

THE 3 ESSENTIALS FOR CREATING A COACHING CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE

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Much has been written on how to create organisation culture and what this means for business performance. The climate you create and sustain for employees directly impacts business performance. It is also a key factor in how connected employees feel with your business aspirations. The following three essentials are the first steps on the path to a climate of coaching. In this environment individuals are able to work together and support each other in growing the business whilst being and doing their best.

#1 Focus on outcomes

The starting point for creating anything is to understand why. Why do you want to create a coaching culture in the first place? It is true that culture is often seen as a 'soft' measure yet we know from research that even the most brilliant strategy will fail in a climate that isn't capable of delivering it. How often have you worked in an organisation where another 'cunning plan' bites the dust because people just haven't bought into it? Having a

clear understanding of the outcome you want is paramount because that will fuel motivation. In most organisations this is the step where you would clarify your business case – making the case for change.

Developing a business case can be a dry activity so collecting meaningful data that answers the logical and emotional aspects of the case for change as well as engaging people is crucial. It's where you'll start to understand the gap between where you are and where you want to be. It's also where you ask 'will it be worth it?' Plotting the course between the present and the future isn't a straight line from A to B and just because you have a plan doesn't mean it will succeed. So being really sure about what you want to be different about the organisation's climate, about the working environment, is the start of your journey.

#2 Re-Write the Unwritten Rules

The second is to understand what the current culture or climate is like in your organisation. What really makes this organisation tick and how would I find out? These rules are usually heard in coffee room conversations and tell you what you need to do to get along here, fit in and what to avoid. Pay close attention both to what people say and how they say it. Observe social interactions to find out how people socialise in the organisation and where you will need to pay attention.

The unwritten rules can pull the rug from under the feet of the best laid cultural transformations. Identify which of the unwritten rules is likely to undermine your road to coaching as the way we do things around here and put actions in place to nip them in the bud. For example, if there is an unwritten rule that the person with the loudest voice wins the day, you might wish to start rewarding listening skills. For each unwritten rule that undermines your mission take mindful action.

#3 Act 'As If'

Acting 'as if' is all about role modelling the behaviours you want to see and experience in the organisation. Humans are by nature social beings and we take our social cues from those in positions of authority and from those we identify with. Therefore, having approaches for how leaders in the organisation demonstrate what they are looking for from others is a great starting point. By asking leaders to coach others symbolises the organisation takes the change seriously.

There is also something in the practice makes perfect approach to coaching. The support systems you establish to encourage, train, develop and enable others to coach will determine how willing employees are to 'have a go'. If they are met with support and encouragement they will continue with meaningful practice. If not, they will probably pay lip service at best or worse, coach in ways which could be detrimental to the organisation and the individuals who they coach.

Creating a coaching culture delivers profit with value for everyone

Creating a coaching culture is about developing a climate where organisations can flourish to deliver business outcomes. It isn't the only way to deliver value for your stakeholders but its USP (unique selling point) is that it automatically engages people where other strategies fall flat. Profit without value for the people who work in the organisation dissipates engagement faster than a speeding bullet – and delivers the hero to zero phenomenon seen in the business performance of some organisations.

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