

7 WAYS TO SHED TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS & EMBRACE A CULTURE OF COACHING AND SKILLS

The consensus is in and performance evaluations are underperforming. This is not to say that the go-to method for employee advancement has become completely useless, but performance evaluations don't give employers all the tools they need to help employees and their companies succeed. Claims such as these are somewhat surprising since for decades performance evaluations have been the backbone of the HR department. The traditional performance evaluation has been encumbered by more than a few concerns over the years. Their inability to fairly measure productivity is one of those concerns. Even when managers agree on the criteria used for evaluations, the consistency with which employee production is appraised is not. Apart from this, with the unpredictable

nature of doing business in the 21st century, goals are constantly being tweaked and updated. As a result, shifting objectives are making it increasingly difficult to evaluate performance. These issues are prompting HR professionals to move away from the traditional performance evaluation and instead create a culture of coaching. Here is how you can help develop talent, build relationships, solve problems and help achieve business goals.



1. Evaluate the Current Coaching Culture -
To fully embrace a culture of coaching you must know two things: (i) how far away from this culture you are and (ii) the tools available to you. Such an evaluation will help uncover the strengths your organization already possesses and the opportunities available for improvement. Apart from assessing these tools, your coaching evaluation is critical in helping you gauge how well your employees understand the concept of coaching. Further, an evaluation will help highlight what your company will like to achieve in the coming years and how coaching can help it to get there. You will be able to assess which behavior changes are crucial and which personnel are best suited to help create this culture of coaching.

2. Prepare Employees for Change - People are mostly opposed to disruptions. Understandably, trying to change anything in the workplace may feel like an uphill battle. Whether it's because people perceive change as being unnecessary, taxing or even painful, managers should expect some resistance. And that resistance is going to come dressed up as a variety of protests. "We don't have the time. We don't want to be coached" or "Coaching is going to slow us down". Understandably, the first hurdle is trying to convince employees that things can be better. Don't dismiss the concerns voiced by employees, but rather listen closely to the hidden reasons behind the opposition. Understand that each protest may cloak a legitimate fear. Addressing these concerns will help employees feel valued. Additionally, helping them to see that their fears may be misguided will make them both open to change and willing ambassadors for the process as well.



3. Ask Employees the Correct Questions

- Coaching involves guiding employees to the correct solutions for the problems they encounter. For this reason, getting managers to ask the correct questions is crucial. This allows managers to shed light on the employees' day-to-day operations and allows employees to learn from their experiences. A pervasive belief is that coaches micromanage and painstakingly point out employee mistakes. Not only is this the wrong way to go about coaching, but it's the easiest way to alienate and victimize employees. In addition to this, this method may bear some unfortunate resemblance to the regular performance evaluation. Instead of itemizing the employee's shortcomings, choose instead to ask open-ended questions such as "What would you have done differently?" and "What can I do to help you work more efficiently?". Questions such as these help empower employees by allowing them to suggest solutions.

4. Bring Professional Coaches on Board -

Attempting a complete overhaul of your organization is no easy task and should not be approached lightly. Such a task calls for the aid of coaching professionals to guide the process. If managers don't take seriously the task of guiding the coaches, they risk alienating

the workforce and losing their best employees. Coaching professionals will help decide which employees are best suited to becoming coaches since promoting the wrong individual can turn into a costly mistake. They can also help identify nuances in approach that help distinguish coaching from micromanaging.

5. Coaching Begins at the Top -

If your goal is to show to your employees the importance of coaching, there is no better place to start than with the company's higher ups. Insist that all senior leaders seek out a coach for themselves. Taking the plunge and then sharing the results with your employees will help them understand that coaching is not tool used to belittle employees, but rather, it enforces the notion that everyone has room for improvement and everyone can benefit from the exercise.

6. Insist on a Coaching Schedule -

Any new behavior takes weeks or even months of repetition, to take root. Encourage employees to either meet in person or communicate via telephone for 30-60 minutes a day. They should aim to keep these meetings going for at least four to six months since it will take this long to reengineer new productivity and performance benchmarks.

7. Be Clear About the Goals - Transitioning from the traditional performance evaluation to a culture of coaching and skills development is a massive shift in how employees are evaluated. Understandably, this might be met with concern and bewilderment on the part of employees who do not understand what the change might mean for them and how it might affect their current employment. The best way to allay fears is to be clear with employees about what this new strategy means. Everyone needs to be on the same page. Everyone needs to know what management expects from them. In this way, employees can fully embrace this new method.

Coaching is all about re-energizing your workforce by empowering them to take full ownership of their performance. It pushes them to discover latent talents and make even larger contributions to the productivity of your organization. Yet, coaching shouldn't just be something your company does, it must become who you are. The practice must be woven into the company's culture. Even more importantly, there is no one single orientation where coaching is concerned. For it to be effective, coaching must flow upwards, downwards and laterally.

