

should I choose coaching or mentoring?

you will doubtless have heard at some point about coaching and mentoring both in a sporting context and business context. so what is the difference and why should you be interested?

definitions

- *coaching is a non-directive approach to facilitating the learning and development of another. (Myles Downey and various sources)*
- *mentoring is the transition of knowledge, thinking and experience from someone who has probably 'been there and done it' (various sources)*

so what?

coaching and mentoring are a cost-effective way of addressing issues such as stress, staff engagement, absenteeism, motivation, performance-management and work-life balance for people at all levels in an organisation.

The really good news is that embedding the key skills of *building relationships, asking effective questions, giving feedback and goal setting* is a way of ensuring that you do not need a coach, mentor or trainer to come into your organisation to solve every problem, as you will have developed teams of people who respond to challenges in a more positive way and take on responsibility for their actions.

benefits

- you are 55% more likely to complete your goals if you commit to someone else that you are going to do it (International Coaching Federation [ICF] 2011).
- engaged staff deliver 4 times the financial performance with an average 3.5 sick days less per year than disengaged staff (Gallup 2011).
- 35% of employers have reported stress-related absence has increased over the past year (CIPD 2010)
- 56% rated organisational change/restructuring as a top-three cause of work related stress. (CIPD 2010)

how?

yes, it does sound like a silver bullet, however there are several components of good coaching skills and mentoring programmes that allow individuals to reflect upon;

1. the way they learn and react to others
2. their personal preferences for communication
3. their own level of self-confidence (external), self-esteem (internal) and consequently self-belief
4. their own values system and whether that corresponds to the company's
5. how people develop trust through their belief in others
6. what motivates them

coaching, mentoring and sport

at this point, a word of caution if you have a sporting background, particularly as a sports coach. any experience of coaching a sport can give you an insight into performance improvement, however transferring these skills into business can result in confusion around the 'what to coach' technical skills (passing a ball, swinging a racket), and the 'how to coach' skills (relationship building, questioning, feedback, goal setting).

this is not to say that sports coaches do not use the latter, the question is; if a sports coach uses these skills, then what does a mentor do in sport?



post-coaching research programme

- 62.4% became better at goal-setting
- 60% improved their work-life balance
- 57.5% had lower stress
- 25.7% gained more income
- 33.3% found that their health and fitness improved

(international coaching federation 2011)

sport v business

having researched what experts, associations and laypeople consider to be the difference between the sport and business context of coaching and mentoring, I offer my opinion below:

coaches in sport;

- use the four key skills of relationship building, effective questioning, feedback and goal setting, plus other technical skills such as how to swing a racket to develop people's ability in their chosen sport.
- will be able to demonstrate an ability in the sport, although not necessarily to a higher level of performance than their client (pick an elite performer in sport – their coach often did not achieve such success)

coaches in business;

- use the four key skills in a non-technical, non directive approach to enable an improvement in awareness and performance.
- do not have to demonstrate any ability in the client's business and do not offer advice and guidance gained from experience.



mentors in sport

- use the same four key skills as a coach, but do not *have* to have any knowledge of the sport.
- are using mainly non-directive questioning mixed with some advice and guidance if they do have direct experience. cross-sport mentoring can be hugely beneficial.

mentors in business

- use the same four key skills but generally have knowledge of the business
- offer advice and guidance from experience

conclusion

if you want to find a coach or a mentor in sport or business, make sure you have a clear idea of what you expect from them first.

in business - ask a coach if they can help with your profit and loss account and they should say no! business coaches can help to accelerate business performance, but they do this by working with people, not balance sheets or sales figures, whereas mentors may be able to offer some insight.

in sport – ask a coach for technical help and you will get it, plus a whole lot more if they are a good coach. a mentor can assist with your own personal development but they may not have all the technical answers.

wctd is a coaching and training organisation. we coach leaders, managers and decision makers to enable them to improve their own performance and the performance of their business, particularly in times of change.

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