

Coaching culture - the key ingredient for organisational success

As a Master Coach with 18 years of experience, Marina Jankovic knows how a coaching culture can unlock individual contribution, engagement and empower teams to perform at their best.

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"We all know that there is no universal recipe a business can follow to become successful. We also know that organisational success depends on empowering people to think differently about their work, become more creative, solve problems and adapt to change. Coaching culture is essential in helping people grow and perform through effective conversations and honest feedback, as they identify what they care about and confidently set and achieve their goals," says Marina.

Why coaching culture?

When people feel they have a safe space to learn, try new skills and apply creativity, they will strive to do and be their best, which underpins business success.

In the 2016 International Coaching Federation (ICF) and the Human Capital Institute (HCI) *study* on Building a Coaching Culture with Managers and Leaders, we learned that "organisations with a strong coaching culture report recent revenue above their industry peer group." A similar ICF / HCI study in 2018 noted that "organisations with strong coaching cultures are more likely to have better talent and business outcomes."

The ICF is soon to release the 2023 version of this study which will show insights from the post pandemic period where we've seen major workplace dynamic shifts and a need for coaching culture has become more apparent than ever.

How to start creating a coaching culture?

1. Make coaching everybody's business.

Actively promote a culture where active listening, asking and giving feedback, and growing others is everybody's business. Organisations often shape and implement programs which target specific gaps or growth areas, but the coaching culture goes far beyond. Progress has been made when all leaders act as coaches to their teams and work on embedding coaching skills in everything they do. In a nutshell, coaching needs to be seen as everybody's business.

2. Integrate coaching in your talent and leadership development strategy.

Work to embed coaching into talent and leadership development programs if they already exist in your organisation.

Learning and development programs must integrate coaching to help participants deepen, apply, and sustain their learning. Embedding coaching may include simple steps, such as a follow-up session between a program participant and a professional coach, peer group support as part of the coaching program, or a session to help participants understand the feedback they received.

The ultimate goal of embedding coaching in your talent and leadership strategy and programs is to make learning stick.

3. Help people unlock their wisdom by focusing on shifting mindsets.

As a professional coach, I know that what drives performance is not a lack of technical capability. It's often a mindset, so it is essential to have a deep knowledge of human behaviour and have professionals trained to go deep behind the behaviour and work on transforming any negative beliefs or self-talk standing in the way of unlocking people's full potential.

When building coaching cultures in organisations, don't rush to provide leaders with easy-to-use coaching models so they can start coaching. While these models may initially be useful for leaders to feel more confident in navigating a coaching conversation, they fall short in creating the right behaviours and beliefs essential to growing skilled coaches and coaching culture.

If you want to unlock the wisdom of your team, instead of jumping to give them the answers, let them ideate and develop their solutions. It's easy to tell someone what to do, but that doesn't always lead to lasting change. It's important to recognise situations when you, as a leader, need to provide advice and when you leave room for others to apply their wisdom and solutions.

Focus on change that sticks

As you work toward building a coaching culture in your organisation, focus your efforts on change that sticks. Take your specific organisational context into account and work on making coaching everyone's business. Your team will be inspired to go above and beyond when they feel like they have the space to create, that their voice matters and that they can put ideas into action.

Marina Jankovic is a Master Certified Coach (MCC ICF) and an expert on women's leadership. She is the author of the book *Your Time to Shine: Awaken Your Greatness to Shape the World*.

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