

9 Steps for Creating a High Performing Coaching Culture

Want to be more empowered, effective, and successful? Get a coach. Want those same attributes to define your company's culture? Well, that's another story.

Based on research conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership, “[L]eaders are confident that coaching cultures benefit the business in ways that include: increasing employee engagement, job satisfaction, morale, collaboration and teamwork. Yet, these same leaders recognize that their organizations may be out of step in their current use of coaching compared with the potential of coaching.”

So what we have here is the belief that while building a culture of coaching can and does bring huge benefits to companies, rarely do leaders implement the practice, despite having been trained in coaching skills. According to BlessingWhite's research, “Few [companies] have succeeded in creating cultures where coaching of employees is a regular, fully supported, and rewarded managerial practice....They like to coach, know they should, but don't get around to doing it with any regularity.”

Training, implementation, and sustainability—the key elements critical for success.

But how does an organization build this kind of culture, anyway? According to extensive studies done by The Center for Creative Leadership, Personnel Today, Coaching Today, Business Management, BlessingWhite, International Coach Federation, and others, organizations must follow these nine steps in order to integrate coaching into an organization, sustain the coaching, and see the long-term positive results from creating a coaching culture.

1. **Find a sponsor or champion of the coaching initiative**—a highly respected top executive with much influence. This creates buy-in.
2. **Find leaders within the organization** who can role-model coaching skills.
3. **Link coaching outcomes to business goals.** Coaching cannot be a stand-alone initiative. It must be aligned with the strategic goals of the company, with measurable results.
4. **Train top leaders in coaching skills.** Be sure that the training doesn't just teach *about* coaching but actually trains leaders through hands-on practice and feedback.

5. **Utilize external coaches.** Any kind of culture change is a long-term process that benefits greatly from an unbiased, objective outside observer. An external coach will provide observation, insight, feedback, and accountability to stick with the changes desired.
6. **Coach the managers and teams.** Says BlessingWhite, “It’s common for managers to need coaching on coaching.” This goes for teams too. So, even if managers have been trained how to coach, they still need coaching from an external coach on their coaching, to ensure the implementation and sustainability of these new behaviors that drive culture change.
7. **Recognize and reward.** Because coaching shouldn’t be seen as a stand-alone initiative (do it, then forget it), role models of good coaching should be recognized and rewarded, and the benefits frequently highlighted. In fact, some leadership companies believe that coaching is so important for high performance, that it should be tied to compensation.
8. **Incorporate coaching with other processes.** For example, coaching must be integrated with processes such as talent management, job competencies, and learning and development. This way, coaching becomes fully engrained into the culture and moves from being merely a skill that is utilized on occasion to the regular way of doing things.
9. **Regularly measure and evaluate.** Like anything else that is important, coaching should be measured and evaluated on a regular basis. How is it working? What business results are seen? Where is coaching not being applied with diligence? How is it being tied into the overall vision and strategy of the organization?

While the above nine steps require much effort, time, and financial resources, the benefits of higher performance, effectiveness, engagement, satisfaction, and teamwork are worth it. Creating a sustainable culture of coaching is an investment with huge dividends for companies eager and motivated to see its power and results.

About Blue Bridge Leadership

At Blue Bridge Leadership, we provide a variety of career development and leadership development services. We work with individuals, teams, and organizations. Opportunities include executive and leadership coaching, team building, and corporate training. Plus, we offer career coaching, resume assistance, and outplacement solutions.

We help talented people flourish. We believe in helping them reach their highest potential. Additionally, we partner with them to overcome their challenges and achieve their goals. And although we are based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, we have worked with clients all over the state and beyond.

We have been interviewed and featured as experts in the coaching and leadership development industry. For example, media spotlights include Grand Rapids Press, Grand Rapids Magazine, Women's Lifestyle Magazine, Take 5 TV, West Michigan Woman Magazine, Carol Roth's Business Unplugged, WGVU's Business in Heels radio program, and WZZM 13 News.

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