



Create A Coaching Culture: An Employee Engagement and Retention Imperative! ©

*“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters
Compared to what lie within us,”*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Increasingly, organizations are retaining executive coaches to support time-crunched managers to engage and retain high potential employees and top performers. Meanwhile, other employees struggle to capture the attention of busy managers who appear to have little time or knowledge of how to ignite their passion, dreams and goals. Discussions about goals typically center around a person’s performance - where they’ve met, exceeded or fell short of expectations. Even then, substantial discussions about performance rarely occur outside of the perfunctory yearly or bi-annual performance review.

Higher level conversations about a person’s career path and personal development goals have only recently begun in earnest in many organizations. Some companies use online career portals enabling employees to map out their career path and track progress on their goals. These systems are effective only if a manager meets regularly with each employee to understand how they can support them in their learning and development. Many managers feel ill equipped to coach employees on the subjective and intangible elements of their performance – their behaviour, personal interests, values and motivations.

Well *‘the times are a changing’* and the younger generation is driving the change.

The Millenials or Generation Y born after 1980 are asking managers to provide regular feedback and praise and show interest in them as people –not just cogs in the wheel. They want to know how they can add value and how their work relates to the organization’s goals. They want to talk about their needs and wants and how the manager can assist them in developing their career. It is imperative that organizations train managers how to engage this generation or they risk losing them.

Managers ask ‘how can I find the time to have these warm and fuzzy conversations when I barely have time to do my own work?’ Inspiring your team to be the best they can be is (or should be) one of the top 3 accountabilities of all managers. Coach-managers are disciplined with their time and practice the art of empowerment through delegation. They are committed to the process and believe they can make a difference in the lives of the people they manage.

I’ve heard many managers say ‘why bother coaching this generational group – they’ll just leave in 3 years to seek new opportunities.’ This thinking is short-sighted. The research shows that people leave their manager, not the organization. A manager can have a profound impact on

an individual's success. Managers who know how to leverage the talent of employees can fast track their development and personally benefit as their internal coach.

Developing coach-managers requires a shift in the attitude and behaviour of managers to commit to their own development. This demonstrates authenticity which fosters trust... a fundamental element of all effective coaching relationships. It's the old 'walk the talk' - you can't be a coach unless you've experienced what it's like as a coachee. '*Success on the outside begins within,*' Robin Sharma, *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*. Simply, you gain the right to guide others in their personal discovery process when you show you are committed to the same.

In addition to a commitment to personal growth, superior self-management and a genuine belief in your ability to influence and effect change, managers will need to learn the art and science of conversation; how to question, listen and give feedback that is well received and acted upon. Then they will need to learn how to hold staff members accountable for realistic and achievable goals that they have co-created. Lastly, they will need to believe that they can act as a staff member's internal advocate and cheerleader for their career development while holding them accountable for performing at a high level in their current role.

Creating a coaching culture in an organization takes time and the dedication of all managers at all levels. Coaching needs to be valued as a key leadership competency and an essential accountability for managers. Corporate compensation and recognition systems need to align with performance systems to elevate this important skill set with other leadership skills such as developing and implementing strategy and influencing stakeholders.

The demand for external executive coaches will continue. However, managers who act more coach-like with their teams will reap the rewards when inspired Millennials (and Boomers) stick around because someone values them as people and recognizes their contributions.

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