

Why Leaders Must Coach



By Michelle Braden

An



Leadership Resource

INTRODUCTION

We live in a fast-paced, ever changing, and complex world. As leaders we are constantly looking for more effective, efficient, and productive ways to push both ourselves and those that work with us. According to research recently published by Gallup, employee disengagement costs American organization up to **\$550 billion** in lost productivity per year¹. That's **\$2000 per employee** per year². It is clear to see from these numbers that the cost of disengagement and boredom among your employees is staggering. Even with jobs in jeopardy during tough economic times, employee engagement has not significantly increased and the reasons for the lack of engagement have not changed. Though strong leadership engagement is always a recommended prescription, in this case a more specific and coach-oriented style is needed.

Engagement results from the fulfillment of 12 universal human needs. And when those needs are met, workers are engaged⁴.

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THE BENEFITS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

5 researched-backed reasons why leaders must coach³:

1

The leader's sphere of influence significantly increases as a leader-coach.

2

Coaching raises the level of personal responsibility and initiative in your employees.

3

Coaching inspires creativity and innovation as employees "tap" into their individual talents.

4

Employees become problem solvers instead of handing them off to the leader.

5

Employees are more collaborative and supportive in a coaching environment.

As employees become more engaged by using the leader-coach dynamic, the WIIFM (What's In It For Me) for the leader becomes clear. On top of enjoying a larger sphere of influence in which the leader can ask more from employees, the leader is also free to be creative and think strategically. Additionally, the leader-coach avoids having to micromanage the team because employees become increasingly self-motivated and autonomous. Released from the need to be on-hands at every moment, the leader is now able to grow in their area of expertise, extend their networks, and work on their own personal development. As a consequence of these changes, employees are now more engaged with the tasks that they perform within the organization and the leader's energy shifts from being frustrated about poor performance and low productivity to growing the current



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SO WHY DOESN'T EVERYONE COACH?

The Question Remains:

If practicing the leader-coach style adds up to a stronger, more engaged and productive organization, why do so many leaders choose not to coach?

- Actually many leaders think that they do coach. They confuse coaching with giving directives, training/informing and/or performance correction or discipline. Many have never been exposed to the concept that coaching is not something that you “do” but more about “being”.
- There is a common misconception among leadership that coaching takes too much time. On the contrary, research continues to prove that leader-coaches’ employees are more productive (cite). What is for certain is that it takes time and focused energy to nurture a “coaching environment”.
- Lacking the coaching skills and confidence required to create a coaching environment, many leaders “try” coaching expecting to get a quick fix they want. When that doesn’t happen, they decide coaching doesn’t work.

3

The Final Word

In conclusion, let's examine different ways that a leader can become a leader-coach. First, it is crucial to further develop listening skills. Leader-coaches listen with the intention to fully understand others rather than to direct or coerce. They believe that others have abundant knowledge and wisdom to make meaningful contributions to the work of the organization. They know how to ask the probing questions which enable others to contribute to the success of their personal performance as well as to the organization.

Next, expand the sphere of trust. Leader-coaches are trusting of others, and they are trustworthy. Leader coaches develop trust by letting others see them for who they really are, being unconditionally constructive in their communications, admitting their own mistakes, accepting the mistakes of others, and demonstrating genuine interest in other people.

Finally, seek to grow as a leader-coach by becoming more skilled in the "art of coaching" and the practice of coaching. MSBCoach (www.msbccoach.com) offers an intensive coaching workshop that will strengthen your skills and give you additional tools to become a strong leader-coach.

The Gallup research asserts that engaged organizations have 3.9 times the earnings per share growth rate compared to those organizations within the same industry that have lower engagement⁴. There are many things that can be concluded from the study, but perhaps most significant is that a leader who coaches can impact the level of engagement as well as the bottom line.

References

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Michelle has coached and trained leaders and teams for over 20 years. She is the founder of the Authentic Leadership Summit, the Emerging Executive Leadership Program and has served as a panelist for the World Coaching Conference. Michelle is a certified coach with ACC credentials from the International Coaching Federation and the author of three leadership books: *Stand Out*, *Dare to Make a Difference*, and *Bottom Line*. She is also a long-term thought-leadership contributor to several blogs/publications including: *Thought Leaders*, *Lead Change* and *Leadership Courseware*.

Michelle is committed to partnering with leaders to identify their motivators, drivers, values and principles that increase their awareness of who they are and how they want to be known as a leader. She works with leaders to uncover both productive and challenging behaviors that may be enhancing their leadership or holding them back from being the leaders they want to be. Ultimately, leaders are motivated to set and achieve their highest goals.



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