

CHAPTER

Preparing for the Cultural Evolution

People create the mindset, mindset shapes behavior, behavior defines culture, and ultimately, culture determines success. That's why the primary business objective is to make your people more valuable.

WHAT'S YOUR BUSINESS DNA?

We were ending the second day working with a team of managers in Beijing, China. During every program I deliver, I want to ensure that expectations are met, know what their biggest learning moment is, and capture their commitment after our time together was over. This is necessary to make sure that what we worked on becomes embedded in the way the managers lead and coach.

As we went around the room, Pierre, one of the managers, paused to share a horrific experience he had just a week earlier.

"I received some disturbing news from our corporate office last week. During last month's quarterly senior leadership meeting, Chan, one of the VPs had a heart attack in the middle of the meeting. Of course, we called an ambulance immediately. Within minutes, he was rushed to the hospital.

“As you can imagine, everyone else in the meeting was extremely concerned about Chan. And yet, the meeting continued. Reports were reviewed. Business plans evaluated. Priorities reaffirmed. Team performance and scorecards assessed.

“An hour passed. The hospital called the main office to share the devastating news. Chan had died moments after arriving at the hospital.”

While there’s nothing worse than the sudden and untimely passing of a good person, here’s what I found most troublesome about this horrific story. The administrator from the hospital asked one of the other VPs in that meeting, “Who would be the proper family member to contact and let them know about Chan’s death?”

Ten people were in that meeting. Some of them had worked together for over 12 years. And yet, when the hospital administrator asked how to contact Chan’s family, not one person in the room had an answer.

No one really knew who Chan was. They knew him as an employee and a peer, but certainly not as a human being. It’s a disturbing story, but it’s one we can all learn from.

Think about your company. Think about your team, your peers, your customers. How much do you really know about them, personally? How much time and attention do you invest in fostering a deeper connection with people?

Keeping HR compliance in mind, do you really *know* the people you work with?

I can’t think of anyone who would *want* to work at a company like Chan’s. The sad truth is, there’s a good chance most people already do.

BURN THE BRIDGE OF MEDIOCRITY

Countless studies detail the business impact that effective coaching has on performance, productivity, attitude, employee engagement, and of course, company culture. Which is why I won’t be focusing on any of that.

Data isn’t going to help you create a coaching culture, but it clearly shows that you need one.

THE SCATHING TRUTH

What about those companies that do not have fantastic DNA? How can struggling and great companies alike achieve enduring success?

If you want to change the face of your business, you need to alter the most fundamental composition of your organization. To do so, every

employee must focus their thoughts, listening, and attention on the heart-beat of the business, which comes not from products and services, but from people.

FROM THE SIDELINES

While Chapter 1 focuses on what needs to be present to launch a companywide coaching initiative, it also applies to building your team's culture. The rest of the book focuses on you, and your transformation into a world-class leader and coach so you can develop champions. That includes deep dives into skill set and mindset development, talk tracks or *coach tracks*, and templates that will make you and your team best-in-class.

CHOOSE NO INITIATIVE OVER A FAILED INITIATIVE

Every time you put profit over people, the promise of improving the work environment will fail. Employees will perceive any course you roll out or coaching offered as an event-based flavor of the month. Your good intentions to develop people into champions become overshadowed by the company's underlying, self-serving agenda to achieve business objectives.

The frustration rises on both sides.

Company leaders: "We just invested in our people! They should be following what they learned."

Your Employees: "Nothing new here. The company was hot on coaching this month, but it's always going to be about the results. Things always go back to the way they were."

No traction is created, no positive change can be sustained, and cultures inevitably backslide into a fear-based, results-driven workplace. The additional cost of a failed initiative is that companies learn the wrong lesson: that coaching doesn't work.

So what's the secret to developing a thriving, top-performing coaching culture that people want to be part of? How do you prepare any company for this transformational journey? How do you prevent it from being just another fleeting idea due to the cultural volatility that exists within your company?

Before we answer this question, let's create some alignment around the definition of *culture*.

EXAMINING CULTURE

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines culture as, "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. The characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time."

This definition applies to any organized group, such as universities, networking events, trade associations, conferences, social networks, nonprofits, a neighborhood fitness center, and even governments. It seems we're all part of and operate in a variety of cultures as we move through the world around us.

BOARDROOM OR BORED ROOM: DEFINING CORPORATE CULTURE

The infamously stodgy word *corporate* refers to the collective body that makes up any organization. Merriam-Webster's definition of *culture* also includes:

b: the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization; a corporate culture focused on the bottom line; c: the set of values, or social practices associated with a field, activity, or societal characteristic ... d) the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.

THE COMPANY ECOSYSTEM

Many pieces must be addressed to solve this cultural puzzle. It's an environment that encapsulates a shared feeling, belief system, attitude, and set of values. Culture dictates how people should behave, perform, and treat one another.

Every company's culture exists within a network of unique individuals engaging and interacting with each other. A healthy culture is a consistent culture—especially in the face of adversity. It's one where people feel their workplace, like their home, is a safe place to live by their values and authentically express themselves.

People live within the culture of their company. Ultimately, it determines their fulfillment, growth, purpose, contributions, success, quality of life, and peace of mind.

WHEN COMPANY AND PERSONAL VALUES CLASH

Does your company culture reflect your people and their personal values? Are your people a reflection of your culture? Does the attitude and behavior

within your organization reflect your desired culture? Does your culture reflect not just your corporate vision but your team vision, as well as your team's and your personal vision and values?

COACHING CONUNDRUM

There is no more line between work and life. There's just life! So, if you're not honoring and living your values at work, then you're compromising your integrity by not fully living your values in life.

Companies and *leaders* with good intentions struggle to break free from the monotony of their current business because they face the daily pressures of metrics, performance expectations, quotas, employee challenges, customer needs, deadlines, hiring, forecasting, emails, impromptu meetings, employee development, reporting—the list runs on.

Inevitably, the reversion to a dysfunctional culture is a by-product of the primary directive: to achieve results.

MINDFUL MOMENT

Having a shared company consciousness is the same as having a shared vision.

YOU'RE NOT COACHING EFFECTIVELY

Like most leaders, you've probably had some exposure to coaching, either through a book, a keynote, a half-day coaching workshop, or a full-blown course. Unfortunately, the majority of managers now think they know how to coach. *If only it were that easy!* The following story illustrates this common misconception.

As a newly promoted manager, Carlos was excited about his position and was already a huge advocate of coaching. As you could imagine, Carlos was thrilled when his boss told him they were going to start scheduling one-to-one coaching sessions, the first one being next Monday.

Immediately, Carlos began preparing. When Monday finally arrived, Carlos sat down with his boss for their first coaching session. As Carlos began sharing some of his goals and challenges, his boss sat, apparently engaged, listening, even asking some leading, closed-ended questions along the way.

After Carlos explained one challenge he was experiencing with one of his sales reps, the first bit of coaching Carlos received started with: *Here's what you should do ...*

This isn't coaching! Did you catch the punchline? Many people don't. Some managers think coaching entails listening and asking a few questions, then giving the answer. As we journey throughout this book, you'll be reading many similar conversations that portray managers as ineffective, directive, and manipulative.

There are four main reasons why managers don't coach:

1. **They think they're coaching but they're not.** This inevitably leads managers to learn the wrong lessons. A telltale sign is a manager who says things like, "Coaching doesn't work," "Sometimes you have to just tell them what to do, which is much easier," or, my favorite, "Coaching just takes too long."
2. **They had awful training.** Sometimes managers go through terrible coaching training. They do everything they were told to, but it doesn't work, so they assume coaching doesn't fit the culture.
3. **There is no companywide alignment on what coaching is and how to do it.**
4. **There is no plan or process to ensure consistent, effective coaching.**
5. **They're not being effectively coached themselves.**

In fact, coaching doesn't have to be hard at all. In this book, you'll learn how most coaching conversations can be completed in less than 10 minutes!

YOUR CULTURE SUCKS

I always try to come from a positive place. For example, I believe that failure is an opportunity to learn; fear can become your greatest ally; and confidence is a choice you make by not allowing external situations dictate your internal state of well-being.

But we don't have time for *sugar coaching* or feel-good statements. Let me be direct, in case no one has shared this memo with you: *Your culture sucks, your people are disengaged because they're not being coached effectively, you're only maximizing about 40 percent of their potential, and you're spending most of your time focused on the wrong activities. In short, you've lost sight of your top priority, your people.*

You may think I'm being presumptuous. You're shaking your head saying, "You're wrong, Keith. You never experienced our culture. We have a great culture."

My questions are: How do you know? What measurable criteria are you using? What results are you experiencing? The upcoming pages will provide you with a quick assessment to determine if your coaching is generating worthwhile results or not.

A 10-YEAR COACHING STUDY

While data is an essential need of any business, it doesn't transform anyone into an exceptional leader.

That's why I focus on the soft skills and transformation of people rather than on the data.

For those who appreciate validated data points to justify decisions (such as the need for coaching excellence), here's one that supports my prior statement: Over the last 10 years, my free ebooks have been downloaded approximately 350,000 times.

In the download request form, there's one required question: "Do your sales and management teams consistently use an effective coaching framework that creates a healthy, top-performing culture and wins more sales?"

A whopping 88 percent of respondents say no. These people represent a global population from a variety of different industries, including HR, sales, management, operations, marketing, engineering, IT, finance, and C-suite leadership. Moreover, these are people from some of the most prestigious, successful, and well-known companies in the world.

Even though my free resources were never meant to be used as surveys, that one question captured honest and objective data. After all, the downloaders' intention was to get the ebook, not to consciously complete a survey.

COACHING CONUNDRUM

Companies collapse a great culture with great results. Not true. These two ideas are mutually exclusive. While results are critical for business success, you know if you have a great culture when you're enjoying the ride, feel that your work complements your life, are living your values, and are self-motivated to attain your business objectives.

ASSESSING YOUR CULTURE AND THE MEASURABLE ROI OF COACHING

Whether you *think* your culture is healthy or toxic, here are 14 questions to quickly assess your culture and coaching.

1. Do you have more turnover than your industry average?
2. Do you struggle with departmental silos or creating a cohesive team functioning as one?
3. Are your managers spending 70 percent of their time putting out fires or developing, observing, and coaching their people in a way that generates consistent, measurable results?
4. Is *everyone* on your team achieving their quota and business objectives, and not just the few top producers who managers rely on to hit their monthly goals?
5. Are your people seeking out coaching from you, their coworkers, and other departments?
6. Do you view your team as *direct reports* or peers, coworkers, and resources? Do you seek out coaching from others, regardless of their position?
7. Are your salespeople authentically *coaching* rather than *selling* your customers?
8. Are you effectively developing a talented bench of future leaders?
9. Do you work in a safe, transparent, and trusting environment fueled by innovation and positivity, or a fear-based culture?
10. Are you retaining your top talent?
11. Are you gaining market share and growing steadily each year?
12. Do you and your people come to work happy and fulfilled because you all want to be there?
13. Do you work from a place of intention or reaction? Do your company priorities seem to be changing daily?
14. Is everyone committed to holding themselves and others personally accountable to sustain and reinforce the culture you want?

These are just a few questions to assess your culture. If you can't answer yes to these questions, then you're lying to yourself about the type of culture you work in.

CHOOSE A CULTURE OF INTENTION OR REACTION

It's up to you whether you put this book down now and never pick it up again, or continue to honor your commitment to yourself, your team, and your company to be the best leader and coach you can be. Regardless of your conscious and intentional effort, your team and company culture will naturally emerge.

Unfortunately, taking this passive approach comes at a cost, especially when most companies default to a results-driven, fear-based culture. In fact, 99 percent of companies I've worked with would admit their culture is driven by results and not by people. It's an occupational hazard when every person, manager, team, department, and organization has a target on their back because every company's primary business objective is to achieve and evaluate the result.

You likely hear otherwise from every executive, find it on every company website, and read a framed company vision proudly displayed in every office. There, the message is always: *We put people first*. Maybe that's their *intention*, or, maybe it's true when times are good and easy, but when there's a deal on the line and a massive revenue-generating opportunity that can make or break quota, the coaching stops. Instead of using a high-stakes situation as a powerful coaching moment, results take priority over developing people every time.

Sadly, when results are the priority, regardless of the collateral damage that follows, most company cultures develop in a reactionary way. Creating a great culture requires conscious intention, focus, and a clear vision that becomes the blueprint for your organization. When coaching becomes unconsciously consistent—and when it aligns with the way people naturally engage and communicate with one another—that's the sign of a healthy coaching culture.

MINDFUL MOMENT

Instead of having your culture define your people, have your people define your culture.

A CULTURE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATORS

Whether you're focused on becoming an extraordinary leader, or you're looking to implement a coaching program within your organization, it's

easy to become overwhelmed. Fear creeps in and people wonder, “What if there’s no consistent or companywide adoption? What if it’s just another failed project and short-term event? What if I’m not a good coach? What if I don’t want to coach? What if my team doesn’t embrace the coaching? What if I’m the only manager doing this? What if performance actually slips?” No one wants to find themselves in a position like this, or have egg on their face after a poorly implemented initiative.

Instead of letting fear rule, reframe your perspective. Consider the failure of any initiative to be a consequence of the overlooked components to be mindful of to ensure coaching success. This applies whether the initiative is for you, a team, or other managers. Developing a culture and becoming an inspirational, respected sales leader is not limited to a series of strategies, processes, reports, or surveys to develop a baseline. Like coaching, it’s not a checkbox you put on a scorecard. The tipping point for developing a coaching culture begins with a series of strategic, well-timed changes in thinking and behavior, then putting it into practice. This includes the questions you’ll be using in your coaching conversations, all of which are precisely scripted using what I refer to as *coach tracks*. These templates are for you to use to achieve a baseline of coaching best practices, and you will need them to facilitate highly valuable coaching conversations. This is necessary to create a culture of strategic communicators.

Why a culture of strategic communicators? Because the foundation of all positive change, whether it’s external or within ourselves is communication. The transformation of human magnitude can only happen when thinking and behavior change.

Ask yourself, where do you begin when you want to change something for the better? What is the first thing you do? You conduct an inner dialog in your mind. We tell ourselves what we want, why we want it, and how it’s possible to achieve it if we believe we are capable of doing so. Or, we have a conversation that does just the opposite: we get in our own way as we become our worst nemesis.

Before you continue, it’s essential that you keep this top of mind: It will be your internal communication that will create your external experiences, results, happiness, fulfillment, confidence, personal success, and ability to become a transformational, influential leader. If you possess any self-doubt, here’s a life-changing exercise to take on: Grab your laptop, tablet, or phone and schedule enough time to write out the story of your life and why you are the way you are. Then write down all the reasons why you can’t become or achieve more of what and who you want to be.

Once you write out your limiting story, throw it out. It’s time for you to write your new story. The story you have is old and stale. You’re comfortable with it only because you’ve been carrying it around your whole life, using it to justify every decision and action you have made. If that’s no longer working

for you, consider today to be your first birthday! It's in your power to create your reality through language and that includes your inner dialog as well.

You are not defined by your experiences and the beliefs you hold. This book will guide you through not only a transformation of action and behavior, but also a transformation of thought. You will adopt the habit of thinking like a talented, valued sales leader, and your past experiences will lose their power over you. You will respond to and learn from them. And that begins by asking yourself the right questions to challenge the reality you don't want and create the one you do.

MINDFUL MOMENT

If your primary focus is on changing your company and your people, you will fail. Change starts with you. When you change yourself, you exemplify what is possible for others and inspire organic, positive change.

34 CHARACTERISTICS OF A COACHING CULTURE

It's one thing to measure the impact of a coaching culture on your business. However, what would a coaching culture *look and feel* like? A coaching culture is a unified culture that everyone wants to be part of. Here are some characteristics that exemplify a coaching culture:

1. Acceptance
2. Accountability
3. Authenticity
4. Care
5. Collaboration
6. Communication
7. Confidence
8. Creativity
9. Efficiency
10. Empowerment
11. Ethics
12. Excellence
13. Family first
14. Fearlessness
15. Fun

16. Growth
17. Honesty
18. Healthy relationships
19. Innovation
20. Integrity
21. Lifelong learning and development
22. Living your personal values
23. Love and connection
24. Positivity
25. Professionalism
26. Self-awareness
27. Self-care
28. Selflessness
29. Service
30. Support
31. Top performance
32. Teamwork
33. Transparency
34. Trust

How would your culture measure up? Can you cite specific examples of how each of these characteristics are present?

FROM THE SIDELINES

Ultimately, a coaching culture is a people culture.

PREPARING FOR YOUR CULTURAL EVOLUTION

Now that you have a more well-defined picture of what a coaching culture looks and feels like, there are seven pillars in every company that determine the overall health and success of your organization.

The Seven Pillars to Achieve Cultural Excellence

1. **Purpose—The Why.** Why do you do what you do?
2. **People—The Who.** Do you have the right people in the right roles who share similar values?

3. **Proficiency—The Mastery.** Skill, knowledge, acumen.
4. **Process—The How.** Onboarding, sales, coaching, interviewing, procurement, handling performance issues, compliance, and all the other processes developed in each department that sustain consistency, efficiency, growth, and success.
5. **Product—The What.** What do you sell? A product, service, or both? Where would you score your product or service on the spectrum of excellence, if you did a competitive analysis?
6. **Perception—The Attitude.** Your attitude, your customer's attitude, as well as the organizational attitude determines your company's level of engagement, collaboration, accountability, loyalty, integrity, motivation, excellence, and all characteristics of a positive coaching culture. Strategy, service, and skill encompass part of the outer game: the rules of engagement and execution. Your attitude and mindset determine the inner game or the core of success. This is the heartbeat of your organization and where your journey begins. Without the right attitude, everything you build will crumble from the pressure of toxic thinking.
7. **Performance—The Score.** How is individual and organizational productivity and success being measured?

If there is a gap or breakdown in any of these seven areas, it will be difficult to achieve and sustain cultural excellence.

Before we start building a culture, we need to start with an impenetrable foundation. Remember, the tallest buildings have the deepest foundation.

IS YOUR COACHING WORKING? ASSESS YOUR CURRENT CULTURE

Some leaders want to take the pulse of the company's current culture, so they have a baseline from which they can measure progress. An anonymous, brief survey with a few questions could suffice. Some companies use more detailed, third-party assessments. Other companies ask one or two questions to assess the level of employee engagement, using any of the survey platforms you can find online.

If the intention of the survey is clear, you increase the chance of aggregating more objective data, rather than people using this to air their grievances or lambast the managers and company, knowing it's anonymous.

Keep in mind, most people have their own definition of what coaching is. To ensure consistency, include a universal definition of coaching on

the top of the survey to ensure they are evaluating the company based on a shared understanding of coaching. Finally, make sure you clarify the intention of the survey and what the benefit is for each employee, so they see what's in it for them, since people will resist what they don't understand.

What follows are 10 sample questions you can use in your survey. While there's value in asking all of them, you'll get a better response rate with fewer questions. Modify them as you see fit, as well as the style of question you want to use. (Open text box, multiple choice, scale 1–5, checklists, and so on.)

1. Would you refer people to work for our company?
2. How would you rate the environment or health of our culture? (Scale of 1–5 where 1 is the lowest score you can give.)
3. What five words would you choose that best describe our culture? (Text box or multiple choice.)
4. How would you rate your manager's support and commitment to your success?
5. How would you rate your manager's effectiveness around developing and coaching you to achieve your goals?
6. How consistent is the coaching you receive from your manager?
7. Does coaching measurably improve your (performance, productivity, attitude, job satisfaction)? (Note that each question should only measure one outcome at a time. In this example, "performance, productivity, attitude, and job satisfaction" would be broken up into four distinct questions.)
8. On a scale of 1–5, how fulfilled and satisfied are you at your job?
9. What do you love most about the company?
10. If you could change three things about the company, what would they be?

PREPARING FOR YOUR CULTURAL JOURNEY

Many companies think they already have a healthy coaching culture, when in fact, they do not. This happens because you can be blinded by success. You might be thinking, "We're hitting our growth goals and quotas, so we must be doing everything right." These are the same companies who also tell me they have little visibility, if any at all, around how their managers develop, support, and coach their teams.

Other companies and leaders realize they need help, regardless of performance. These leaders are more self-aware, have let go of their corporate ego, and like you, seek out resources to continually learn, grow, and perform like champions.

While you may feel you need the answers to move forward, the answers are only as good as the questions that are asked. Rather than provide a checklist, I developed 38 questions to spark creativity, innovation, and strategic thinking, and ensure you are well-positioned for your cultural evolution. Please note these questions are not listed in any particular order, so feel free to arrange them in the order you prefer.

TIP FROM THE COACH

The question is always more important than the answer because the answer you get is only as good as the question you ask.

COACHING CULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is the universal definition of *coaching* and a *coaching culture* that will create companywide alignment and adoption?
2. What are the challenges you're experiencing that would be minimized or resolved if you transformed and upskilled your managers to become elite performance coaches?
3. Why do you want to create a coaching culture?
4. What are your measurable objectives and the results/ROI you expect that would determine the success of this initiative?
5. What is your ideal profile and the top characteristics of (a leader/coach, salesperson, employee, etc.)?
6. What practical, easy-to-incorporate coaching framework and methodology will you use to ensure consistency throughout your organization?

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7. Who is the subject matter expert outside of your company who will support you around this initiative and ensure all best practices are being incorporated and adopted?
8. Will you be building this in-house or partnering with a credible company or leader in the field to create and deliver this for you?
9. Who will be the facilitator/trainer and coach who would deliver the coaching program? (The program will fail with the wrong trainer and coach, regardless of how good the content is.)
10. Will you be leveraging outside coaches to support your internal coaches and those who may require individualized coaching?
11. Who will own this initiative and be responsible for its launch, implementation, and success? Who will be the evangelists, advocates, and stakeholders? Will they have coaches of their own to support them throughout this initiative?
12. When is the launch date? When would be the best possible time to launch this coaching initiative and schedule the onsite or virtual leadership coach training, as well as the coach training for your salespeople and every department?
13. Who would be participating in the initial training program? The senior leadership, executives, or midlevel or frontline managers? What team, function or department would be the first to participate in this course?
14. Will you start with individual coaching, a pilot, or a full rollout?
15. What are the milestones that will be achieved and results measured throughout the implementation of this initiative that will ensure success?
16. How many people would be participating in the *initial* coach training course?
17. How many simultaneous days of training are you allocating to deliver the leadership coaching program?

18. How many employees in each department would be taking this course?
19. How are you introducing this initiative, and to whom? (A companywide email, team meeting, individual meetings, or will you incorporate all these communication platforms?)
20. Once announced, what is your timeline and path to progress? What are the defined phases of this initiative, the order in which they are introduced, and over what period of time? (Refer to the appendix for an outline of the steps to take and the order of the critical conversations that need to happen. After the initial rollout, ongoing coaching, observation, and enrollment becomes part of your daily, habitual rhythm of business.)
21. How will you ensure you have the support, commitment, and backing of your senior leadership team to ensure that this is a non-negotiable priority and will not compete against other initiatives? Is senior leadership just as committed to going through the same training and coaching that every other employee will participate in?
22. Do you have the right people in the right positions?
23. What will be the initial training format? An initial onsite delivery? Virtual delivery? Teleconference? Videos? Developing online courses?
24. Are you taking people out of the office (which would include travel expenses and more time for logistical planning) or are you doing the training onsite?
25. How will you reinforce, sustain, and embed the coaching after the initial coach training? Onsite training/coaching reinforcement, an advanced course, virtual delivery/videoconference, online training and resources, webinars, videos, team coaching, scheduled one-on-one and group peer-to-peer coaching to reinforce best practices and learn from each other?
26. Do you have well-defined job descriptions for your managers? Is it clear that the top priority for every manager and where they need to invest the majority of their time is in the development and coaching of their team?

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27. How are you going to manage the coaching process? What technology, if any, might you consider (an online coaching platform) to further support and manage the coaching process and progress for each coachee?
28. How are you going to measure the *quality* of each manager's coaching? How will you ensure you have the visibility you need around the quantity and quality of each manager's coaching to avoid it becoming a "check-the-box" activity?
29. How will you leverage your CRM to uncover coaching and developmental opportunities?
30. How are you going to ensure consistency around peer-to-peer coaching?
31. What would be the structure and cadence of coaching? Team coaching and individual coaching for each person within the company? Scheduled coaching? Dynamic, situational coaching? Observation? How often?
32. How will you ensure the fundamental principles of coaching are being honored? Will you choose "always be coaching" (ABC), "always be peer coaching" (ABPC), or "always be enrolling" (ABE)
33. What modules and topics would you like to see covered in the coaching course that your managers would participate in? How will you ensure there are no missing modules or critical topics in your program?
34. How will you budget for an investment like this? If you can't make the proper investment of time and money, then save both and don't do it at all.
35. What are the possible barriers that can lead to coaching failure when attempting make this the daily responsibility of every manager, salesperson, and peer?
36. How will you ensure global adoption throughout the company? How are you going to hold people accountable when it comes to delivering consistent coaching and being coached?
37. What kind of coaching evangelists, advocates, group, or coaching consortium can you put together who would

support the stakeholders and participants throughout this initiative and beyond? Who will take the role of being the accountability partner to ensure the coaching culture is sustained? Who will become your chief coaching officer?

38. Rather than push people to coach and be coached, using forced scorecard/HR compliance, how will you enroll people to the point they want to engage in and are fully committed to coaching?

CAN'T CHANGE YOUR COMPANY'S CULTURE? CREATE A SUBCULTURE INSTEAD

While many companies may not be ready to take on this initiative, there will be managers who want to learn how to become inspiring, transformational leaders and masterful coaches. That's what the rest of this book is about. At this point in the reading, we will look at the best way to support an organization by ensuring these managers have the foundation to build a coaching culture. Unfortunately, many managers who try to initiate positive change in their company wind up feeling frustrated, disappointed, and disheartened from the pushback they receive from their boss or senior leadership. You've probably heard something along the lines of: "While this is important, it's not our priority. Enough with the coaching for now. We need results to make sure we hit our revenue goals for the year." That's ironic, because in order to hit your goals without the stress of last-minute decisions, late nights, impromptu meetings, and using your last bit of physical and intellectual energy to crawl over the finish line, *you need to be coaching your people!*

FROM THE SIDELINES

It is the responsibility of every manager to insulate their people from the pressure felt from the top.

Rather than trying to change your company's culture in the short term, create a subculture instead.

CAN YOU TRULY CHANGE A METRICS-DRIVEN CULTURE?

As an author and a wordsmith, I truly believe that reality is created in the language we use. Therefore, when you change the language, you have the power to change your thinking, which in turn creates new and better results. In the following story, I describe how one group of senior leaders experienced this very powerful universal principle.

I presented a workshop in Madrid, Spain, to about 80 senior sales leaders of a Fortune 50 company. They were there to learn how they could further impact their team and influence their organization by effectively coaching their sales teams, peers, and cross-functional teams. The group questioned whether a manager truly has the power to impact or influence a culture without authority, to the point where they can effectively coach their team in a sustainable way, especially in an environment where the leaders doing so are in the minority.

Their concern was how effectively their coaching could be over the long term if their boss and the organization's overall culture is not a coaching culture but instead a results-driven culture that valued performance over everything else, including their people.

Demoralized, dejected, and discouraged, these managers truly wanted to initiate positive change, but they felt helpless. They believed they had no influence over their company culture and could do nothing to make the positive changes that were desperately needed. So, instead of trying to become the change they wanted to see, they tried to work around the system and tolerated the toxic culture.

Think of our global society for a moment. Pick any country and consider the cultures that exist and even coexist among each other within an overarching larger culture. Now consider your company culture. Regardless of the size of your company, managers struggle to figure out what they can do to measurably impact their work environment.

This frustration typically manifests itself in a comment from a manager that sounds like this.

Keith, I get that coaching works. You just put us through a powerful simulation that demonstrated what could be possible when we lead conversations with questions and more effectively engage with each other. I'm a huge believer in the power of coaching. But the message we hear from my boss, and my boss's boss, and the senior leadership team in this company is, "Get the results or die trying."

So, coaching is great during good times, but it gets tossed out the window during a heated performance review or when your team is 30 percent down from your sales targets and you're a month away from closing out the quarter.

At that point, all I'm thinking is, my scorecard isn't looking very green and that's going to affect my team, my bonus, reputation, and career. We work for one of the largest companies in the world. We are a KPI-, scorecard-, results-driven organization. While I'd love to see this change, to date, we're not measured around how effective we are as coaches, but around our quota and goal attainment, and performance.

I've heard this a couple of times. I'm sensitive to this and deeply empathize with these managers. As much as I may understand their situation and how they believe there's no hope of change, as a coach, I'm not serving anyone by jumping on the bandwagon of despair and limiting thinking, nor telling people what they already know.

However, I truly understand and deeply respect the feeling that, regardless of the company you work for, trying to change a culture can often feel like trying to quickly turn a battleship, especially if you're a large global sales organization. Instituting any type of transformational change can feel overwhelming, risky, discouraging, and time consuming, especially when there are business objectives that need to be achieved *now*.

CREATE A SUBCULTURE

While continuing the facilitation of this workshop in Madrid, an idea came to me. I didn't plan on saying this nor was it in my presentation. I turned to the senior leaders and asked, "*What if you create your own subculture instead?*"

Being in a room with some very intelligent and experienced people, I needed to back up my statement. So, before I went deeper, I wanted to make sure I got my facts straight. We all pulled out our phones and found how Merriam-Webster's dictionary defined the word *subculture* to ensure alignment around the definition and its relevance to this conversation.

Here's what we found.

b. an ethnic, regional, economic, or social group exhibiting characteristic patterns of behavior sufficient *to distinguish it from others within an embracing culture or society* [italics added for emphasis].

It sounded as if I was on to something. We then jumped over to Dictionary.com.

They defined subculture as:

a. the cultural values and behavioral patterns distinctive of a particular group in a society.

b. group within a society that has its own shared set of customs, attitudes, and values, often accompanied by jargon or a different way of communicating. A subculture can be organized around a common activity, occupation, age, status, ethnic background, race, religion, or any other *unifying social condition*.

This definition helped further reinforce the next question that I posed to every manager who wants to create positive change. I responded to their concern by asking a question very few could answer: If creating the type of subculture you want is a possibility, then how do you change a culture? How do you develop and transform talent?

The answer? *One person at a time. One conversation at a time.*

Regardless of the company you work for, look at your team for a moment and ask yourself, “Who created the culture and environment that exists within my team?” You did. You created that environment. In every conversation and during every interaction. Whether it’s during a face-to-face meeting, a telephone conversation, a text, IM, or email.

Because in every interaction, you are doing one of two things. You are building trust, or you are eroding trust. You are building and developing people or you are eroding them.

And don’t lose sight of the fact that it is your responsibility to create the desired coaching culture, or subculture—the positive environment that can coexist and thrive within a larger culture. It is entirely in your power to create a subculture of collaborative, coachable, and self-driven champions.

In an ideal scenario, the entire company would shift to creating a culture where they authentically put their people before the results. But until that happens, your team, department, or division can be the voice and example for what is possible, regardless of what is going on around you or throughout the company. From there, the subculture you create spreads organically throughout your organization. That’s how to change a culture—from the inside out.

FROM THE SIDELINES

When you wake up, the first question to ask yourself before starting your work day is not, “What can I do to achieve my business objectives?” The question you want to ask yourself is, “What can I do today to make my people more valuable than they were yesterday?” The by-product is, you achieve your business objectives while developing a strong bench of future leaders.

Let’s be clear, your job description hasn’t changed. What has changed is the way you engage with and support your direct reports, peers, boss,

and customers. Regardless of the culture you work within, how you communicate with and support people is always entirely in your power. And where you tap into that power to inspire positive change is in the language of leadership, the language of coaching.

THE CULTURE IS YOU

Honoring this philosophy and opening your thinking to create a subculture creates the changes and the type of environment that you and your team desperately want and need to thrive.

Regardless of your culture, your people interact with you every day. And how does that translate into the impact you can make? You're the culture or, at least, you're the subculture.

Therefore, creating the subculture you want on your team is all in your power because you control how you communicate, respond, and engage with each person on your team, including your peers, cross-functional teams, and customers.

Think of it this way: It doesn't matter what train you get on and whether the conductor of the train is a leader whose style is different than your own. As they lead you down the path to achieve your shared business objectives and desired destination, keep this in mind. When you get on that train, you get to choose your cart, seat, and your view. That's why, ultimately, the culture is you.

FROM THE SIDELINES

If the entire organization is part of this cultural journey, then everyone's a coach.

STOP SELLING, START COACHING

The question every company wants answered when it comes to accelerating growth, revenue, employee development, and productivity, is: How can we maintain our competitive edge, build our brand, outsell our competition, and consistently achieve our sales goals?

Your customers have evolved. So must your salespeople. That's why top salespeople are great coaches. Instead of training salespeople with outdated techniques your competitors use, you must transform your salespeople into *consultative sales coaches* who coach customers to succeed.

THE CONSULTATIVE SALES COACH

Being the innovator of executive sales coaching and the first to create a course that specifically focuses on developing sales leaders and all people managers into world-class coaches, I continually noticed the parallel between sales leadership coaching and professional selling.

My clients started recognizing it too. In practically every sales leadership coaching program I delivered, I would hear from at least one of the participants, “Keith, when reading your book, *Coaching Salespeople into Sales Champions*, this model can also apply to sales. If the art of coaching is to create new possibilities and it’s always about the coachee, then the same model can apply to selling.”

Actually, this is how I sell. Well, I don’t *sell*. Instead, I coach prospects, which is why the definition of coaching and the definition of selling are the same.

Selling is the art of creating new possibilities.

THE SECRET TO MAKING TOP SALESPeOPLE GREAT MANAGERS

Ever promote a great salesperson into a management position, only to watch them struggle with managing, developing, and coaching their team? To solve this eternally universal contagion, here’s how to prepare your future managers for their next position.

Sales training isn’t the answer. To build a bench of next-gen successful leaders, start developing your salespeople into consultative sales coaches. Now, when they get promoted into a management position, they already possess the core competency and proficiency of a leader—coaching! Moreover, since these directs embraced the coaching methodology as a salesperson, you mitigate the risk of promoting the wrong people into management.

Imagine if every person within your company learns and embraces the language and methodology of coaching. Only then can you create corporate alignment, a united front, shared vision, the future leaders of your organization, and a top-performing coaching culture.

THE BEST LEADERS—AND SALESPeOPLE—COACH

Do you need a coaching model for your salespeople and a different one for your managers? Not at all. And that’s great news. While my coaching model remains the same, the only thing that really changes is the conversation.

Instead of limiting the coaching conversation between a manager and a direct report, salespeople are now leveraging coaching conversations with

every prospect, customer, peer, boss, coworker, friend, and family member, including your children, spouse, or significant other.

Now salespeople can coach their customers in a way that empowers them to find their own solution; one they would have greater ownership of, rather than being told what to buy.

MINDFUL MOMENT

The new language of leadership is coaching. The language of selling is coaching. The language across every department is coaching. Subsequently, the language of your culture is coaching, which creates full organizational alignment:

The Manager Coach + The Selling/Nonselling Coach = A Top-Performing Coaching Culture.

The first step to creating a coaching culture that inspires greater innovation and talent is by transforming everyone into a world-class coach. When everyone in your organization is speaking one language, and everyone, regardless of tenure, title, department, or position gets coached effectively and consistently, the results are extraordinary.

This is how you create and sustain your position as a market leader and get your peers, team, and company focused on one unified vision, strategy, and shared goal.

FROM THE SIDELINES

Another quick note about word choice: I use the words *framework* and *model* interchangeably, as I also do with the words, *manager*, *boss*, *leader*, and *coach*. This note is especially for any perfectionists who find these inconsistencies annoying.

We've finished discussing what's needed to prepare your company for a cultural journey into coaching. The rest of the book gets even more exciting because it focuses on the one thing that's going to make or break your company's success—you!

