Coaching and Organizational Transformation

From the Desks of the Co-Editors

Coaching as an Essential Element of Organizational Transformation and Transitions

At the launch of IJCO, journal editors Bergquist and Lazar reviewed the name and niche of this publication as coaching for the simultaneous benefit to leaders and their organizations. This is the first issue of IJCO that is dedicated entirely and specifically to illuminating some of the relationships between coaching and organizational leaders on one hand, and their organizational contexts on the other. In our time, “coaching in organizations” means “coaching in changing organizations” (for example, Surrenda and Thompson). This issue features five articles that present diverse perspectives on the critical connections between leadership coaching and changing workplaces.

In the first article, Taylor and Westinde review the approaches to leadership for organizational change over that past century and their parallels in coaching. They advocate paradigmatic literacy or understanding the underlying assumptions in these two levels of intervention, since they co-exist as mental models for different coaching clients/colleagues in the current postmodern context. William Bergquist then offers the second of his series of articles on how coaching contributes to traditional organizational processes, this one exploring eight principles in coaching that enhance retention and transfer of learning to the workplace from training and education programs.

The final three articles exemplify different ‘pathways’ of connection between coaching and organizational change in specific practice contexts—two public service settings and one business setting. Frank Joseph, Candice Phillips and Joan Wright have provided a detailed examination of their carefully designed coaching oriented leadership development strategy for the City of Charlotte, NC. Richard Wale describes a coaching training initiative with a practicum, all conducted within the territorial government organization of the Yukon in Canada.

The Charlotte initiative begins specifically as one of coaching leaders, while the Yukon begins as one of training leaders to coach. However, both create opportunity for learning and change simultaneously at the individual and organizational levels by generating a multiple-participant coaching context that can impact the culture of the organization, or “the way we do things around here.” Finally, Roger Ingbretsen delineates the strengths of an internal coaching strategy to business leaders based on his experience in a particular enterprise. He links a results-oriented coaching process to key business practices and the imperative
of continuous leadership learning.

While the term "organizational coaching" can be heard strictly as coaching to organizations (distinct from coaching to organization leaders), we believe that the articles in this issue illustrate the significance of the term. There can be a reciprocal relationship between leaders and their organizational contexts—and the potential for simultaneous contributions to both learning leaders and changing organizations.

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References

1 Along with the Centre for Creative Leadership, we distinguish transition as a change from a known state to desirable and designed future state (similar to single loop learning at the individual level), and transformation as a change from a known state into a future state that cannot yet be envisaged (similar to double loop learning). Articles in this issue represent both types of organizational change.
