obviously, this competency group

is very much related to customer satisfaction, decision support systems and a number of other competency groups described below.

Customer Satisfaction: The organizational competencies that form this category relate to cultivating an intense customer focus in all facets, and at all levels, of the company. This group of competencies establishes and perpetuates a company mindset that is always focused on meeting the needs of customers and clients in ways that are perceived as adding more value than the competition.

Growth and Renewal: There are a number of functions that are needed to pursue the company's desired growth strategy whether it is rapid, aggressive growth or not. Also, there is the issue of company renewal – keeping an eye on the continuing viability and freshness of the company's mission, products and services in light of emerging technologies and the changing needs of customers and clients. Renewal is an easy competency category to forget when a company is doing well, and easier still to put aside when a company is not doing well. However, these are the competencies that make companies into long-term industry leaders.

Planning and Implementation: A company's abilities to collect and analyze data, and to formulate and evaluate alternative plans for accomplishing its chosen strategies are essential for continued success. So too are the company's abilities and capacities for actually implementing the selected plans successfully. Managing change and aligning the organizational culture in support of the company's goals and strategies are also among the competencies in this category.

Product Development: There is a wide range of specific organizational competencies and individual attitudes and skills in this grouping. The accomplishment to which this category of competencies is related is that of creating the product research and development, and first-to-market production capabilities

needed for continuing success in a highly competitive marketplace.

Marketing: This category is one that requires the coordination of many different interrelated organizational competencies. The accomplishment to which this group relates is to create, and aggressively pursue on a continuing basis, the organizational capability to be insightful and remarkably successful in the formulation, implementation, and management of marketing and sales activities. Implied in this category is the notion that most sales activities should be pursuant to a carefully constructed marketing plan that strategically focuses the company's attention on the needs of the company's customers and clients, and the realities of the competitive marketplace for maximum profitability and growth.

Sales: Products and services need to be sold to customers and clients in order for a company to meet its revenue and profitability goals. Though linked strongly to customer satisfaction, product development, marketing and production, there are a number of organizational competencies that are specific to sales. There are also a number of sales-specific individual talents and skills that are required for success in a company's sales efforts.

Decision Support Systems: Like administration and production support, this competency category supports almost all of the others. Proper planning, implementation, and continuing management of all company initiatives require lots of good information provided to appropriate people on a timely basis in a very usable format. Identifying and gathering the correct information and creating a management information system that has these characteristics is the desired result of this group of competencies.

Production: This category of organizational competencies is the one that varies the most from company to company. It can also be the largest, most diverse group of competencies.

Obviously, the competencies in this category will vary widely from industry to industry, but examples might include: manufacturing, service delivery, engineering, process design, methodology development, transportation, cost management, low cost manufacturing, and many more.

Resource Management: Maybe not entirely separate from the production set of competencies are the competencies required to identify, obtain, deploy and utilize all of the resources that are needed by the company. The extent to which the company manages its resources (including its human resources) effectively and efficiently can constitute formidable competitive advantages. In addition to the traditional purchasing, inventory, and control functions the category of resource management now includes competencies such as supply chain management, and outsourcing.

Communication: Another group of competencies that supports many others is communication. The communication competencies provide the vehicles through which: goals and strategies are made real to the work force; employees are empowered; ideas are traded; and the company maintains relationships with its customers, investors, and the public. Without these competencies there would be no commitment to the accomplishment of company goals and no individual commitment to personal efforts required to achieve those ultimate goals.

Fiscal Management: The procurement, leverage, management, and tracking of the financial resources of the company form a set of competencies essential to success and the accomplishment of company goals. Billing systems also support production and sales. And, the manner in which expenses are captured, tracked, allocated, and paid are important for profitability and in the determination of the incremental contribution of product and service lines and business units to the overall goals of the company.

Administration and Production Support: This category of competencies includes a number of administrative systems and processes (e.g., human resources, compensation and benefits, training and education, legal, etc.) that impact and support the performance of individuals. The aggregate performance of individuals, of course, constitutes the performance of the company as a whole; therefore anything that supports the productivity of individuals is of great value to the company.

Performance Improvement and Quality: This category of organizational competencies is based on the recognition that continuous improvement is needed in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes within the company. Without continuous improvement any company will be outstripped by its competitors. Administrative processes and production processes are both addressed in this group, as are both the process aspects and the attitudinal shifts required to be successful in significantly improving the performance of the company.

All of the individual and company efforts in the area of quality are also included in this category. The actual and perceived quality of a company's products and services is one of the primary ingredients in the value placed upon those products and services by customers and clients. Therefore, quality is one of the cornerstones of company competitiveness, profitability and growth.

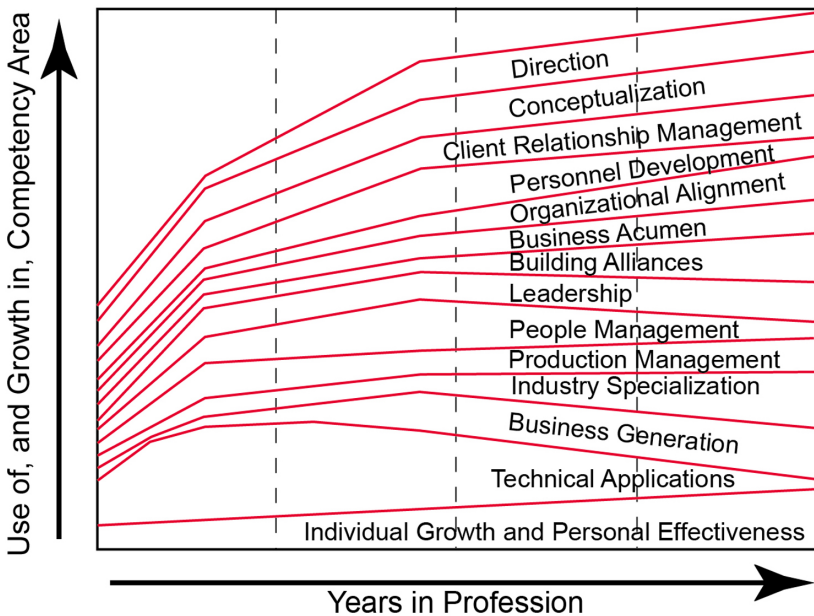
Individual Competencies

Once the coach has a good understanding of the types of competencies that are most important to the success of the company, it is time to take a close look at the competencies that are needed by the particular individual or team in need of coaching. The coach must closely examine the individual competencies that are required in order to fulfill the job responsibilities or other company-assigned challenges and com-

pare those with the individual competencies actually possessed by those being coached.

The *Career Development Model* presented in graphic form here illustrates a relatively simple concept. People begin their work careers with at least a minimum measure of proficiency in some of the competencies in each of the essential competency categories, then add new competencies and grow in their proficiency in these competencies over time. Later in their career, as people begin to gravitate to one specialization or another (e.g., engineering, management, sales, leadership, R&D, etc.), some competencies continue to grow whereas proficiency in others may decrease from disuse.

Career Development Model



Hopefully, at any given juncture in their career path, people have the correct blend of competencies and proficiencies from each of the competency categories to perform their job responsibilities successfully. The model depicted above presents only one snapshot of many possible pictures showing the relative emphasis on the competency categories. This one is

indicative of a person who began concentrating on a number of the leadership related competencies in the later half of their career. Another picture could show continued emphasis in the technical and/or production management aspects of the business.

The categories of individual competencies shown in the model and listed below are a good place for the coach to begin a review of the particular competencies needed by an individual or team.

- Individual Growth & Personal Effectiveness
- Business Generation
- People Management
- Building Alliances
- Organizational Alignment
- Client Relationship Management
- Technical Applications
- Industry Specialization
- Production Management
- Leadership
- Business Acumen
- Personnel Development
- Conceptualization
- Direction

Individual Growth & Personal Effectiveness: The platform from which all other individual competencies are built and sustained is a collection of personal effectiveness competencies. Many of the competencies, skills, knowledge areas and attributes included in this category are intensely personal. They include self concept, interpersonal relationships, life balance, and continuous learning. Others that are less personal also contribute to personal effectiveness. They include: time management, personal organization, computer use and applications, perceptual objectivity, basic communication, assertiveness, and the social graces.

Technical Applications: This category can be very large because it contains any and all of the technical skills applicable to a specific industry, company or job. People who work in the technical and/or production spectrum (rather than management) may need quite a number of competencies in the technical applications category.

In addition to the industry, or company, specific technical competencies, there are some more general competency areas that tend to be more generally required. These include: research methods, writing skills, platform skills, facilitation techniques, negotiation and others.

Industry Specialization: This competency area relates to the continued cultivation and application of specialized knowledge about the industry of which the company is a part. In some cases it will also include knowledge about other industries that may be served by the products and services produced by the company. This type of specialized industry knowledge is a very important part of a number of types of jobs within many companies. Obviously, this category of competencies is valuable to those who might be in marketing or sales, but it is also valuable to those who contribute to setting direction and formulating strategy. These competencies can also be useful to people who have positions higher up in the manufacturing, engineering, and R&D fields.

Business Generation: Both marketing and selling are included in the list of organizational competencies. People in a number of different types of jobs (more than purely sales or marketing positions) need business generation competencies. In addition to various levels of understanding of both marketing and sales principles and concepts there are a variety of other competency areas included in this category. Many of these competencies and skills can be applied inside the company with “internal clients” as well as outside the company with customers and clients. Some of the competencies with multiple uses include: networking, positioning, understanding of served industries, and a broad knowledge of products and services.

Production Management: At the most general level everyone needs the competencies in this category. It is not only those who have positions in manufacturing. Anyone who can benefit from project management – that is the ability to move

a project along from inception to completion – has need of some of these competencies. Getting things done on time and on budget is what these competencies are all about. People with responsibility for complex and involved projects have a greater need for skills in this group.

Even with relatively simple projects all of the following competency areas are valuable: designing an approach to the project and specifying how the work is to be done; estimating the amount of work involved and the costs associated with completing the work; staffing and keeping people focused on the work; coordination with other business units; controlling the scope, budget and progress of the project; quality control; process improvement; capturing ideas for continuing improvement; communicating the value of the work to internal and/or external clients; documentation of deliverables; review and assessment; and institutionalization of improved methods.

People Management: Whether a person works in a command and control work environment or one in which empowerment is the norm, people management skills are useful at all levels within the company and high proficiency in these skills is mandatory in many job positions. The competencies in this category can be divided into two major subcategories: *supervising and managing others* and *group and team leadership and participation*. These days, just about everyone needs the competencies to work effectively as a member (or the leader) of a group or team. As for supervising and managerial competencies, certainly everyone in a supervisory or managerial position needs them, but others not in those positions can sometimes profit from them too. Delegation, providing effective feedback, building commitment, participative management, enabling others and empowerment, and coaching skills are a few of the competencies representative of this category.

Leadership: There is a continuing debate (or at least an ongoing discussion) about the difference between management and leadership; this also includes the question of what consti-

tutes true leadership. One persuasive view is that there are opportunities for leadership at many levels and in many divisions within a company. Leadership is not just for the CEO. There are many needs for leadership qualities and behaviors in a number of positions throughout the company. Leadership is about setting direction, understanding what it takes to cultivate exceptional performance, and managing the business variables that contribute to profitability and growth. The competencies included in *people management*, *business acumen*, and *direction* categories are also needed by leaders. The direction competencies are especially important at the higher levels of leadership.

Building Alliances: This competency group has been around for a long time, however it is only in the last generation that it has come to be recognized and valued. Various types of business alliances are extremely valuable to companies in opening new markets, increasing the channels to market, providing better service to customers and clients, supply chain management and a number of other vehicles to increase quality, value, growth, and profitability.

There are many types of alliances ranging from informal cooperation to merger, and the people who can find, create, and maintain balanced and valuable alliances are important to a company's continuing success. Alliance competencies are obviously necessary to individuals and teams in the corporate development department, but they are also valuable to anyone looking at low cost manufacturing, outsourcing, supply chain management, and marketing. Many of the competencies associated with building alliances can be readily applied within a company as well. Ask the leader of any major business unit about the value of cooperation and coordination with other business units within the same company.

Business Acumen: Business acumen is not one of those innate abilities like raw intelligence, or, to a lesser degree, com-

mon sense.³⁴ Neither is it something that is magically awarded at the completion of an MBA program. A good MBA program certainly helps, and so does intelligence, but business acumen is something that must be cultivated through study, hard work and experience. There are a number of subcategories that are worth mentioning; they include: business ethics, economics, industry and market area knowledge, information management systems, management systems, strategic planning, forecasting, change management, and others.

With knowledge and skills in these areas and talent at being able to identify relationships and discern trends, a person is on their way to cultivating business acumen. This is a complex category of competencies and it is easy to see why the business acumen competencies are important to those who contribute to the leadership and direction of the company.

Organizational Alignment: In chapter three, *The Nature of Performance*, the topic of alignment is discussed as one of the effectiveness factors that contributes to performance. In this regard organizations are similar to individuals – everyone and everything in the company needs to be aligned toward the accomplishment of the company’s strategic goals. Individuals and teams that possess the competencies to help align the purpose, resources, functional systems, organizational structure, policies and procedures, and culture of the company are extremely valuable.

The stages involved in making organizational alignment happen include assessment, design, implementation, evaluation and the additional competency of managing organizational change. Obviously, additional competency areas such as analysis, interpersonal relationships, project management and others will also be utilized to complement the competencies in this category.

³⁴ Common sense can be cultivated if one pays attention to the many lessons that life offers us on a daily basis.

Personnel Development: Another very valuable set of competencies is that which contains those required to teach and develop other people. All managers and leaders need some of these competencies to one degree or another, but they can also be applied by those outside of the ranks of management. These natural teachers can be found in most companies. They are the people who are paired up with people new to a job who can *show them the ropes* and help others *get up to speed* quickly.

The competency areas within this category can include recruiting, facilitating on-the-job learning, coaching and counseling, tailoring work assignments for individual development, individual development planning, mentoring, and succession planning, to name a few.

Client Relationship Management: One of the hot three letter acronyms these days is CRM – Client (or Customer) Relationship Management. There are books and courses on CRM³⁵, there are CRM systems, there are CRM expos. In addition to a heavy dose of project management skills a person who would be proficient in client relationship management must be able to cultivate a good understanding of the client's industry, business environment, vision, and strategic business goals. With those basics, and using wonderful communication skills, a good client relationship manager must also build the trust of the client, be responsive in terms of products and services that add value, cultivate client loyalty and obtain quality feedback from the client.

Client relationship management competencies are needed by those in sales and marketing, and by many others in a wide variety of job positions. Just about anyone from the CEO on down who represents the company in some way to a client or

³⁵ An example of one of the better books is that written by David A. Po-Chedley: Client Relationship Management published by Human Resource Development Press, Inc., Amherst, MA, 2001. David's company, Cambridge Consulting, also has a course to help people learn CRM skills.

a vendor needs some measure of client relationship management competencies. As in the case of many of the other major competency categories, CRM competencies can be utilized with *internal clients* as well – that is other departments, groups and teams within the company that rely on the work that your group does and/or provide support to your group.

Conceptualization: The collection of competencies in this category may be more closely associated with a set of innate abilities than any of the other categories. Many of the specific competencies, skills, and knowledge areas that relate to conceptualization can be learned and applied, but it probably does help to have that innate ability to conceptualize and deal with concepts and abstractions.³⁶

Conceptualization competencies are very useful to those who are involved in helping to establish the vision and direction of the company. These competencies are also useful to anyone who has some creative latitude in designing strategies, approaches, initiatives, etc. for the company. Any person needing problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking and/or consequential thinking to do their job well is in need of some of the conceptualization competencies. Others who have as a part of their job responsibilities the design and development of systems, procedures, techniques, methodologies, processes, services and/or products can also benefit from the application of the competencies in this category.

Direction: The competencies related to providing overall direction for the company include defining and communicating that direction. Also included are a number of competencies needed to appreciate and analyze the marketplace and to identify and compose a variety of strategies for achievement. The required strategies include both internally directed strategies

³⁶ The “perceiving” scale of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator also indicates that there is a difference among people in that some have a preference for working with concepts and abstractions (those who are *intuitors*) and some do not (those who are *sensors*).

(such as continuous process improvement and recruiting the best and most appropriate talent) and strategies that are focused externally (such as strategic marketing and building institutional loyalty with clients).

These direction-focused competencies are certainly needed by those who occupy positions in the top leadership echelon. They are also very much needed by those who participate in the design of major company initiatives in support of company strategies. To a lesser degree these competencies are also required for people who need to be able to communicate company direction and strategic goals as a part of building commitment within the work force.

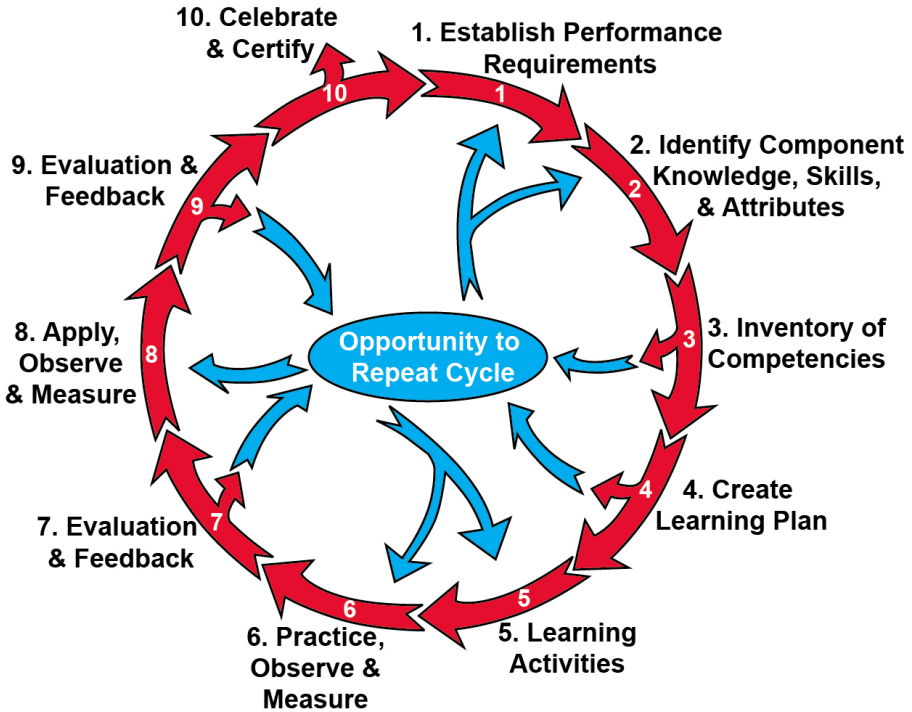
Summary

In this chapter two sets of competencies have been listed and briefly explained – one set of organizational competencies and one set of competencies that would apply to an individual and/or a team. These two competency sets can be used by the coach in the process of identifying the specific competencies that an individual or team needs to address in improving their performance. The competency identification process is described in chapter four in “part one” of the *Competency Cultivation Cycle*. These competency sets can be used as a sort of checklist in conjunction with an understanding of the job requirements of the position occupied by the coaching recipient(s) to assist in identifying the focus of the coaching endeavor.

The balance of the ten step *Competency Cultivation Cycle* treated in chapter four outlines a sound process for a coach to use in working with an individual or team in improving competencies needed to fulfill job requirements and accomplish company

goals. As a reminder and reinforcement, the diagram depicting that cycle is repeated below.³⁷

Competency Cultivation Cycle



³⁷ See chapter four for a more detailed explanation of the Competency Cultivation Cycle.

Chapter Seven



Creating a Coaching Culture

The Attributes of a Good Coach

Creating a Coaching Culture

Chapter Seven:

The Attributes of a Good Coach

Taking a page from my own book, so to speak, to determine the attributes of a good coach we should start by looking at the purpose of a coach and the functions that are required to accomplish that purpose. Trying to pare it down to very simple terms, coaching is a two-part process:

- Determining what kinds of improvements are required in the performance of an individual or team in order to better accomplish the goals and objectives that the individual or team shares with the organization of which they are a part
- Working with the individual or team to design and complete a program of building competencies and commitment to successfully achieve the specific performance improvements required

In this chapter we will concentrate on the *attributes* of a good coach – not the knowledge areas or skills – but the attributes. In chapter three attributes were described as neither knowledge nor skills, rather, more of a quality, special feature, or characteristic of an individual or team.

We will not be quite so literal in the treatment of attributes in this chapter, because the knowledge and skills of a coach are very important, interrelated, and deserve some mention. But attributes will be the main focus.

The Sixteen “Cs” of Coaching

The essential attributes of a good coach can be summed up in a list of sixteen items – all beginning with the letter “C.”

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Craving | 9. Charisma |
| 2. Character | 10. Chemistry |
| 3. Capability | 11. Concern |
| 4. Competence | 12. Confrontation |
| 5. Commitment | 13. Constructive |
| 6. Consistency | 14. Communication |
| 7. Constancy | 15. Career-oriented |
| 8. Credibility | 16. Change-focused |

Craving

The following statement is found in the Introduction to this book:

There are many areas of knowledge and skill that one must possess to be a good coach in either the athletic or business context, but the essential fundamental is that *burning desire* a coach must have to identify, and help others realize, their individual potential.

At the beginning of it all, a good coach must have a burning desire, or *craving*, to assist others in improving their performance, usually in some type of vocationally related endeavor. In keeping with the peak performance concepts presented in chapter five of this book, if a person truly has a passion for this type of work, he or she is much more likely to perform better as a coach than a person who is not enthusiastic about coaching work.

There is another reason why having a craving for coaching is essential. Sometimes coaching is not at all easy. There are times when finding just the right break-through to gain commitment is very difficult. Without a passion for the work a coach may not be able to get through to the individual or team. And, having the passion certainly helps with the tenacity

needed to find the right key to unlocking the potential of people.

The next six items in the list are interrelated. In chapter five the need for every coach to cultivate *personal trustworthiness* in order to build a culture of mutual trust is discussed. There, and here again, this brings us to Character, Capability, Competence, Commitment, Consistency, and Constancy. All are required in establishing a coach's trustworthiness.

Character

A coach is a person whom others must trust enough to plainly admit their faults and inadequacies and then discuss them openly in order to begin the process of performance improvement. This requires a high level of personal trustworthiness on the part of the coach and a coach's personal character and integrity are big parts of this. Character is about who you are as a person, and it has everything to do with the standards of fairness and ethical principles that guide the coach in their actions.

Without very obvious ethical principles and standards of fairness a coach will not be able to cultivate mutual trust within the coaching relationship and will be ineffective.

Capability

Up until now we have skipped right over the topic of *capability* in talking about the ingredients of performance. That is because most people tend to group capability together with competence. But, in truth, they are different and distinct. One must have capabilities, in addition to competencies, for effective performance. Capabilities get overlooked because they are more or less assumed. You sort of have to have them in order to apply your competencies and perform.

Strictly speaking, capabilities are those *basic* human attributes you need to perform. They are not the competencies that you cultivate through acquiring knowledge, building skills, and practicing the application – they are the more basic building blocks of performance. Intelligence, physical strength, common sense, and manual dexterity are just a few examples. Certainly some of these can be improved, to one degree or another, through exercise and practice, but in many instances, so it seems, people either have these capabilities or they don't. Other capabilities that are important for a coach to have include: situational awareness,³⁸ conceptualization ability, self-control, critical thinking (discernment), judgment, perceptual objectivity,³⁹ logical and rational thinking, energy, stamina, ability to handle complexity, clarity (ability to explain things very clearly and in ways that others understand), tolerance for ambiguity, emotional resilience, consequential thinking (seeing the consequences of actions beyond the present time), mental agility, creative and divergent thinking, and imagination.

Competence

In a coaching relationship competence relates to the skills of the coach and how well those skills are applied in their coaching activities. In order to cultivate mutual trust people must have confidence in their coach's ability to perform their coaching job well. People must believe that a coach has all of the needed coaching skills and also the right collection of industry, business, organizational, and/or technical knowledge to be valuable in the coaching process.

³⁸ There is a three letter acronym (TLA) that I sometimes use to describe those who lack situational awareness. I call this condition *situational awareness deficiency* or SAD.

³⁹ Perceptual objectivity is extremely important for coaches. It is the ability to see things as they really are and not as one wants them to be – for example, to see and evaluate performance objectively and accurately and not as others may have rated it in a performance review.

Competence as explained above is mostly about having the correct collection of knowledge and skills and being able to apply them. A good coach should have an additional attribute – that of being able to inspire confidence in others, and a part this is related to having, and demonstrating, the correct set of competencies. There is some measure of self-presentation ability involved in demonstrating competence, and this is an attribute that should be openly recognized as a positive feature.

There are many, many different combinations of competencies that could be required of a coach in particular situations. There are also more than a few basic competencies that a coach must possess in just about any coaching situation. At a minimum those basics would include: facilitation skills, enabling others and empowerment, individual development planning, mentoring (establishing and maintaining mentoring relationships), and most especially a very high degree of proficiency with all of the skills involved in the elements of the *competency cultivation cycle*.⁴⁰

As mentioned before, competence relates directly to the personal trustworthiness that a coach needs to be effective. People might trust a coach's character and believe that they have the best of intentions, but they must also believe that the coach can perform the work, or else the coach's personal trustworthiness is compromised.

Commitment

The personal commitment of the coach is a strong force within the coaching relationship, and without some demonstrable commitment the coach's personal trustworthiness is diminished. A coach's commitment is demonstrated through the enthusiasm with which they apply their craft and by the

⁴⁰ See the competency cultivation cycle model in chapter four on page 64.

manifestation of that *burning desire* to help people realize more of their human potential.

Consistency and Constancy

As fundamentally important as commitment is, it is sometimes difficult to quantify with precise measures. In assessing the commitment of a coach look for such things as:

- The enjoyment that a coach shows in working with individuals and teams in coaching relationships
- The **consistency** and **constancy** (*constancy* is consistency over a period of time) with which a coach achieves positive results in coaching assignments
- The sincerity that a coach manifests in his or her approach to coaching and their level of belief in the importance and value of coaching in performance improvement
- The tenacity demonstrated by the coach in attempting to find ways to help individuals and teams improve their performance, especially in difficult situations

These are all good indicators and there are a number of others. Another way to approach commitment is built from the observation that commitment is difficult to define and quantify, but people tend to know it when they see it. When assessing the commitment of a coach ask others who have had experience with that coach about the level of the coach's commitment. It is a simple approach and still has inherent difficulties about the definition of *commitment*, but it is good information.

The additional dimension of consistency is that a coach should have a set of standards that are objective and fair and should also apply that set of standards in a fair and uniform manner. This consistency of application should be apparent throughout any particular coaching engagement and across all coaching endeavors.

Credibility

Credibility is one of the most valuable assets that a coach can have. A coach must be believable – or credible. Credibility is one of the essential ingredients in helping people through the personal change required in performance improvement. In dealing with just about any kind of change or issue people need (1) knowledge, (2) competencies, (3) motivation and/or commitment, and (4) belief. In addressing the first three of these a coach can provide information; conduct skills training; reward, reinforce and otherwise build commitment. To help people believe that change is possible the coach must first be personally believable.

One way in which a coach can be believable is for the coach to have accomplished great things. A track coach who has been a great track athlete – for example, one who has run a mile in under four minutes – has instant credibility when he looks a young athlete in the eye and says, “I believe you can do it and here’s how.” An executive coach has points toward credibility when recipients of their coaching in previous initiatives have demonstrated significant personal growth and gone on to accomplish great things. And, there are additional ways in which credibility can be demonstrated and maintained.

All seven of the forgoing C-words used to describe the essential attributes of a coach contribute to credibility. *Craving, character, capability, competence, commitment, consistency* and *constancy* are all a part of one’s credibility. And, there are more as well. The level of personal self-confidence that is demonstrated by the coach contributes much to credibility. Having good business acumen and being able to apply it also builds credibility. The manner in which a coach treats confidences and deals with potential conflicts of interest also builds and maintains credibility. If the truth be known there are probably not many things that do not relate either directly or indirectly to credibility. This said, it is important for the coach to treat credibility as an item that must be monitored, cultivated throughout every coaching

initiative, and carried forward, in tact, to the next coaching endeavor.

Charisma

The first question that one might ask about charisma is, “Is it really necessary for a coach to have charisma?” Maybe not absolutely necessary, but it sure helps. Charisma is the ability to inspire enthusiasm and/or interest. A coach with a bit of charisma is more likely to get off to a faster start because that charismatic element is attractive. And, getting started in a coaching relationship and having some positive successes early in the process reinforces the value of the process. For coaching to work the coach and the recipient must first establish some sort of personal relationship and it will more often take a bit longer in the case of a coach with no charisma at all.

Charisma may be a little like commitment in that it is difficult to quantify with specific measures. It is more one of those “I know it when I see it” kind of things. However, look for *content* and *substance*. It is hard to be charismatic without standing for something – you can be charming without substance, but not charismatic. *Confidence* is another indicator. Charisma is attractive and people are not attracted to individuals who lack confidence in what they stand for. Personal magnetism, responsiveness and maybe at least a hint of spontaneity may be indicators as well. It is difficult to be charismatic without being present, engaged, and responsive to the people with whom you are working.

Charisma is all about inspiring others to action: sparking interest, generating enthusiasm, and making things happen. Try to imagine a successful coaching endeavor with a coach who lacks the ability to generate interest or enthusiasm. . .

Chemistry

No, a coach need not have had chemistry in high school or college. It might help if he or she is coaching people in the biotech industry, but that is not the issue here. Once again, this attribute is hard to define, but *chemistry* is the degree to which the coach and the recipient(s) get along and work together well. As the hackneyed saying goes, “It takes two to tango” and chemistry is the same. The chemistry is between at least two people; if a team is involved there are more. It is the relationship between the two (or more) that is the issue. More often than not there is sufficient chemistry between the coach and the recipient(s) for things to work well, but occasionally the chemistry is missing. Personally, I do not believe that there is anyone *at fault* for a lack of chemistry – it is just missing in some cases. The coach could be a wonderful coach and the recipient(s) could be top-notch as well, and still the requisite chemistry could be missing. And, you won’t know whether the chemistry is there until the two parties interact, because it is all about how individuals react to each other.

There are a few attributes in a coach you can examine that might predict improved chances for positive chemistry. Continued success in coaching indicates at least the *ability to establish trust* in personal relationships – a good prerequisite to chemistry. *Style flexibility* is a great attribute for a coach to have in any case, and a coach with good style flexibility will be able to cultivate good personal relationships with a broader range people with differing personality styles. Being *approachable* and valuing, and being able to cultivate, *camaraderie* are also good indicators of the ability to establish positive chemistry with others. If you add to that mixture a dash of *humility* you probably have a good recipe for chemistry.

Concern

Concern as used here includes, but means much more than, having a sincere positive regard for others as explained in chapter five. Caring and compassion are also included under the heading of concern. This means that a coach should not only want to help people realize more of their human potential, but a coach should also have true concern for the individual(s) receiving the coaching.

Coaching is about performance improvement and improving performance requires personal growth, and personal growth involves some level of change on an individual basis. Change can be a scary thing and many, if not most, people resist change. Coaches must be empathetic, if not sympathetic,⁴¹ to the feelings and difficulties experienced by the individuals that they coach.

When a coach is concerned, has compassion, and truly cares about those who receive their coaching, that coach will have a much better sense about when and how hard to push, when a person needs encouragement and reinforcement, or assistance in dealing with the stress of individual change. Each individual has a different capacity for change and a different set of things that they find stressful. So, coaching cannot be a formula that is applied uniformly in every situation – each coaching initiative is different. When a coach brings concern, caring, and compassion to their work they will be much better able to design, facilitate, and appropriately modify, a program of individual learning that really works for those they coach.

Coaching effectiveness can be improved when, in addition to possessing concern, caring and compassion, a coach has both

⁴¹ One of the major differences between empathy and sympathy is that in being empathetic one understands, or maybe even identifies with, the feelings of others. In being sympathetic one shows in some way that they share the feelings of others. In other words, you can be empathetic without ever expressing the depth of your understanding to anyone; sympathy would seem to require some form of expressing your compassion and/or understanding.

the ability and the inclination to share and express those traits in appropriate ways. Just like empathy and sympathy, having concern and expressing it are two different things. Traits that would improve the likelihood that a coach would be able to appropriately share concern, caring, and compassion include: concern for affiliation and a value for collegiality.

Confrontation

Confronting reality is extremely important in the coaching process, but confrontation without understanding and compassion is usually ineffective. That is why this confrontation attribute is purposely listed immediately after explanation of concern. This element of confrontation should perhaps be expressed as “compassionate confrontation.”

Years of experience in dealing with managers, management education, teams and the manner in which people work together in teams leads me to the conclusion that it must be human nature to dislike giving or receiving bad news. To most people the term “constructive feedback” is almost an oxymoron. Constructive feedback is providing someone with information about how something that they did could be improved. It seems that receiving feedback that we could have done better is so distasteful to most people as to be offensive and hurtful, and therefore not constructive at all. Perhaps it is this all to frequent defensive and negative reaction that discourages us from providing accurate feedback when it might be perceived as being the least bit negative.

Obviously, if the purpose of a coach is to improve performance, there has to be constructive feedback. A coach cannot help people improve their performance without appraising them of both the things they do well and the things they need to improve. Therefore, a coach must depart from the normal behavior of not providing accurate feedback about the need for performance improvement. And, to be effective, a coach

must possess skills for effectively conveying this constructive feedback in a way that it will be both heard and heeded by the recipient.

In a way, providing truthful and accurate feedback to individuals is part of the integrity of a coach. Integrity within the coaching relationship is telling the truth about what is happening and confronting reality. To successfully employ this ethic within the coaching relationship a coach must place a high value on candor, truth, and honesty. A coach must also value assertiveness and be skilled in applying assertiveness techniques in the context of coaching relationships.

A coach has a responsibility to provide truly constructive feedback, to discern and confront people with reality, and to share his or her most accurate and truthful assessment of people's work products and actions. All of these actions must be conducted in the context of concern and a real and demonstrated desire to help others improve their performance, realize more of their personal potential and accomplish the goals of the company.

Constructive

Some might overlook this item, because it is probably *assumed*. Obviously, a coach should be *constructive*. Nevertheless, we will include it here if for nothing more than completeness.

In most coaching situations there are at least a few instances in which the coach must provide observations and feedback to individuals and teams that they could be doing better – that there is “room for improvement.” This should be presented in a *constructive* manner. Unless the coach is, in fact, positive and constructive in presenting this much needed information, it will be received negatively and met with defensiveness.

Communication

Communication is the glue that holds everything together. Communication is also the only real vehicle that coaches have to get things done. As one might begin to appreciate from this book, a coach has many tools, models, and skills to apply – but they are all applied through some form of communication.

There are many specific communication *skills* in which a coach must be highly proficient, for example providing and positioning feedback, facilitation, explaining performance criteria, active listening, etc. But, there are also a few *attributes* related to communication as well. First and foremost, a good coach must have bias toward being communicative, and have an appreciation for the value and importance of communication in the coaching process. This is the fundamental attribute that will provide the impetus for a lot of hard work and concentration on the part of the coach to ensure that communication within the coaching endeavor goes well.

Other attributes that strongly influence communication are the degree to which a coach is expressive, animated and energetic. As we all know, in getting the right message across choosing the right words is the smallest part – that's only seven percent.⁴² Thirty-eight percent of effective communication comes from the voice; that would include pitch, tone, rate, and inflection. And, fifty-five percent is determined by how you look – your facial expressions, body posture, and other physical attributes. Certainly, some of these aspects of how you sound and how you look are skills that can be cultivated, but other aspects are attitudes and attributes – look for them in a good coach.

Another very important set of attributes and skills for a coach to have are those that pertain to listening. A coach must be a good listener. Throughout the coaching process the coach and

⁴² Peter Block, Flawless Consulting, University Associates, San Diego, 1981, p. 133.

the recipients must maintain a very effective dialog that provides the coach information about the understanding (or lack thereof) and progress on the part of the individual(s) receiving coaching. Also, there are usually a number of points within the coaching process at which the coach must gather information very important to the coaching endeavor from people other than the coaching recipient(s). This information is many times gathered by the coach through interview and/or discussion and effective listening. Communication is a two-way process. For a coach listening is the receiving part of that two-way process, and receiving information from recipients and others is essential in the coaching process.

Career-oriented

Even though much of the content of this book could be applied in other types of coaching, the focus of this book is performance-based coaching in the context of business or a vocation. A coach who performs in this arena should be primarily concentrating on the competencies and commitment that will contribute to the career development of the individual or team receiving coaching assistance. A good coach, then, would be very oriented toward helping people develop and advance in their chosen career.

Change-focused

A coach is, by the very nature of the coaching process, an agent of change. In some coaching initiatives, being a change agent is a major function for the coach. In other coaching initiatives the role of change agent may be less prominent, but it is always present and always important.

The process of personal growth is a process of change. This process is usually accompanied by a range of feelings that make it into an emotional roller coaster ride for the recipient(s)

of coaching. The ups and downs can include: fear, positive anticipation, anxiety, excitement, concern, hope, uncertainty, enthusiasm, disappointment, accomplishment and confidence. If the coach fails to recognize his or her role as a change agent and therefore does not pay attention to managing the change on a constant basis, this process of personal growth may well be compromised.

A good coach will view him- or herself as a change agent (this is an attribute) and will be well versed in the art of managing change (these are skills). A great coach will be sensitive to, and in constant touch with, the impacts of the personal growth process on those receiving coaching. A great coach will continuously facilitate the process of change while building commitment and expanding competencies.

Conclusion

In the beginning of this conversation about coaching the purpose was to encourage the extensive use of coaching as a means of improving individual and organizational performance and to accomplish individual and company goals and objectives. Clearly, our arena has been the world of work – a performance-based coaching model with a business orientation.

The models presented in this book are, for the most part, constructed around the elements of performance. And, the focus of coaching, as discussed in this book, is performance improvement – specifically the effectiveness and efficiency elements required for the accomplishment of work responsibilities.

Taken together, the models and text in this book provide an integrated approach that people who perform in a coaching role can use to identify the topics that are important for success in the coaching endeavor. A coaching process is also suggested for use in cultivating competencies and commitment.

This book is not designed as an in-depth treatment, rather as a “quick-read” that might be helpful to both experienced and beginning coaches alike in providing performance-based coaching. If companies do their part by establishing and cultivating a work environment in which coaching is valued and supported (*creating a coaching culture*) greater organizational accomplishment and individual self-actualization should follow.

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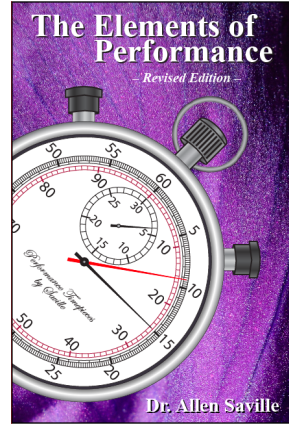
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