

A coaching style of management – how it makes a difference

A summary by Terry Wright of a Linked In Discussion Forum considering the question:

If your current management team were replaced by the best manager-coaches in the world, WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU'D NOTICE THAT WAS DIFFERENT in your work environment? What would you see and hear?

The answers make interesting reading. They can be summarised under the headings:

- ⌚ How the coach-managers would behave
- ⌚ How their staff would feel
- ⌚ How their staff would behave
- ⌚ What the effect would be on the organisation

There are also a few cautionary and qualifying remarks.

How the coach-managers would behave

There would be more and better quality questions – more varied and more productive. There would not be what one contributor called “que-gestions” – suggestions masquerading as questions. Instead, managers would ask questions in a genuine spirit of enquiry.

Along with the questions, there would be more genuine listening.

Managers would display high emotional intelligence in their relationships. They would appreciate people’s work and effort. They would be great at engaging people and facilitating bottom-up solutions.

There would be open collaboration, empowerment and an open flow of conversation with much more transparency. Managers would solicit creativity from their staff.

How their staff would feel

There would be a noticeable improvement in energy and mood – what Deming would call Joy in Work.

People would feel valued and respected. They would know that they were being heard and seen. They would feel more confident, inspired and productive. Job satisfaction would be high. There would be less fear of failure. Staff would be smiling!

People would bring the best of themselves to work every day.

How their staff would behave

Staff would be clear about the goal they are trying to achieve and would then focus in on how to achieve it. If you asked someone a question about the mission, direction, organisation, priorities, challenges, successes, or other general knowledge, they could tell you without thinking about it.

Staff would have less stress and would do their jobs to the best of their ability, without unnecessary interference and with higher levels of achievement.

People would be more engaged - with their jobs, with each other, with business issues, organisational priorities and finding ways of improving service and performance. The motivation to take the initiative to perform would be on a rise.

Delegation would become easier as managers became less concerned about giving more complexity to staff and began to trust them more.

Fear in the workplace would be replaced by open communication. People would give honest and constructive feedback rather than avoiding the issue. They would be comfortable with conflict and challenge.

Whining and complaining would reduce and be replaced by open and honest dialogues within a group that problem-solves and communicates freely and trusts one another, because their boss sets the standard.

People would work as if they had a financial stake in the organisation and behave authentically to deliver the business and personal aims.

What the effect would be on the organisation

There would be a far more open culture where people's learning and development would be given adequate importance.

The good people would not leave because of a bad boss or manager.

The workforce would be well-trained and empowered to make decisions.

There would be the synergy that comes from an organisation of empowered people all making their own decisions with a shared goal.

There would be more success in the business and personally because customers and colleagues would value the service that they were being offered.

The organisation would be able to learn from honest mistakes.

There would be clarity about business goals and everyone would be aligned to those goals rather than working at odds with each other.

There would be an absence of unhealthy conflict and a removal of working silos.

Engagement scores would move up. It would be known as a better place to work.

There would be fewer formal meetings!

There would be reduced turnover overall, although there might be some leavers based on new management standards.

There would be greater organisational knowledge, and increased job performance from nearly every employee.

There would be a fresh perspectives on previously taxing issues and a desire to show results.

The organisation would relax and energy rise as the culture shifts. People would be saying: "At last!" and "Why didn't we do this before?"

Qualifying Notes

Asking great questions takes skill and practice!

Manager-Coaches are hard to find. Most people only have the skill set to do one or the other effectively.

Managers must also be very good at inspiring the workforce with a compelling purpose. Jim Collins in *From Good to Great* noted that one of the variables that distinguished leaders of truly great organisations is that they clearly identify what they are truly passionate about.

Things won't change overnight - it takes time.

People may initially be sceptical until they see it isn't all rhetoric. Then they will be on board with bells on!

If the opposite happened – a cautionary tale

One of the contributors, Eglé Daunienė, recounts this sorry tale: *“I once saw a different live case - a management coaching team replaced by a very traditional management team. The employees were the same. The 5 management board members were replaced by the other 5.*

These were the most obvious signs:

- the doors to office rooms were shut down and the whole office became very quiet. The doors were open before, a lot of discussions and talks were going on in the corridors and people solved problems and found solutions on the way they were going to get a cup of coffee because they just bumped into someone on the way, shared their issue, someone from the next room heard it and joined in - and here we are - the solution is found.

- the decision-making slowed down and bureaucracy increased. There was little of it before, decisions were quick, mistakes were fast, accepted and fixed. An atmosphere of trust was built on.

- people stopped smiling and became really busy. While before, there was a kind of easy going way which opened hearts and ideas, and creativity, and it seemed that ideas were just spilling out. With a focus on executing, yet in a very easy way, and issues were handled pretty fast.

So I would summarise by what was lost - trusting atmosphere, engagement, speed, creativity, synergy and joy of being part of the winning team.

And it took about 2 days to lose everything.”

A final question

Since we all know that a coaching environment/culture delivers engaged, motivated, effective, happy employees, why isn't every organisation run in that way?

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