



Summary

Date: August 7, 2007

Topic: Coaching that Gets Results

Participants:

There were representatives from the following 10 companies on this call:

BISYS
Citigroup
Companion Technologies
GBC
Howard County General Hospital
Indymac Bank
K. Hovnanian
Liberty Mutual Group
Service Untitled Group
Wyndham Vacation Resorts

Introduction:

A recent poll by ASTD found that 47% of all respondents ranked coaching and feedback as most critical to their organization's success in the next three years.

A recent Bersin & Assoc. study showed that 67% of organizations that are very effective at driving business results and increasing employee retention use coaching always or most of the time.

Coaching is one of the highest impacts, yet most overlooked, ways to achieve goals.

Even the best organizations struggle with how to deliver effective coaching that builds associate morale and performance. It is not enough to simply tell supervisors/team leads to coach.

We have observed four key success factors for ensuring Coaching that Gets Results:

Time Commitment:

- Make time a priority for supervisors/team leads to coach AND make time for associates to receive coaching.

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Alignment with Corporate Vision and Values:

- Work to create a culture that sustains outstanding service. The focus of the coaching should be aligned with organizational needs/priorities, values and vision.

Developmental Approach:

- The effective practice of coaching is developmental—in the form of a dialogue where there is more listening and exploration and a focus on individual growth and development. It is less about being directive and/or punitive and more about collaboration.

Process Orientation:

- Coaching is an ongoing process, not an event. It is a clear process that is repeatable, relevant and sustainable.

Discussion

The following is a summary of the comments made on each of the four key success factors.

1. Time Commitment

- Often coaching is put on the back burner when we are under time pressure.
- Managers can make time for coaching when there is performance problem. When it's urgent, the time is there. There needs to be a perception that developmental coaching is just as valuable as a preventative to performance problems.
- It helps to add coaching to existing monthly or quarterly reviews already incorporated in the time schedule.
- We have a commitment to doing weekly collaboration sessions with managers and use calls to review 33 points. We would like to see more collaboration among coaches in these sessions.

2. Alignment with Corporate Vision and Values

- One company's organizational value is "Continuing Education." Associates are offered a wide range of learning opportunities including personal interests. Coaching is a part of those opportunities. One purpose for this wide range of offerings is to attract and retain employees.

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- MAGIC has become part of our service culture but we have not done a good job coaching to it. First step is to identify resources and classes that we can bring to supervisors and management.
- A new executive VP is always in touch with our associates. He says that MAGIC training is not just an exercise in good customer service. It is driven by the vision of the company.
- We ask HR: “How can we incorporate the 33 points into performance reviews and give managers and supervisors the skills to coach to that?”
- Our executive team goes to each unit to give positive comments to every individual who has received comments from patients who have appreciated their service. This way, it is not a sit down one-to-one. It is quick, easy and positive. And, it reinforces our vision and values.
- Here’s an example of how a Vision Statement is linked to MAGIC behaviors at Wyndham resorts:

Their statement includes the words: warm, thoughtful, gracious. They have identified specific behaviors for each of these words and linked them to specific MAGIC points.

The first 9 points demonstrate the vision through listening, showing empathy, using their name, telling them you can help them and building security with the customer.

If call coaches observe behaviors that are not warm thoughtful or gracious, they go to the 33 points as a way to identify which behaviors are working for them and which ones need to be improved.

3. **Developmental Approach**

When associates hear the word “Coaching” it often implies “This is not going to be good”. Below are some suggestions from the group about how to avoid the perception that coaching is bad.

- In coaching session there is more time spent on emphasizing what they are doing well. Sometimes the successes are all that is focused on.
- Once a month everyone signs up for coaching. It always happens so that it is more a matter of fact. They don’t feel “called in” because coaching is regularly scheduled.



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- We deliver calls to the associates ahead of time so there aren't any surprises. They can hear for themselves what they did well and where they could improve. They are more prepared for feedback and coaching.
- One example of developmental coaching is how a senior executive acknowledges associates. The call center manager selects top-rated calls for the month and sends them to the senior executive who listens to each one. She then records a complimentary message with specific details to each associate. Her recorded comments for each associate are attached to his/her recorded call and is listened to in his/her coaching session.
- Our associates sit side-by-side with their supervisor and discuss calls. It's scheduled once a month and everyone does it. This works in a "public" environment because, as we learned in MAGIC Coach, the coach spends most of the time asking questions. The associate is doing most of the talking and evaluating.
- Our coaching sessions are a three way conversation between the associate, the supervisor and the call coach. The associate is able to score the call himself and the supervisor gets to see the successes and areas of growth for the associate. We make sure that the positive aspects of the call are highlighted.
- One trainer mentioned that she also listened to tapes and live calls to offer a second point of view along with the supervisor's.

4. Process Orientation

- We give them MAGIC training the first two days that they are on the job before they learn anything about the company. On the third day they start coaching sessions right away.
- Several participants on the conference call said that they had a coaching session with each associate once a month. Some had informal sessions more often. One mentioned that she had two coaching sessions a month with each associate.
- MAGIC Coach helped a lot. Supervisors come through MAGIC again to refresh their MAGIC skills and reinforce the skills with their associates.