

Creating a Coaching Culture —Doing vs. Understanding



By Jathan Janove, J.D.

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Last September, I began my column by urging HR professionals to become compliance coaches instead of compliance cops.

Today's column shares an example of how HR can take things a step further. Instead of simply providing leadership training (the “understanding”), HR can help create and support a coaching culture (the “doing”).

Recently, a *Fortune* 50 company, which requested anonymity for this article, hired Chris Coffey, a Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centered Coach, to work with its general manager (GM) of marketing. Employees viewed the GM as an intense, difficult-to-approach, results-oriented machine; a highly knowledgeable but impatient individual; and a person who was both driven and resistant to sharing his knowledge to help others perform more effectively.

When the GM learned this information through a 360-degree evaluation, he was surprised and eager to change. He committed to:

- Improving collaboration to enhance business performance.
- Sharing knowledge and expertise with others.

His behavioral action plan based on suggestions from stakeholders included the following:

- Ask good questions and be open-minded.
- Listen authentically and fully to other people's ideas.
- Build off of others' ideas before giving your own or rebutting their suggestions.
- Engage in both dialogue and debate when appropriate.
- Be more approachable and patient.
- Be a thinking partner instead of a critic.

The process was so successful as documented by his stakeholders that the GM thought, “Why should these benefits be limited to me and my stakeholders? The entire marketing division could benefit.”

At the same time, HR conducted a companywide employee survey. The results indicated a need and desire for managers to become better coaches and mentors.

With HR support, marketing leaders launched a pilot project across their division of 205 marketing employees. Coffey redesigned the coaching process to have a group-based focus instead of an individual one.

Twenty-nine marketing managers (two GMs, nine of their direct reports and 18 managers) had two goals:

Become a better coach and mentor to direct reports.

Help the managers below them become better coaches and managers to their direct reports.

After learning the coaching methodology, the marketing managers took action. They communicated their goals, engaged their direct reports and stakeholders, created and implemented action plans, shared the action plans with their stakeholders and followed up monthly.

The managers began executing their action plans and holding each other accountable to do the same.

According to an HR partner involved in the process, “it was important that HR measure the effectiveness of this coaching process. So, six months after the beginning of the engagement, we had a confidential, third-party-administered electronic survey done of division employees. It asked, ‘How satisfied are you with your manager in his or her becoming a better coach and manager since starting this coaching process?’ The survey measured results using a five-point scale ranging from ‘highly satisfied’ to ‘dissatisfied.’

“The results were nothing short of astounding: 46 percent were highly satisfied, and 40 percent were satisfied. That’s an 86 percent success rate after only six months!”

HR plans to conduct another survey later this year.

The marketing GM said, “The process has been incredibly helpful to me. I wasn’t aware of my opportunities to grow. Now I love being seen as a trusted advisor and valued resource. And I especially love the overall impact this coaching process has had on the entire marketing division. I am hopeful this coaching process is expanded throughout the company.”

The HR partner summed things up this way: “As an HR professional, I’m grateful for this opportunity to help our managers become better coaches and mentors. The better our managers do this, the better their relationships with their employees, the better we do in HR, and the better we do as a company.”

Readers of my column know how passionate I am about HR taking things to a level above and beyond legal and regulatory compliance. This company took coaching to that level. It challenged managers to become better coaches and provided help to achieve the goal.

As a former labor and employment law attorney, I’ll add that this approach is not only good for overall organizational health, it’s also good for claim prevention, employee engagement and building bench strength. Employees who feel their boss is a coach helping them achieve their potential don’t sue. They don’t become compliance headaches for HR. And they do their jobs better.

Upon learning of the results from this company, leadership coach Marshall Goldsmith said, “This is especially exciting news for me. It shows how executive coaching principles—designed for external coaches—can be scaled in a much broader way using line managers as the coaches with a little guidance and support. I hope this company is able to use the example from their marketing division and continue to grow and sustain this coaching culture in other parts of their organization.”

Creating a Coaching Culture—Doing vs. Understanding, Part Two



By Jathan Janove, J.D.

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Last May, I wrote a column about a general manager (GM) who received executive coaching and whose experience led to a scaling of the coaching program for his division.

Phillips 66 hired Chris Coffey, a Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centered Coach, to work with the GM in its marketing division in Houston. Employees viewed the GM as an intense, difficult-to-approach, results-oriented person; a highly knowledgeable but impatient individual; and someone who was resistant to sharing his knowledge to help others perform more effectively.

Through the coaching process, the GM committed to “improving collaboration to enhance business performance” and “sharing knowledge and expertise with others.”

His action plan focused on specific behaviors such as asking good questions and being open-minded, listen authentically and fully to other people’s ideas,” “build off of others’ ideas before giving your own or rebutting their suggestions” and “be a thinking partner instead of a critic.”

The process was so successful the GM, with HR support, launched a pilot project for his division of 205 marketing employees. Coffey redesigned the coaching process to have a group-based focus instead of an individual one.

Twenty-nine marketing managers (two GMs, nine of their direct reports and 18 managers) had two goals: “Become a better coach and mentor to direct reports,” and “Help the managers below them become better coaches and managers to their direct reports.”

The results were extraordinary. After six months, a survey of division employees revealed that 86 percent felt their managers had become better coaches and mentors. After another six months, a second survey was conducted to determine if progress had been sustained. Nearly all employees surveyed said “yes.” And this was despite major organizational changes in the division during this time.

According to a Phillips 66 HR business partner, “Although this wasn’t an HR idea, we agreed to support it provided there were good metrics to measure its effectiveness.”

The metrics included using an anonymous survey to ask employees, “How satisfied are you with your manager as a coach and mentor?”

Overall satisfaction went up from 86 percent in the first survey to 97 percent in the second. Employee ratings of their manager went up from 46 percent highly satisfied to 53 percent highly satisfied.

The survey asked, “Did your manager discuss and share with you his or her stated goal?” 93 percent of direct reports said yes on the first survey and 94 percent said yes on second.

The survey also asked, “To what extent has your manager followed up with you?” On the first survey, 36 percent of direct reports said their manager had consistently and periodically followed up. In the second survey, this number increased to 58 percent. Another 23 percent said there’d been some follow-up.

According to Coffey, a key to this project’s success was managers communicating their goal, asking for employees’ help in achieving it, and following up. “In order not only to change management behavior but to change employee perception of behavior, the manager must have the humility and the courage to share the goal and solicit candid feedback and feedforward [improvement suggestions]. These managers had that humility and courage. They also demonstrated discipline in the follow-up and follow-through process.”

The GM added, “From the coaching, I learned that not only did I have plenty of room to grow and improve as a leader, so did everyone else. I’m grateful for HR’s support since we’ve now be able to scale these benefits throughout the division.”

This account shows the value of HR and management partnering on leadership initiatives. Although this initiative did not come from HR, it didn’t prevent it from being developed, supported and evaluated by HR.

The lesson is simple and straightforward: Look for ways to collaborate with management to create better leaders. In my experience, including as a former employment law litigator, it achieves the ultimate win-win-win: great culture, desirable business results, and staying out of court.



Doing vs. Understanding

In a Fortune 50 Company

By Chris Coffey and JoAnne Henein

How to get managers and direct reports to make positive, long-term change in behavior – behavior that drives results!

Within the corporate world, HR is brought in to solve “behavioral-related problems” and is tasked with teaching and training people to fix these problems. Yet this rarely works. The change is incremental and fleeting.

There is a common fallacy about the process of getting people to change. We confuse “knowing” versus “doing.” Training programs and workshops are designed to impart knowledge and skills and often do an excellent job at it; however, transferring classroom learnings to the real world is a huge challenge and rarely successful.

On the other hand, coaching, when done correctly, can be a powerful vehicle for converting knowledge and skills into specific, measurable behaviors that create tangible value and drive results.

One Fortune 50 company we worked with underwent a remarkable transformation when its leaders changed their behaviors in simple and profound ways. Not only did one senior leader dramatically improve, an entire group of 30 managers and leaders within the organization did the same. The results speak for themselves.

Meet Sandy

When we first met Sandy, General Manager of Sales, she presented with a stern, serious demeanor and no-nonsense attitude. People viewed her as disconnected and labeled her as an intense, results-oriented machine. In addition, she was perceived as highly knowledgeable about the business but resistant to sharing enough of this knowledge to help her direct reports perform at a higher level. Sandy was very concerned about this perception and decided she needed to change.

Enter Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centered Coaching® - a specialized process that helps successful people become even more successful by making strategic changes in key behaviors. Although our coaching process is simple, it's not easy and takes courage, discipline and a large dose of humility.

When Sandy started working with her Stakeholder Centered Coach, he told her: “If you don't want to get better, I don't want to work with you. I can help you fly but only if you want to fly.” She chose to fly.

“The acquisition of knowledge does not change your life, it's how you apply that knowledge that changes your life.”

Chris Coffey, Co-Founder, Stakeholder Centered Coaching®

After Sandy received her 360-degree feedback she committed to two leadership goals:

1. Improve collaboration to help enhance business performance.
2. Share her knowledge and expertise with others.

Sandy's 360 report showed that her direct reports were reluctant to offer creative suggestions or different points of view because of her unapproachability and their fear that their input would be dismissed.

We incorporated some of her co-workers' and stakeholders' suggestions into her action plan, including:

- Ask good questions and be open minded;
- Listen authentically and fully to other people's ideas;
- Build off other's ideas before giving her own or rebutting their suggestions;
- Engage in both dialogue and debate when appropriate;
- Be more approachable; and

- Be a thinking partner instead of a critic.

This Fortune 50 corporation had strong evidence that employees did not feel they were getting the coaching they needed from their managers after their classes were over. Consequently, they were not applying what they learned in their formal classes to their working environment.

Committed to change, Sandy decided to expand the Stakeholder Centered Coaching® process to her entire sales division leadership team. Not only did she commit to personal change, she committed to change the culture in her organization to one of empowering lasting behavioral change through coaching.

“I felt this process could really help my managers execute on what they had been taught in their leadership classes,” Sandy said.

Each manager had two simple goals:

1. Become a better coach and mentor to their direct reports; and
2. Help their managers below them become better coaches and managers to their direct reports.

After completing the Stakeholder Centered leadership trainings, Sandy’s managers took immediate action! They went public with their goals, created an action plan, shared it with others and implemented the plan. Thirty people were now changing their behavior and holding each other accountable to do the same.

A Real-world Process for Lasting Change

The yearlong Stakeholder Centered Coaching® Process includes three pragmatic, powerful and unique components:

1. **Leaders pick the goal they want to work on based on 360 feedback from their co-workers.** They understand the unique value that executing on these key behaviors will have on them professionally and how it will benefit their stakeholders and co-workers.
2. **Leaders are accountable to their stakeholders.** They ask their stakeholders to hold them accountable to execute on the action plan developed directly from the 360 feedback and request feedback and suggestions along the way.
3. **Leaders hold themselves accountable.** Most importantly, leaders are expected to practice and hold themselves accountable until the new behaviors become second nature and the perceptions of others are changed in a positive and permanent way.

“We all simply became more aware of our own behavior and its impact on others,” Sandy said. “We followed the action plans we put in place and shared what we were committing to do with our stakeholders. Then, we followed up in a disciplined way and asked our stakeholders if they had noticed the difference – which is what ultimately matters. This was not a time-consuming process. All our follow-up, our feedback to each other, and our suggestions for the future took minutes, so there is really is no excuse for anyone.”

“The mission of Stakeholder Centered Coaching® is to measurably improve leadership behavior around the world.”

Frank Wagner, Co-Founder, Stakeholder Centered Coaching®

Results That Speak For Themselves

The pilot group at Sandy’s corporation included 30 managers, 205 stakeholders and 30 self-evaluations. Six months after the beginning of the engagement, Sandy and the other participating managers surveyed their stakeholders to measure their improvement. The confidential mini-survey asked: “How satisfied are you with your manager in becoming a ‘better coach and manager’ since starting this coaching process?” The survey measured results using a five-point scale ranging from “highly satisfied” to “dissatisfied.”

The results speak for themselves: 46% of the 205 stakeholders rated their manager “highly satisfied” in becoming a better coach and manager and 40% rated their manager “satisfied.” To see the complete results of the survey please visit:

www.stakeholdercenteredcoaching.com

Fortune 50 companies are experiencing massive change and demanding that their people change as well. “What has become eminently clear to everyone is that **Stakeholder Centered Coaching® is not an intervention or flavor of the month,**” Sandy says. **“It is truly an effective way to create a coaching culture focusing on behavior change.** Once people saw how this process helped me, and then helped them, is when we got real commitment, commitment that lasts!”

A year later, Sandy is now seen as a trusted advisor, thinking partner and a valued resource. She is also seen as someone who is “easy to talk to.” She’s incredibly proud of the progress she and her teammates have made. **Stakeholder Centered Coaching® has added tremendous value to Sandy’s corporation and it can make a difference in your organization as well!**

Marshall Goldsmith (www.marshallgoldsmith.com) is corporate America's preeminent executive coach. Chris Coffey and Frank Wagner are the Co-Founders of Stakeholder Centered Coaching® and its eponymous coaching certification. They have been business partners with Marshall for over 30 years. JoAnne Henein is a Certified Stakeholder Centered Coach, and the Co-Founder of MCMF Consulting. Andy Taylor is a Master Certified Coach, Trainer, and also in charge of Online Stakeholder Centered Coach® Certification trainings for North America.

Click on the banner below for more information.



Sincerely,
Chris Coffey, JoAnne Henein and Andy Taylor

