

COMPONENT 2

EMPLOYEE COACHING

This brief publication is an executive summary of a major research project conducted by Educational Management Consultant Services, Inc. This work was commissioned by the Florida Association of District School Superintendents. The document was designed as a training manual to be used in mentoring and coaching school principals and district level leaders. The complete work will be published under the title "Executive Coaching in Public Education." The content of this document are protected under applicable copyright rules and statutes. It may not be reproduced without the expressed written consent of Jerry P. Copeland, President of EMCS, Inc.

SECTION I

An Introduction to Employee Coaching

Because employee coaching is a relatively recent practice, there is limited information available on the full scope of issues involved in using a coach. This introduction is intended to provide a better understanding of the following:

- ❖ Whether a school executive needs an employee coach or whether he/she is ready for one.
- ❖ What the most promising characteristics of a good coach are.
- ❖ How to evaluate the qualifications of a prospective coach.
- ❖ Understanding the nature of the coaching relationship.
- ❖ What to expect when you use a coach, including the results the school executive should achieve.
- ❖ How coaching should relate to a person as well as the overall organizational system.

Do You Need an Employee Coach?

Employee coaching is a process that fosters self awareness and that results in the motivation to change, as well as the guidance needed if change is to take place in ways that meet organizational needs.

Dotlich and Cairo

Employee coaching is often confused with other valuable but different services. It is not the same as consulting, a situational or organizational intervention, or medical counseling. Employee coaching is also different from a long-term mentoring relationship with a trusted professional colleague.

According to an article published in *Leadership in Action* by Karen Kirkland Miller, a coaching manager at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) San Diego Campus, the following questions distinguish coaching from other activities:

- ❖ “Do I need help in solving a complicated business problem? If yes do not hire a coach; hire a business consultant.
- ❖ Do I need to discuss a deeply personal matter about my internal sense of well-being? If yes, do not hire a coach; engage a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, or counselor.
- ❖ Do I need to discuss the internal politics of my organization and my career path within it? If yes, do not hire a coach; find a trusted person in your organization who is willing to serve as a mentor to you.
- ❖ Do I need to learn and practice a specific new skill set that I lack? If yes, do not hire a coach; find an appropriate skills development course that offers opportunities to practice the new skill set, perhaps using videotaped feedback.
- ❖ Do I need to acquire a specific field of knowledge? If yes, do not hire a coach; get the information from such sources as books, tapes, Web sites, classes, or discussion groups, depending on your preferred learning style, and set aside enough time for studying and internalizing the new information.
- ❖ Do I need spiritual, moral, or religious guidance? If yes, do not hire a coach; find a rabbi, minister, priest, or other spiritual counselor to assist you.
- ❖ Do I need to evaluate whether I am in the right career and to consider possible options for changing careers or professions? If yes, do not hire a coach; hire an expert in career counseling who can do aptitude and interest testing and serve as an expert during your transition.
- ❖ Do I need structured planning and support to develop a new way of leading or managing others? If yes, consider hiring a coach.”

Determine the State of Readiness

Prior to using a coach, a school executive should reflect on the specific degree of readiness. If he/she is not motivated then don't do it. The writers from the available literature generally agree that to determine the state of readiness, the executive must sincerely respond to the following personal queries:

- ❖ Do I have a clear understanding of the organizational mission, vision, and constancy of purpose?
- ❖ Can I clearly articulate the mission, vision, and constancy of purpose to the employees that I supervise?

- ❖ Am I in agreement personally with the mission, vision, and constancy of purpose for myself and the organization that I serve?
- ❖ Have I undergone or am I willing to undergo a series of rigorous self appraisals which will reflect feedback from peers, supervisors and those I supervise?
- ❖ Am I willing to commit the time, energy, and resources to change what needs to be changed or should I seek a new career path which may be more consistent with my personal skills, training, and belief system?
- ❖ Is my nature such that I am likely to spend more time trying to discern who to blame for an error than is required to correct the error?
- ❖ Is the organizational culture at a place on the growth continuum such that an intensive internal coaching program will be safe for my career development? If not, should I consider an employee coach from another school district or even at all?
- ❖ Am I willing to be honest enough to openly interact about my shortcomings and admit that I can improve the quality of my service delivery?
- ❖ What personal characteristics, as determined by measures such as Myers Briggs indicators and others, should a coach have, to be effective in working with me?
- ❖ Do I have a clear understanding of what is required to manage change?
- ❖ Do I truly believe as a public school executive that all children can learn; and that we can teach each one regardless of his/her socioeconomic condition or racial-ethnic heritage?
- ❖ Do I have the personal capacity and willingness to change from “Managing the trivial many to providing leadership for the significant few.”

Characteristics of a Good Employee Coach

Since employee coaching is somewhat new in the broad field of management science, several organizations, companies, and educational institutions are working diligently to develop this new science. Among the more prominent of these is the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). CCL and others in the field of leadership development tend to agree that the list which follows represents acceptable qualities for employee coaching. These writers include: Coble, Deal, Deck, Huge, Copeland, Rogers, Hargrove, Dotlich, Cairo, Schlechty, and others. The following list is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive:

- ❖ Intensive knowledge and experience in public education, organizational alignment, strategic planning, practicing the power of purpose, and an extensive background in employee mentoring, supervision, and consulting.
- ❖ A successful change agent with experience in writing, research, and consulting in managing the science of change and the correlates of adult learning theory.
- ❖ Executive presence which means having an observable professional demeanor that is personable, articulate, and confident.
- ❖ Intensive listening skills which contribute to the capacity to build rapport and trust in a nonthreatening and developmental atmosphere.
- ❖ Unquestionable integrity and credibility, an authentic person who talks and walks each premise.
- ❖ In-depth knowledge in assessment methodology, including psychological testing interpretation. This specifically means knowing which instrument is appropriate in each setting and having the capacity to be data driven in developing feedback sessions.
- ❖ A strategic thinker and planner who recognizes the strategic implications of management/operational decisions which may have strategic impact. This person will know of that which he/she does not know, and as a result be able to conceptualize issues over the horizon.
- ❖ Appropriately educated for the setting, usually requiring a Masters Degree or higher.
- ❖ A clear understanding of perception and the frame or frames from which an individual may view a particular issue, organization, or recommended solution.
- ❖ Extensive interpersonal skills which include compassion, empathy, and the ability to communicate while preserving dignity.
- ❖ A demonstrable willingness to learn and adjust, including a creative spirit which promotes growth and organizational change.
- ❖ A visible core value system which includes sincerity as well as a nondiscriminatory, non-biased attitude when dealing interpersonally with rules, roles, and relationships.
- ❖ A successful employee coach will create a relationship which is professional, confidential, nonthreatening, and developmental.

Absent these attributes, employee coaching will not work.

Robert Hargrove, in a publication entitled, *Masterful Coaching*, adds six additional characteristics to this listing (Hargrove, pg. 42-49). These characteristics are:

- ❖ “The Ability to Inspire – Employee coaches inspire people by helping them recognize the previously unseen possibilities that lay embedded in their existing circumstances.” Remember the story of James Escalante, a math teacher at an inner-city high school in East Los Angeles.
- ❖ “Setting High Standards – Employee coaches seek excellence by setting higher standards not only for themselves but for others. They are not only stern taskmasters with others but also with themselves.”
- ❖ “Honesty and Integrity – Employee coaches hold themselves to the highest standards of honesty and integrity, not just because of expediency but because these qualities really matter to them. Integrity is the consistency between what the coach wants for the employee and what the coach says and does, - “doing what you say you will do. Speaking honestly to people involves letting people know where they stand, questioning what people take for granted, and honestly acknowledging all mistakes... Employee coaches confront people for the good of the organization and out of a deep sense of caring for others.”
- ❖ “Disciplined Intensity – Most people can rise to the occasion when there is a crisis, what distinguishes an employee coach is his/her ability to elicit disciplined intensity using people’s inner motivation rather than relying on outside pressure.”
- ❖ “Forwarding Action – Employee coaches don’t get stalled at the starting gate or bogged down strategizing, planning, or preparing... They forward the action by identifying the openings that will allow them to get a meaningful result in the shortest period of time and, at the same time, will allow them to learn something that will provide new opportunities for action.”
- ❖ “A Passion to Help Others Learn, Grow, and Perform – Employee coaches have a burning desire to help others learn, grow, and perform. They are highly perceptive in discerning the gap between who people are today and their potential. They see leaders where others see followers. They see creative thinkers where others see those who can only follow conventional wisdom... An employee coach cannot stand to see someone who has potential but who is not being helped to fulfill it. It is the coach’s job to make this happen... It is the urge to make a difference in other people’s lives that sets an employee coach apart.”

Employee Coaching Connectivity

In order for employee coaching to have a personal and/or organizational impact, it must have direct connectivity to a well-planned overall development system. In this particular case, the employee coaching component is part of a comprehensive program of executive development services offered through the Florida Association of District School Superintendents. This program serves various cohort groups such as school principals, district-level executives, school board and superintendent executive assistants and school superintendents.

The school superintendent component is designed to provide continuity of leadership in the State of Florida since approximately 30 of Florida's 67 superintendents, either elected or appointed, vacate the office each four years. This comprehensive training sequence is divided into three intense training modules.

Supporting Technical Assistance

This literature clearly indicates that employee coaching is less powerful when used in isolation or when it is used simply to prevent on the job failure.

When used correctly, employee coaching will help system school executives manage and lead their organizations with an emphasis on taking charge of their own careers and allow other executives to do the same while maintaining a direct focus – **Student Growth and Achievement**.

To further demonstrate the need for employee coaching and the relationship of various school system executive systems with emphasis on the principalship, the following research is included. On careful examination a reader will note the direct parallel in concept, precept, practice, and theory with the above described superintendent developmental experiences.

School Principals Perceptions, Roles, Rewards and Challenges

A study (Lyons) was conducted at the University of North Carolina by 97 students who collected data from 194 principals. These principals were from 14 school districts served by the University.

“The study had several limitations. First, since students were allowed to select the two principals that they would interview, the respondents were not randomly selected. For this reason, the findings cannot be generalized to all school principals. Second, students were permitted to interview principals in schools where they were employed as teachers if they chose to do so. In instances where this occurred, the objectivity and candidness of

some responses could be called in question due to the superior-subordinate relationship involved in the interview.

This research project was designed to determine whether a group of principals perceived the following research conclusions as a part of their leadership roles. Recent research, theory, and professional organizations (for principals) have generally concluded that successful principals must:

- ❖ Have a vision for their schools.
- ❖ Have clear and well-understood goals.
- ❖ Establish a safe and positive school climate.
- ❖ Focus on academics, teaching, and learning.
- ❖ Practice shared decision making in concert with teachers, parents, and students.

All participating principals were asked to respond to nine standard questions:

1. How do you develop school goals?
2. How do you determine school priorities?
3. How do you make decisions at the school level?
4. How do you assess school results/effectiveness?
5. What planning procedures do you use at the school level?
6. What satisfactions or rewards do you derive from the principalship?
7. What are your greatest frustrations in the job?
8. What do you perceive to be your most important duties as principal?
9. What advice would you offer a beginning principal?

Based on the data contained in the interview summaries, the respondents had very clear ideas of their most important duties. Given the open-ended nature of the question, it was interesting to note the level of unanimity in the responses. Responses were ranked on the basis of frequency of mention.

The majority of the respondents were in substantial agreement on what they perceived to be their four most important responsibilities. Following the top four priorities, there was not as much agreement among the respondents on the remaining items. In response to

the question, “What do you perceive to be your three most important duties?,” the following are reported in priority order:

- ❖ Providing a safe school environment and a positive school climate.
- ❖ Fostering good teaching and learning.
- ❖ Communicating with parents and promoting good school-community relations.
- ❖ Hiring and developing a good staff.
- ❖ Monitoring student progress.
- ❖ Managing school resources.
- ❖ Determining school goals.
- ❖ Leading, inspiring, and motivating staff.
- ❖ Maintaining a child oriented school and being an advocate for children.
- ❖ Maintaining positive staff relations and staff harmony.

The findings from the study led to some specific suggested changes for school principal training programs and employee coaching:

- ❖ Provide the leadership to develop and articulate a vision for the school.
- ❖ Lead teachers and other members of the school community in goal setting, planning, and shared decision making.
- ❖ Become intimately familiar with the variables used to determine school effectiveness, particularly school test data used to assess academic progress.
- ❖ Work cooperatively with superiors to determine annual school goals and priorities.
- ❖ Provide a safe school environment and a positive school climate that fosters good teaching and learning.
- ❖ Communicate with parents and promote good school-community relations.
- ❖ Recruit and develop a competent staff and be able to lead, inspire, and motivate staff members.
- ❖ Monitor student progress, particularly in academic areas.

- ❖ Manage school resources.
- ❖ Maintain a child-oriented school and be an advocate for children.
- ❖ Maintain positive staff relationships and staff harmony.

SECTION II

The Focus and Direction of Employee Coaching

Becoming a masterful employee coach is a lifelong process of personal analysis, deep self awareness, and continued professional growth. This is a specific and all together distinct field of thought and service. Employee coaching is not delivering a one-size-fits-all solution; rather it contains the noblest of purpose – leading others to the full realization of their visions, deepest thoughts, spontaneous ideas, and living out values.

In more specific terms, the central focus is on a complete transformation. This becomes the building platform for everything else an employee coach will do. “The key to becoming a masterful coach lies in having the dream, aspiration, and the bone-deep commitment to make a difference in the lives of employees within an organizational context. This commitment will unlock wisdom, intuition, and insight when mere technique fails.” (Hargrove, pg. 13)

From the literature there are at least four constructs of masterful employee coaching. These are:

1. Coaching as Stewardship.
2. Personal Transformation and Reinvention.
3. Creating Communities of Commitment and Team Collaboration.
4. Expanding People’s Capacity to take Effective Action” (Hargrove, pgs. 18-26).

Each of these points are briefly described herein.

Coaching as Stewardship

Stewardship is taking a stand for the future of the people, communities, complex social systems, and the world we care about.

One cannot contemplate stewardship without considering at a soul level the essence of being. The sociology of our contemporary society creates the concept that our sole purpose of being is to live out our lives fully, successfully, and as happily as we possibly can. Few are endowed with the thought that our being carries the responsibility of passing to the next generation a world which is better situated than we found it. This goes far beyond passing on an accumulation of wealth. It implies the necessity to pass on a collective vision from a cornerstone of intrinsic values institutionalized in our

communities, schools, social structure, and the very essence of being in practicing the art of living a constructive life.

Victor Frankl, an existentialist thinker, wrote a publication entitled *Man's Search for Meaning*. This publication summarizes his holocaust experiences which had a profound impact on his methodology and practice as a psychiatrist. Frankl believed that at the very core of every being is the absolute will to exist. Our society has imposed the next layer and defines it as a series of accommodations designed to improve the quality of life. Unfortunately, in our society this translates quickly to an accumulation of wealth, the abundance of self interest, and accordingly, becoming a CEO in which, of itself, creates the view of being on the road to personal and organizational success. Stewardship will transform this layer from enhancing the quality of life to adding value to the essence of being. The question is then raised, "What does it take to accommodate this premise?" The answer is perhaps too lengthy for this publication, but it certainly includes dealing with purpose, choosing service over self interest, establishing a vision, nurturing the human spirit, seeing who we are and what we stand for, thinking creatively about the future, of people, institutions, and the world. "Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather he must recognize that it is he who is asked. In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond by being responsible. Thus, in responsibility one discovers the very essence of human existence." (Frankl, pg. 131) The alternative to this discussion may not be acceptable. Hargrove states, "That we are existing off the capital of future generations."

The effective employee coach who truly understands the qualities of stewardship will stand out accordingly. These patterns of behavior will eliminate for employees the artificial boundaries between the things they care about at the office and things they care about as human beings. It will create a culture that encourages people to bring their total being to work. This will not only impact productivity but make a difference to the organization and the community.

Personal Transformation and Reinvention

"Nothing happens without personal transformation."

W. Edward Deming

Employee coaching is about empowering people to visualize a future they truly desire by discovering what they passionately care about. Employee coaches have left a legacy in Fortune 500 Companies. Many CEO's have profited from coaches who encouraged them in this direction and so have the cultures that established their success.

Transforming contemporary organizations and leaders is not an event, but a continual process of discovering how to add value to the “essence of being”. In the field of public education, numerous executive leaders can articulate that which they passionately care about and are successful in building a shared vision within the organization. Upon close examination, however, many of these leaders have not been impacted by the realization that reinventing the organization cannot be separated from transforming and reinventing themselves. Employee coaching is not based on an intense analysis of what is wrong with an executive, rather it is the discovery of the context or frame that shapes the perceptions which influence decisions. Any organizational context is made up of the sum of employee’s specific perceptions and beliefs and perhaps assumptions that they believe to be true.

Employee coaching involves empowering people to transform who they are and reinvent themselves by helping them to see how their frames of reference, thinking, and behavior produce unintended consequences. This work involves encouraging people to surface and question the way they have framed their points of view about themselves, others, or their circumstances with the idea of creating a fundamental shift. For example, a shift from self-interest to stewardship, from being control oriented to being creative and generative, from seeing conflict as embarrassing or threatening to seeing conflict as a leverage point for building a shared view. When people’s frames of reference shift, it allows them to see things in new ways and to act in new ways.” (Hargrove, pg. 22)

Creating Communities of Commitment and Team Collaboration

Effective collaboration is an intricate series of planned interpersonal interactions of both internal and external networking driven by a common purpose. Such has been described as a beehive – a complete community.

Copeland

To eliminate the power, control, fragmentation, and piecemeal approach, many leaders, managers, consultants, and coaching practitioners from a variety of organizations are searching for metaphors to clarify this new science. Some of the more recent follow.

- ❖ Servant leadership.
- ❖ Beehive—a complete community.
- ❖ A living community of commitment.
- ❖ Productivity as a community of purposeful practice.

- ❖ A living organization with an unlimited diet of common purpose.
- ❖ A thinking culture with perpetual synergy that adds value to the very essence of human existence.

In this organizational culture, vision and purpose are shared. Employees have a sense that not only is the work worth doing but it is also deeply purposeful. Employees draw their identity from their individuality and from their specific connectivity to the whole. This is perfectly consistent with the nature of the human spirit. Most have a sincere desire to work with dedication, passion, and pride. “At CNN, the game is covering the planet in real time so as not only to produce information but also to impact opinion shapers and movers. At Swissair, it is flying people to hundreds of destinations with personal service touches that give everyone a sense of real worth. At Ben & Jerry’s, it is making ice cream, like Rain Forest Crunch, with the intent of changing the world.” (Hargrove, pg. 23) In public education, it is revitalizing curriculum and instruction according to Schlechty, Coble, and others by reformation and by building a new infrastructure that motivates every student to achieve extraordinary results.

Due care must be exercised not to confuse this discussion with the first or second waves of school reform. The first followed the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Most of these reforms resulted in omnibus education bills containing various incentives and regulations. Many state legislatures assumed that schools were more alike than different, and therefore reforms tended to be applied across the board in a one-size-fits-all syndrome. This bureaucratic tinkering generally resulted in teachers and principals being more accountable, but much less empowered.

The second wave of reform gained momentum in the mid to late 1980’s. While the first identified teachers and principals as the problem, the second tended to see them as the solution. This new wave ushered in the bottom up approach and introduced the concepts of collegiality, participatory culture, empowering teachers with the sharing of decisions and with greater teacher autonomy. In return schools were to be held to a higher standard with greater accountability. The outcome of these efforts has altered how teachers and principals are prepared and coached.

Moreover, one must be careful not to be overly critical of the level of effort exhausted at a district or school level. Most school executives and teachers are working harder than they have ever worked. We must also realize that this class of our current employees may be the best we will ever have. This fact being due to critical shortages and the competitive job market place. Therefore, the need for profoundly masterful employee coaching is approaching an all time high.

In the previously described community of commitment and purpose, leaders stand for what matters and leadership comes from throughout the organization. Communication and standards of excellence are focused, challenging, and rigorous. Employees visualize how they fit with a part of the organization which fits together to make a whole.

Employee coaching in the years ahead will increasingly transform the educational community. Leaders will offer guiding visions and values which will shift the culture from following orders to working on causal integrated relationships to purpose.

Expanding People's Capacity to Take Effective Action

The fourth compass point of employee coaching is leading employees to take effective action. On occasion employees are working in job classifications that do not match their personal qualities or challenge them to excellence. Likewise, employees often set goals that are not creative, do not stretch their minds, or use their skills. This lacks the inspiration to achieve high levels of commitment. The research generally indicates that the majority of the work force truly desires to do an effective job. The key appears to be in finding the perfect match. The baffling aspect of this concept is that individual interests do not always follow their educational or their experiential background. Coaching people to be more effective starts with the explanation of what we were born to do and then finding the arena that fits our value system and a job where we can do it. Accordingly, the level of effectiveness will be greatly enhanced.

It becomes immediately obvious that if the employees do not understand the prior premise then even if they happen upon a great job match they may not recognize it with particularity. Coaching in this area is deliberate and will produce amazing results when employees are motivated to be excited, really care about what they do, and have something at stake. This grows a culture where employees discover the core of their creativity, generate new ideas, and innovative solutions.

SECTION III

Critical Components of Employee Coaching

Matching personal qualities, skills, purpose, and vision with job expectations will produce extraordinary results.

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David Dotlich and Peter Cairo, in a publication entitled *Action Coaching*, defined several types of coaching from traditional methods to executive development services. This publication is contemporary, forward thinking and probably sets a new benchmark for employee coaching within an organizational setting. The book is primarily written for Corporate America but crosswalks in a recipe format to public education. The following types of action coaching are paraphrased:

Contemporary organizations on a growing basis are starting to recognize that coaching is a core competency for executives and other managers. Internationally, including public education, downsizing, the bottom line, and accountability movements have created fewer hands to accomplish a larger task. Increasing productivity by enhancing commitment is now a survival skill. Coaching delivery in an organizational context adds insurance to the likelihood of visionary growth.

- ❖ “Manager Coaches - The old notion of a manager was a no-nonsense boss who didn’t deal with the soft issues. Not so many years ago, managers wouldn’t touch issues such as individual purpose and values versus results. Today such issues are crucial. For one thing, the role of the manager has expanded as the number of managers per organization has shrunk. For another, self-reliant workforces require individual managers to do more of their own problem solving. Coaching allows managers to do more with less. In addition, managers can no longer motivate without getting into both the head and hearts of their people. Coaching helps managers do exactly that.

- ❖ Employee Coaches - Many executives are using coaching to train and mentor future leaders; they’re also employing it as a way to develop key competencies in their direct reports. At the same time, they’re determining when coaching is appropriate, deciding who should be a coach (external or internal), and setting coaching goals for individuals that link to desired business results.

- ❖ Peer Coaches - As organizations flatten and the lines between functions and titles blur and as individuals are increasingly working together in self-directed teams, the need for peers to coach each other has intensified. It's not always possible to go to a boss for help. Co-workers are much more likely to have the time and inclination to assist a fellow worker who is having problems or wants to develop in new ways. All they need are accessible coaching skills.
- ❖ Specially Trained Internal Coaches - These people often work in the Human Resources Department and their mission is to coach whomever needs assistance. Like school counselors, they exist because organizations recognize that the high-pressure, competitive environment and confusing issues will produce people with problems and unmet goals. Permanent coaches such as these are terrific generalists, able to handle a wide range of coaching issues.
- ❖ External Coaches - These still exist, though they tend to be more specialized than in the past. Organizations usually hire such coaches for specific purposes: To develop high-potentials, to handle politically charged situations (where an internal coach wouldn't have the objectivity or platform to do a good job), to work on leadership development issues such as accelerating the business skills of individuals or groups, or to deal with complicated or delicate problems (a highly talented but out-of-control executive). In other words, external coaches have the specialized expertise that other people might not have." (Dotlich, Cairo, pgs. 6-8).

Dotlich and Cairo have simplified the definition of action (employee) coaching. As follows: Employee Coaching is a process that fosters self-awareness and that results in the motivation to change as well as the guidance needed if change is to take place in ways that meet organizational needs. (Dotlich and Cairo, pg. 18).

This definition raises several questions. What is the methodology to motivate an employee to a point of full self awareness in an organizational context and then act accordingly? Within a systems context, how can one be sure that each of these individual employee changes will indeed have a positive impact on the organizational constancy? What is the certainty that such awareness will enhance the organizational culture as opposed to simply advancing an employee's aspirations and career expectations? These questions and others are answered by describing at least four essential elements of employee coaching. These elements follow:

- ❖ **FIRST**, self-awareness is linked with organizational results. Early in the coaching process personal development goals are set which match an employee's perception of necessary changes to the need for change in the organizational context. These two perceptions may vary dramatically, but must be reconciled.

- ❖ **SECOND**, an executive plan is put in place. Employee coaching plans are clear and substantial. They ask people to accomplish specific essential tasks, set visionary benchmarks, and agree on the indicators of measurement. Employee coaching may require employees to develop critical incident reports, establish journals based on reflective thinking, and test new behaviors while developing/learning new skills. The record of coaching interactions may impact an employee's future in the organization. While designed to be positive, shortcomings may have a negative impact. Sincerity, compassion, creditability, and integrity will help clarify that we all are held accountable.

- ❖ **THIRD**, the level of achievement is set based on organizational need. The exertion of human effort in the workplace should be systemically influenced by the mission and vision of that specific organization. On occasions, nothing will suffice short of a complete transformation of employee attitudes and behaviors. "For this reason, Dotlich and Cairo recommend the setting of one of the four following goals: self-awareness, performance improvement, performance breakthrough, or transformation.

- ❖ **FOURTH**, the process is structured and provides proven tools. Employee coaching is far from being a seat-of-the-pants methodology. It may be situational but employee coaching unfolds in a logical, orderly manner. There is a definable beginning, middle, and end to the process as well as an extensive tool chest to facilitate the process. This well organized system will eliminate the uncertainties and the vague irrational outcomes that plague other approaches.

Dotlich and Cairo present a continuum from traditional coaching to employee coaching. This continuum follows.

From Traditional Coaching to Executive Coaching

From Traditional Coaching	→	To Employee Coaching
• Therapist-patient relationship	→	• Professional-organizational relationship
• One-size-fits-all approach to development	→	• Personalized to each employee
• Self-awareness as an end	→	• Uses self-awareness as a means to create needed organizational behavior
• Focused primarily on personal insights, not action	→	• Focused on implementing new learnings into measurable results
• Unstructured approach and interactions	→	• Strategic and planned actions leads to performance breakthroughs
• Focus on individual only; little link to organizational realities and obstacles in changing behavior	→	• Matches individual aspirations and skills to the organizational context with a focus on purpose

Adapted from Exhibit 1.3, Dotlich and Cairo, pg. 21.

According to Dotlich and Cairo, there are at least eight steps of executive coaching. They view these steps as flexible so that a coach would not feel locked into the chronological order. Each employee may enter the process at a different point or some of the steps may have already been taken. “You must, however, adhere to the four key elements of the process: (1) self-awareness is linked with business results; (2) an executive plan is put in place; (3) the level of goal achievement is set based on organizational need; and (4) the process is structured and uses proven tools.” (Dotlich and Cairo, pg. 33).

The Employee Coaching process consists of the following eight steps:

1. Determine what needs to happen and in what context.
2. Establish trust and mutual expectations.
3. Contract with the client for results.
4. Collect and communicate feedback.
5. Translate talk into action.
6. Support big steps.
7. Foster reflection about actions.
8. Evaluate individual and organizational progress.

We hope that this overview of employee coaching will provide a vibrant and living sense of how this process unfolds and how it can be implemented within school districts. It is our intention to further develop techniques, and training activities that will assist along the journey. This is not a complicated process, it is one, however, that requires skill and knowledge. Any process held out for the purpose of reshaping human behavior needs to be led by a seasoned and learned professional.

SECTION IV

The Organizational Context of Effective Coaching

The product of employee coaching within an organization should unleash the human spirit and expand the work force capability to achieve beyond anticipated measures of productivity so as to institutionalize real change. This does not begin with tinkering with the strategy, structure, or systems of the organization. It also does not start with coaching techniques like setting goals, motivating people, and giving feedback. It starts with considering and being willing to alter the underlying context in which these occur.

The cultural context is made up of the sum total of all the conclusions people in the organization have reached in order to succeed. This culture is shaped by the shared interpretations employees make about the operational environment, the existing theory of practice, and the core competencies that have been built up over time. It is also shaped by the management and leadership culture that is inherited or self-imposed. This network of underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes are largely invisible but still influential. It is this basic cultural context that is important to consider in creating a framework for effective coaching.

For example, the prevailing culture of most school districts is based on some type of alignment—the institutional practice of placing different people and groups into separate divisions and departments. Consequently, if you move from coaching the individual to coaching a group, especially in an organization like a school district, you have to talk about the context in which you are coaching. Is the coaching going to take place in the context of unilateral decision making, subservience, and dependency? Or is it going to take place in the context of internal commitment, external networking, collaboration and involvement? Considering the context is essential before you begin the journey of coaching any group.

Robert Hargrove, in a book titled *Masterful Coaching*, looked at the cultural context from two perspectives, the first being, command, control, and coercion; the second being stewardship, internal commitment, and learning model.

The Command, Control, and Coercion Model

This model has been traditional in many organizations. According to (Hargrove, pg. 7) “Bill Walsh, former coach of the San Francisco 49ers, in this context there is only one person who does all the thinking, makes all the decisions, and designs the game plan and that person is the dictator.” There are many executives whose need to pursue power to serve their own purposes and the desire to win is so strong that they use this context without even being aware of it.

Despite all the attention given to visionary leadership, culture change, empowerment, quality, strategic planning, understanding purpose, and service in recent years, most of the changes have impacted limited numbers of people and have been largely cosmetic.

This often reduces itself down to autocracy—getting people to do things that they ordinarily would not want to do. The price paid for that is enormous. This model withers the human spirit and saps people of the motivation for high level performance and the ability to embrace the concept of change. The organization becomes impersonal and values stability, predictability, and control above all else. This creates a culture that flattens creativity, is inconsistent with quality and adds no value. Finally, people resist and most feel bewildered, frustrated, and resentful.

This model is contradictory to the nature of the human spirit. People who work under this model have to accept being dependent, submissive, and passive in the face of the leader. Since this goes against a person's basic instincts, the command and control model breeds defensive behavior. The boss ultimately is stymied, the shared view is lost, people try to win or withdraw from the conversation, the whole is reduced to the most powerful of the parts and the organization becomes unmanageable, falls into a mood of resignation or in the case of public schools, becomes more domestic and operates in spite of the leadership.

Another significant issue of this model is that employees tend to perceive everything that comes from the top as another form of coercion. Thus, coaching people in this context will be seen as an attempt to dominate or to get more out of people after they are already past the breaking point. Motivating people with a reward system will be seen as manipulation and giving feedback will be perceived as checking up on what are you doing or saying to me this time? Learning and training are resisted because people do not participate in setting their own learning agendas. This becomes self perpetuating creating a vicious non productive cycle.

The Stewardship, Internal Commitment, and Learning Model

In attempting to realize high-standards and visionary change so as to create higher levels of commitment from people, every organization reaches an ethos or point of crisis that represents a need to create a new culture. One approach is the previous described system of command and control. A second system is the concept often called creating a learning organization through focused commitment and a shared vision. School districts that operate under this cultural context are “light years” apart from those that operate under the traditional control domains.

In a learning organization with a common vision, employees do not give up their creative spirit in order to earn a living. Rather they begin a journey to answer “Who am I really?” and “What can I do in this organization that I passionately care about?” As this culture

grows, employees form a group or groups which surround a constancy of purpose which is larger than themselves. They negotiate their own goals within an organizational context and work collaboratively with unparalleled intensity. The organization that results from this is new. It embraces change and because of a sharpness of focus will clearly challenge the uncertain with enthusiasm. This phenomenon is equally true without reference to the size of the organization or the service delivered.

In the emerging organization, the traditional systems and control functions may still be there but they exist only to serve and maintain a focus on the mission and vision with an added value that they indeed make a difference to employees. Institutional control is maintained by the employee commitment, collaboration, and involvement with their work about which they are particularly passionate. The new culture is a community built on communication, visible support, service leadership, and institutionalized creativity. This concept is summarized on the following page.

A learning institution inspires employees to reach new horizons rather than new plateaus. These changes institutionalize the need for additional learning which creates change and a new revolving cycle. This new cycle is learner influenced and determined through collaboration and networking. It is not an isolated activity but rather a completely new culture that is synergistic. The pursuit of each new horizon creates the need for employee coaching.

One might ask, "Who is the coach in the new organizational context?" "The coach is an organization leader or manager, a frontline supervisor, a project manager, an external consultant, or simply a colleague. In this context, the role of the coach is that of being a steward, facilitative leader, and teacher, not just the person with the most power. He or she works with people to create a shared vision and values based on what matters to the institution, its demands and constraints, and what the people truly care about. In this context, one of the coach's primary tasks is to help people create effective organizations that they believe in, where they can produce extraordinary results as an offering, not by demand." (Hargrove, pg. 11) It is on this model that Employee Coaching is based.

New Culture The Shift to a Learning Organization

Service Context	From Situational Domination	To Practicing the Power of Purpose
Direction Setting	Vision from "on top"	Shared Vision
Thinking and Execution	Top thinks, others act Work now, grieve later	Collaboration and interaction at all levels
Nature of Thinking	Absolute control and the exercise of power	Systems design and collaborative visionary conversations
Conflict Resolution	Conflict resolved by political or situational ethics	Focus on diversity and growth from disparity of opinion. Involve yea and nay sayers
Role of Leadership	Set vision and motivate people with temporary rewards or threats Make major decisions and create situations which control local actions Delegate learning to the training department	Build shared vision Empower and inspire commitment Encourage team reflection, learning and networking to make better decisions Coach people in a personal transformational context and to the development of necessary skills

Adapted from Diagram 1.2, Masterful Coaching, Robert Hargrove, Pg. 11.

SECTION V
**The Connection of Employee Coaching and Leadership
Development**

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents includes Mentoring and Employee Coaching as essential elements of leadership development. In the early stages of career development the new superintendent (or other executive) is provided the services of a mentor. As training and experience progress the superintendent is provided a learning partner, a coach, to assist the learning process. As superintendents' careers progress, coaching takes on an even greater dynamic. Any superintendent, at any point in his/her career, is provided a coach on request. Such a need may be triggered by the superintendent's grappling with a difficult problem with which the coach has experience or may be triggered by a superintendent wishing to implement a new program, project or strategy with which a coach has experience. From its training programs, involving mentoring and coaching, Florida school districts have developed a strength in networking, resulting in sharing best practices, resolving problems, establishing a constancy of purpose, and establishing professional collegiality and friendships.

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