

PART I

The Basics of
Organizational Coaching

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CHAPTER 1

The History and Context of Coaching

EVERY DAY IN EVERY COMPANY, people are being hired, promoted, or moved from one position to another. Every day in every company, people need development as part of their ongoing professional growth. Every day in every company, people look to training as one of the most effective ways to give people skills and tools in organizations. But training is only one way to bridge developmental gaps.

The acquisition, development, and retention of good people are recognized by many fine organizations as obvious competitive advantages. Coaching has emerged as a powerful discipline that organizations are leveraging in various ways to build and retain their people. Coaching is a relative newcomer to organizations. As recently as the late 1980s, coaching was focused primarily on individual athletics and team sports. Coaching as an application to help individuals achieve better results in areas other than sports emerged from several sources simultaneously:

- Ontological philosophy, which questions the very nature of being.
- Organizational, cognitive, behavioral, and “positive” psychology, which examine the questions of how people function in groups, how people learn and change, and what makes people feel happy or satisfied.

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- Theater performance, which might be defined as the ability to project a fabricated reality, and which implies the mastery of the art of “presence.”
- Business consulting paradigms, which teach managers and leaders the mechanics of successful business.
- Social anthropology, which examines how different cultures define success and how leaders are chosen.
- Even neuroscience, which, in the context, studies how brain structure and chemistry affect a person’s ability to change and grow.¹

Ultimately, the disciplines that add to the vast store of knowledge that helps coaches be effective all share the same root: the way in which humans develop, relate to others, and grow and change in order to better achieve their goals.

Today, at least half of the Fortune 1000 organizations are providing coaching for their employees in one form or another. In a survey of members of the Institute for Executive Development, 59 percent of respondents said that the budget for coaching in their organizations would increase by more than 10 percent annually moving forward, despite only 7 percent stating they have a formal process to measure and calculate the return on investment (ROI) of the coaching.

An article in the *London Times*² revealed that British cabinet ministers and other civil servants across several governmental departments are receiving coaching at taxpayers’ expense. The coaching is helping government leaders analyze complex issues, think more creatively, and manage life/work balance more effectively. Of course, considerable hue and cry have been heard from the opposing party about the practice, which has been a source of mockery and derision among a public that is largely misinformed about what coaching really is.

Great debate continues to swirl among professional coaches from all different backgrounds about what coaching really is

and how it should be done. The resulting confusion has made it extraordinarily difficult for human resources (HR) and organizational development (OD) professionals and managers in organizations to define coaching, to find a reasonably simple coaching model, and to implement the use of coaching in their organizations with any confidence. Most organizations are too bottom-line-focused to allow for trial and error.

Coaching in Organizations is designed to share what we've learned as coaching practitioners working with professionals in organizations to deploy coaching easily, effectively, and, most importantly, with impact. The book is not intended to serve as a comprehensive overview of all coaching done by all coaches in all organizations everywhere. Nor is it intended to be a compendium of all empirical research done on coaching. Rather, it is an account of what we've learned working as coaching practitioners in organizations. It is written for HR, OD, and leadership development professionals who are tasked with introducing, managing, or measuring the effect of coaching in organizations.

A DEFINITION OF COACHING

We receive three to five calls a week from friends of friends and colleagues of friends, who ask: "I need to provide coaching to the sales force. Where do I start?" "I have been asked to centralize all the coaching that's going on in the organization and make sure it is consistent. Do you have some guidelines?" "Our board of directors wants to know how we know that the investment in coaching is paying off. I have some ideas, but I wonder what you guys are doing."

The best place to begin to answer those questions is to define the term *coaching*, for confusion in this regard abounds. If one were to ask 10 separate coaching professionals for their definitions, at least 10 answers would result. Table 1.1 contains a number of variations.

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Table 1.1
Various Definitions of Coaching

A person who trains or directs athletes or athletic teams; a person who gives instruction, as in singing or acting; a private tutor employed to prepare a student for an examination.	<i>The American Heritage Dictionary</i>
Helping successful leaders achieve positive, lasting change in behavior: for themselves, their people and their teams	Marshall Goldsmith ³
An informed dialogue whose purpose is the facilitation of new skills, possibilities, and insights in the interest of individual leading and organizational advancement.	Terry Bacon and Kevin Spear ⁴
A comprehensive communication process in which the coach provides performance feedback to the coachee. Topics include broad, work relations dimensions of performance (personal, interpersonal or technical) that affect the coach's ability and willingness to contribute to meaningful personal and organizational goals.	Thomas Crane ⁵
A collaborative solution-focused, results-oriented, and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning, and personal growth of the coach.	Anthony M. Grant ⁶
Unlocking a person's potential to maximize his or her own performance.	John Whitmore ⁷
The art of facilitating the unleashing of people's potential to reach meaningful, important objectives.	Phillipe Rosinski ⁸

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In spite of the confusion, however, a few characteristics of the term seem to occur across the board:

Coaching:

- Is generally a one-to-one relationship.
- Usually involves development (of skills, awareness) and/or improved performance.
- Often involves gathering and sharing of feedback for the person being coached.
- Depends primarily on supportive rather than directive communication from the coach.

More specifically, for the purpose of this book, the following definition will be used. It has been honed by coaching practitioners in various organizational settings over a period of about five years.

*Coaching is a deliberate process using focused conversations to create an environment for individual growth, purposeful action, and sustained improvement.*⁹

This definition is broad enough to enable multiple uses but narrow enough to identify the key components of a successful coaching relationship.

Many people think all they need to do to coach is to have great listening skills. Certainly, listening well is a key competency of a good coach; however, it is only one of many. Good coaching is not a random set of activities; rather, it involves using the same mechanics for every kind of conversation (performance, goal setting, career development, leadership, vision, strategy), because a number of solid mechanics work well consistently.

All coaching is a dialogue of some sort, whether it happens over email, voice mail, or face to face—in synchronous time or over a period of time. The coach is responsible for creating an environment in which the person being coached will learn, grow,

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act, perform, and behave differently in some way that will significantly enhance that individual's success at reaching personal long- and short-term goals. How the coach creates this environment is radically different for each client and is at the root of the mystery that surrounds the process of coaching.

In addition to the aforementioned mechanics, there is also an art to achieving this with every client, day after day, year after year. Finally, coaching is a *service*. Successful coaches are willing and able to show up and be fully present with each client, stay free of their own agendas, and modulate their own personalities and needs. Mediocre coaches are those who remain attached to their own opinions and feel the need to be right or even useful.

NOTE

Coaching competencies will be addressed in detail in Chapter 10.

WHY COACHING NOW?

The advent of coaching as a professional service to employees in organizations is the result of the confluence of several trends:

- *Advent of the "lean, mean machine."* Public companies are scrutinized routinely for waste. Poor performance is no longer tolerated; gone are the days the "likeable fixtures," or popular employees, are kept around out of sympathy. High performance is no longer an option, and organizations will invest in coaching support for people who add enough value.
- *No time for training.* Do you remember three- to five-day training events? Unless it relates to legal compliance for accounting or HR practices, time for training is being cut to the bone. Even so-called soft skills are being learned using online modules and virtual classrooms that don't require people to leave

the office. The cost is simply too high for employees to be away too long from their voice mail, email, and meetings.

Coaching is the perfect vehicle for precise, just-in-time learning. It takes much less time and can be scheduled at the employee's discretion. Coaching is also an excellent way to capitalize on whatever training has been done, as people who are coached posttraining are vastly more likely to apply their knowledge and adopt new behaviors than those who aren't.¹⁰

- *The vanished middle manager.* A new term has emerged from this trend: the *working manager*. This means that employees are responsible for providing adequate amounts of information, accountability, direction, support, and all the HR compliance record-keeping for large numbers of people while also doing a full-time "individual contributor's job." This trend is prevalent in most organizations. Coaches can provide what some managers can't or won't—specific skills improvement, sustained focus, a safe place for deep personal reflection, and sometimes much-needed empathy and attention. Coaches are filling in the space left open by inexperienced or overloaded managers.
- *Increased pace of business.* The speed at which business is conducted today has accelerated and continues to do so. The prediction in the 1970s that new technologies would help get work done more efficiently and leave people with more leisure time is, now, laughable. All these technologies have done is to enable one person to do the work of several. And, as the pace of work increases, so does the pace of change. Thus, the need for people to be able to manage their inner lives and adapt to change is critical. Coaches can offer perspective and help employees structure their time and prioritize their activities more effectively.
- *"Turbo leader" development.* Related to the speed of business is the time it takes for young talent to rise to leadership positions—usually long before they have had time to reflect

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on and synthesize their own experiences. Coaches can help with targeted work in the crucial areas of vision, purpose, and “knowledge and use of self.”¹¹

- *The “me generation.”* Young people in organizations feel that they are special and unique. They respond favorably to a service that is tailored specifically for them. In addition, in exchange for working 24/7, younger workers expect to be developed; many see it as a right. Employees regard coaching as a perk and an acknowledgment that they are valuable enough for the investment.

COACH TRAINING PROGRAMS

How can one tell if a coach has been well trained? Simple! Sit in on the first three minutes of a coaching session with that coach. Companies that hire coaches to deliver services are in unanimous agreement: Consultants and psychologists who serve as coaches, thinking that their current levels of experience and knowledge will serve with no additional coach training, are finding it harder and harder to get by. Not even business experience, advanced degrees, and a deep knowledge of psychology and counseling are enough to prepare one for the rigors of coaching in organizations. The demand for real results is simply too strong, and coaches must know exactly what they are doing at all times. Coach training is not optional.

Two phenomenal resources list coach training programs, with accompanying details about philosophical foundations and methodologies. The combination of these two sources will provide you an exhaustive overview.

- The Peer Resource Network website (www.peer.ca/coachingschools.html) is devoted to serving a vast network of coaches and other helping professionals. It contains a staggering amount of information. At the time of this writing, 225 coach training programs were listed.

- The International Coach Federation (www.coachfederation.org/ICF/For+Current+Members/Coach+Training/For+Prospective+Students/ACTP) lists more than 40 accredited coach training programs. The accreditation criteria are rigorous, indicating that these programs have existed for some time and have demonstrated clear standards. The site also lists programs that offer accredited training hours.

COACHING ASSOCIATIONS

Googling the term *coaching organization* yields more than 6,500,000 matches. Over the past five years, coaching organizations have cropped up like mushrooms after a rainstorm, and it has become increasingly difficult to know where to pay attention. We recommend the following three, on the basis of their longevity, leadership stability, and support services: the International Coach Federation (ICF), the Professional Coaches and Mentors Association (PCMA), and the Worldwide Association for Business Coaches (WABC).

These organizations offer information, resources, an informed and active community, and, in some cases, accreditation and credentials. Following is a brief description of these top coaching organizations.

THE ICF

In 1993, when the International Coach Federation formed, the general public did not yet have access to the Internet; and, certainly, “google” was not yet in existence, much less used as a verb. The ICF (www.coachfederation.org) was founded by Thomas Leonard. Formed as a forward-thinking, open, and inclusive organization, its purpose was to answer the call from practicing coaches who realized they needed an association to serve as a source of community, information, standards, and ethics for the profession. Several other professional organizations came into

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being around the same time. Some folded together, and others continue individually to this day.

Today, the ICF is the world's largest professional association for coaches. As part of its scope of services, it:

- Establishes standards and ethics for coaches.
- Accredits coach training schools with clear criteria.
- Certifies coaches at three levels: Associate Certified Coach, Professional Certified Coach, and Master Certified Coach.
- Offers annual international coaching conferences, annual executive coaching summits, and annual research symposiums.
- Provides structure and support for a worldwide network of chapters designed to support coaches with community and continuing education.

Although some coaches argue that there is no standardization¹² in the coaching profession, the credentialing, ethics, and standards established by the ICF are rigorous and reliable for basic coaching skills. True, coaching for the development of managers, leaders, and executives has yet to be strictly codified. In fact, the efforts of the ICF to accredit coach training organizations and create standards for coaches recognized by a credential have generated criticism that the organization has become exclusive, despite its original vision of openness. Only time will tell whether the ICF will weather the storm that is sure to break over licensing, credentialing, and legal implications for coaches. Still, each year, a higher percentage of organizations are requesting that the coaches staffed on their projects be ICF-certified.

THE PCMA

Established in the early 1990s, the Professional Coaches and Mentors Association (www.pcmaonline.com) has a similar mission to, but with a broader audience base than, the ICF because it includes both coaches and mentoring professionals. The PCMA retains its original mission of openness and inclusiveness. Based

in California, the organization has chapters primarily in that state and hosts an annual conference there as well.

THE WABC

The Worldwide Association for Business Coaches (www.wabccoaches.com/index.htm), founded in 1997, focuses strictly on the business coaching niche and has the distinction of being the only international association dedicated solely to serving the business coaching industry. Interestingly, it is also one of the few for-profit associations for coaches, and has a fairly new charismatic leader, Wendy Johnson. This group offers conferences worldwide and is currently working on accreditation for training programs.

As organizations are becoming more aware of the benefits of coaching, they are seeking well-trained, professional coaches to work within their walls. Many are already asking about ICF accreditation and are committed to working with coaches who are equipped as proficient organizational coaches.

NOTES

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2. Isabel Oakeshott, "Call My Life Coach, Not a Spin Doctor," *London Times Online*, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article620837.ece>; August 27, 2006.
3. Marshall Goldsmith, via email, in response to personal correspondence. January 9, 2007.
4. Terry Bacon and Karen Spear, *Adaptive Coaching* (Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing, 2003), xvi.
5. Thomas Crane, *The Heart of Coaching* (San Diego, CA: FTA Press, 1998), 31.

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6. Anthony M. Grant, *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, "October 2002, the UK College of Life Coaching established the first International Coaching Summit," Vol. 1, No. 1, August 2003, <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/education/ijebcm/ijebcm-docs/vol1-no1-conference-review.pdf>. Note that Dr. Grant has generated multiple definitions of coaching since the publication of this article; this one is used as an example.
7. John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2002), 8.
8. Phillippe Rosinski, *Coaching Across Cultures* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2003), 4.
9. Linda Miller and Madeleine Homan, *Coaching Essentials for Leaders* (The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2002), 4.
10. Neil Rackham, *Training and Development Journal*, "The Coaching Controversy" November 1979, No. 11: 12–16.
11. Term coined by Scott Blanchard for Blanchard Coaching Management System, 2000.
12. Alyssa Freas, "The Wild West of Executive Coaching," *Harvard Business Review*, November 1, 2004: Reprint No. O411E.