

Everyone Deserves a Coach

One's success and job satisfaction depends on a number of factors. The nature of the work, the work environment, the degree of fit between skills and job requirements, the corporate culture, and certainly the way an individual is managed. Another way to increase the likelihood of success would be the development of an internal mentoring relationship or working with an external coach.

Feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction on the job have a variety of causes. In the past I have written about the importance of making “deposits” in an employee's motivational I.R.A. account. These “deposits” take the form of providing Involvement, Recognition, and Appreciation to people, and have been shown time and again to be key drivers of employee satisfaction. Involvement stems from being well informed and part of a team, Appreciation is demonstrated through private thanks, and Recognition by public gratitude for a job well done.

Another aspect of satisfaction comes from performing work you enjoy doing within a company that shares your values. Understanding your values and behavioral style will enable you to select the “right” company and perform a job that plays to your strengths. It has been proven that such alignment leads to reduced stress and higher levels of performance.

Many companies now use validated instruments to assess behavioral styles. Use of such assessments enables a company to create job profiles and benchmarks which identify the characteristics of top performers in various job classifications. By comparing job candidates to these success profiles, we have found that our clients can increase their chances of hiring and promoting successfully.

The preceding discussion demonstrates that an understanding of ourselves is essential in achieving satisfaction and high performance on the job. In fact, such an understanding leads to happiness and satisfaction in all phases of our lives. But even armed with such knowledge, it's all too easy to fall into the “activity trap” – substituting the accomplishment of a lot of tasks for the directed effort necessary to accomplish the important ones. Focus and discipline are key ingredients in turning your understanding of what's important into a better reality.

First order change (focus only) tries to implement change by oneself. Like the typical New Year's resolution to become more physically fit, it almost always ends up back at the starting point. The second order of change adds an outside agent (focus and discipline). The outside agent creates accountability, assists in overcoming roadblocks, and provides support and reassurance – like a personal trainer would in the fitness example above.

When the desired change involves an organization or the individuals striving for success within it, the outside change agent could be a mentor or personal coach. The most successful athletes have understood for years that their physical prowess is only one part of the formula. A coach provides them with outside perspective, additional expertise, and maintains their focus. The same is true for the rest of us who get too easily wrapped up in the day-to-day; and as a result, lose sight of the bigger picture and what it takes to create the future we desire.

Unfortunately, many of us don't have the opportunity to develop a mentoring relationship on the job, nor have our managers always made the switch from command and control to a coaching and facilitating style. Even if we are lucky enough to have a manager who takes on the coaching role, we may be uncomfortable discussing our personal shortcomings. In this case, the void can effectively be filled by hiring a personal coach.

Your personal coach is committed solely to your success. The coach's success is measured in terms of your success - the continuous achievement of the predetermined goals you've identified as important. Day-to-day happenings on the job don't distract your coach from staying focused on helping you achieve your goals. A coach can draw upon their life experience, a successful career, and regular exposure to other successful people and organizations. Therefore, they are continually exposed to different approaches and ideas which can be shared with you to break through obstacles and bottlenecks.

The only constant in life is change. And we now know that using a change agent makes lasting change much more likely. An effective coach does not judge your actions or goals but facilitates their accomplishment. They can serve as advocate, confidant, caring listener, reality check, business advisor, or cheerleader depending upon the situation. Don't you deserve this type of support to attain the success you're capable of achieving?

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