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PRESENT SCENARIO OF COACHING AND MENTORING FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Organizations are looking for learning solutions beyond conventional class room training and e-learning. Coaching has come a big way in the last few decades in the corporate world. Though it was happening in an informal way and in the context of academics and sports earlier, it has caught a lot lately in the management scenario. This paper explores, how different coaching is from mentoring, ways in which coaching can help organizations and management and how the concept of smart coaching can be implemented.

Keywords: Mentoring, Coaching, Ideation, SMART concept

INTRODUCTION

There is a lot of talk going around in HR Circles on the concept of coaching in the last couple of decades and the learning space around Class room training and e-learning is abuzz with programs or modules including fast track management programs helping managers in becoming coaches.

“There are also forums and societies not only international but also local, emphasizing the importance of this very integral concept of coaching in ones day to day life.

Let us try to define this concept and also look at how different this is from Mentoring in the organizational context.

Coaching is training or development in which

a person called a *coach* who supports a learner in achieving a specific personal or professional goal. The learner is sometimes called a *coachee*. Occasionally, *coaching* (Renton, 2009) may mean an informal relationship between two people, of whom one has more experience and expertise than the other and offers advice and guidance as the latter learns; but coaching differs from mentoring (Chakravarthy, 2011) in focusing on specific tasks or objectives, as opposed to general goals or overall development.

There is a lot of historic significance to the word "coaching" to mean an instructor or trainer arose around 1830 in Oxford University slang for a tutor who “carries” a student through an exam (Passmore, 2010). Coaching thus has been used in language to describe the process used to

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transport people from where they are to where they want to be. The first use of the term in relation to sports came in 1861.

“Historically the evolution of coaching has been influenced by many other fields of study including those of Large-Group Awareness Training (LGAT) such as “Erhard Seminar Training-EST”, personal development, adult education, Human Potential Movement, psychology (sport, clinical, developmental, industrial and organizational), and leadership studies. Since the mid-1990s, coaching has developed into a more independent discipline and professional associations such as the Association for Coaching, the International Association of Coaching, the International Coach Federation, and the European Coaching and Mentoring Council have helped develop a set of training standards” (Cox, 2013).

Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé)”(Bozeman, 2007).

	Coach	Mentor
Character	Specific plan	Organizer with no plan
Association	Comes with the work	Self-selecting
Emphasis	Performance	Individual
Benefit	Visible and short term	Wisdom transfer
Ground	Job related	Lifetime
Basis of power	Position	Observed value

Let us look at the differences between coaching and mentoring.

CHARACTER

In terms of the character played by the Coach is more on, having a set agenda to work upon the skills and behavior and re-emphasize on reinforcing the changes mentioned in the agenda (Kenneth, 2006). The perception on style being adopted by the mentor is Questioner, Direct, Logical, and Friend/Confidant.

Whereas the character played by a Mentor is on being a facilitator and a teacher who makes the relationship, mutually beneficial and meaningful for both sides and is totally hierarchy free.

In the Indian context he would be no doubt a “Guru or Teacher” but a Guru who shows direction and shares his experiences and helps in developing the mentee and developing him in an overall manner than only looking at specific skills.

ASSOCIATION

The association that is between a coach and coachee is more of an association (Scannel, 2013) that comes with the task on hand and focuses on a short term relation, till the skill is picked up by the coachee. For example if the coachee is to pick up time management in a coaching period of 3 months, the time period for this relation would be for 3 months till the skill is imparted through the coaching process.

Whereas in the case of a mentor, it would be more informal and can be over a longer period. Self -selection also a major way of association, in the case of mentor.

Emphasis

The emphasis in coaching is more to do on performance and to ensure the performance is improved, within the stipulated time. The focus is also more job related. There is also an element of monitoring and tracking also involved (Tony, 2008).

Whereas in mentoring it is more on giving advice, which the mentee is free to choose from and is more of a support on individual growth and maturity. The focus is not on specific skills and tasks on the job and more personal involvement is seen.

BENEFIT

In the case of coaching, the profit may be in terms of monetary benefit for the coach and the satisfaction of helping the coachee, in facilitating a better performance for his/her team and team synergy.

Whereas in mentoring the benefit is mutual and more on wisdom transfer. There is no monetary consideration, but more of give and take in the learning process and this helps both with a high perceived value and satisfaction for the mentor and to the life of the mentee.

GROUND

In the case of coaching, the ground of discussion is more on the task at hand with structured discussion and follows up (Pradipta, 2014). There is also an element of tracking and continuous feedback where required. Coaching is also a proper tool to use in competencies similar to the sporting area, where the game is more skill based and sharing of experiential knowledge helps. Constant monitoring of an increased demonstration also helps the process (John, 2010).

Whereas in the case of Mentoring the discussion and scope is more on long term career and other areas related to life and not on specific areas. It is informal and can also go to the age group of school children and also youth, who are mentored by somebody more senior, knowledgeable and experienced than them.

BASIS OF POWER

In the case of coaching the basis of power is automatically decided by the role the coach occupies and commands a certain level of authority. It can also be on the basis of the job you have earned as a coach and the authority that comes with it (Mary, 2007).

Whereas in mentoring the relationship is such that no element of power gets in the relationship and is on the basis of perceived value and mutual respect. This is more of a reputation earned personally (Sir John, 2009).

Ways Coaching can help Employees in Organizations

There are lots many ways employees can benefit from the concept of coaching. Some of these are mentioned below

- Coaching can help employees see the employee his/her role better in a the big picture of organizational vision and strategy.
- Coaching helps in linking professionals from organization, who can assist in providing solutions to problems and give a global perspective and world class process orientation.
- Coaching helps in making an honest assessment of ones Strengths and Weaknesses and opportunity and threats in the organizational context and framework.

- Coaching helps in creating an entrepreneurial perspective to the current role and may also help in creating an entrepreneurial bent of mind and a possible career option.
- Coaching gives a platform to share your ideas to the competencies being dealt with, in the coaching process and get meaningful solutions, to problems with planning vision, goals etc.
- Coaching gives an opportunity for dialogue with credibility and effectiveness to improve, any process with a fair amount of honesty and integrity.
- Coaching also helps not only in sustaining and increasing the existing level of motivation but also helps in reinforcing the competency levels and self-worth.
- Coaching also helps in identify further areas of development that can be worked upon through the application of training, e-learning or on-the job training.
- Coaching also helps in experiencing the benefits of coaching as a process itself and probable application to other areas of development.
- Coaching also helps in getting a first-hand experience of the process to use it for others.

Ways in which coaching can help Leadership in the context of Communication, Ideation and Feedback

Coaching can help a great deal in the three top areas of Leadership¹⁴ being Ideation, Communication and Feedback

IDEATION

Many great ideas sometimes never see the light of the day as these needs to be formulated and

documented the right way. A coach can help in analyzing the strategy the right way and use the concept of brainstorming to the maximum advantage in helping the best way to state and implement the idea.

COMMUNICATION

A coach can help a great deal in coaching CEOs and business leaders and help them in developing better communication to help them in ensuring their thoughts and strategies are transferred to the team in a better and more effective manner, through both oral and written modes of communication.

FEEDBACK

Receiving feedback is a very critical and sensitive issue for most managers, the presence of a coach helps a great deal in communicating the same to same to the coachee who is the manager here. The coach equipped with the right tools can play the role of a mirror safely placed under the oath of confidentiality and transparency for his/her development.

Adapting the concept of SMART Goal setting to SMART Coaching.

Before attempting to adopt the SMART concept, following needs to be clarified

- When the coaching needs to happen and within what time frame
- With Whom is the coaching going to happen-clarifying on the coach and coachee
- What is it, that the coaching is trying to achieve along with the limitations and conditions specified
- How is the coaching going to be conducted
- What are the possible ways with which, the coaching may achieve what is desired

Applying the SMART Concept to Coaching

Simple: Keep the coaching process simple and look at competencies that can be handled through a coaching process. All work based competencies both functional and technical can be handled through coaching apart from a host of behavioral competencies. Anything which requires, constant tracking and experiential sharing and can't be handled effectively through lecturing or on-line learning and can be effectively imparted through on the job training can be capitalised by using coaching.

Measurable: The learning on the competency being addressed should be measurable. Always better to have a pre and post assessment done and record it. In most cases where there are no metrics available to measure the learning during coaching, it becomes difficult to gauge how effective the coaching initiative is.

Accountable: The coach and coachee both have to be accountable and not only the coach on how much learning is actually happening through the coaching process and what is the end outcome and meeting it also in the agreed level of commitment.

Realistic: The expectation on achieving the end outcome has to be realistic. No point having hazy false expectations from the programme. Also the learning's need to be doable and the on the ground reality of the learning.

Time bound: Many times in the excitement of doing a very effective and awesome coaching process close to perfection, the time lines of coaching are well above the target making the initiative something that has been dragged too long. Anything too long normally tends to lose the momentum and the interest levels also go down with it.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the difference and context of coaching in comparison to Mentoring helps in clarifying how these two processes are different and helps in using the correct process for the correct purpose. The application of Coaching in the right context also helps a great deal in making organizations move up the learning curve in a very effective manner. The usage of SMART concept of goal setting for coaching with proper understanding of purpose, context, style, application and relevance would take the coaching process to high levels of efficiency and efficacy.

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