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From the desks of the Co-Editors

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FROM THE DESKS. . .

Of the Co-Editors

Who would have thought in the early 1990s that this simple profession we call “coaching” would be powerful enough to profoundly change huge business organizations? And who would have guessed that many organizations would wrap their cultural values around the use of a coaching conversation between managers and their employees? Finally, what about this managerial approach has proven to make a difference in organizations?

The focus of the articles in this issue are about coaching culture, what it means to have one, how some have been created, how managers utilize coaching skills to motivate employee engagement, and some specific outcomes that can be expected. The articles review ways in which all individuals in the organizational system are changed when a coaching culture is activated and implemented. We also look at what doesn’t work and the pros and cons of using the coach approach to generate high levels of performance within the organization through a greater level of employee engagement. Primarily, in every article, we begin to change the performance systems in positive ways because of the interest shown by coaching as a tool for conversational management.

The first two articles are about developing and implanting coaching culture into organizations. The first article finds the organization at the very beginning implementation stage, where strategies and delivery systems are put into place. The second article is about the successful completion, evaluation studies, and several years of sustainability of an embedded coaching culture.

Bill Pullen and Erin Crane documented the developing stages of their process of establishing a coaching culture into CH2M Hill, a Fortune 500 company and a global organization. They developed a strong business case for the implementation of such a culture by tying it to the organization’s vision, strategy, and culture; addressing needs and perspectives of key stakeholders; articulating the desired behaviors the organization needs as outcomes; selecting a team of qualified coaches; and orienting and maintaining the coaching community. Further, they outlined the desired alignment of coaching with other leadership initiatives and created feedback loops for learning. Their article shows that by putting a coaching culture in place, CH2M Hill can invest in its employees and deliver high-quality service to customers, while simultaneously positioning for successful bottom-line results.

The second article defines the successful outcomes of implementing a coaching culture, with evaluation results over a five-year period. Sue Bock and Carollyne Conlinn discuss how their client, Kootenay Savings Credit Union, a regional credit union in British Columbia, Canada, shifted its culture from the top-down to a coaching culture over a five-year period. They provide information about the process, the tools, the measurement of the impact on the organization, and lessons learned along the way. Subsequent to their work, Kootenay Savings was the 2009 Prism Award winner for celebrating excellence of coaching within their organization.

Nancie Evans takes a strong look at whether or not a coaching culture truly delivers on the promise of employee performance improvement. She argues that there may be improved employee satisfaction, but there may not be the intended or desired organizational performance. Her suggested alternative is not about creating a coaching culture, but rather a component of such a culture, the learning and use of coaching skills.

To broaden the conversation about coaching culture, Philippe Rosinski takes a global perspective on organizational coaching by defining the term *global coaching culture*. His approach suggests that such an approach transcends traditional coaching, in that coaching is viewed as a philosophy and outlook, rather than as a leadership style. Rosinski demonstrates this through an evocative exploration of a “hybrid process” in which he combines cultural assessment, coaching, and education to facilitate the strategic alliance of two companies, one French and one Dutch. In a fascinating and successful result, coaching culture on a global scale is created and explored in the article.

Taking organizational coaching beyond the cultural question, Don Tosti explores the most difficult aspect of integrating coaching into the culture, that of getting behavioral changes implemented and maintained in the workplace. Tosti’s focus is on how self-referenced feedback (also called *ipsative* feedback) during the coaching process can facilitate both planning for implementation of change and change itself, thereby creating a supportive workplace that can maintain such a coaching culture.

In all the coaching culture discussions, the manager’s ability to successfully utilize coaching skills is at the heart of cultural success. John Cooper discusses both supports and hindrances of the manager’s practice of coaching. Cooper observes that some cultures can support coaching as a practice, while others may not. Cooper draws on his own experiences to discuss the approach needed in training and coaching managers who might use such a coaching style of management.

We also have the privilege of including a Musings from Mike Jay, our resident guru and gadfly. Mike offers his unique perspective on the issues of coaching, organizational coaching, and coaching culture. While he questions the reality of coaching an organization and has seen few examples of a coaching culture, he is certain of the value of coaching individuals as a path to making organizations better places to work, perform, and fulfill their promises.

Our final article, one that was peer reviewed, ties all the ideas from the other articles together. The author, Frode Moen, speaks to a specific aspect of executive coaching, that of the effect of causal attribution in executive performance. In reviewing attribution theory, he reveals how coachees need to lead with personal attribution (ownership) for the success or failure of their coaching. Moen explores this concept through a study of 19 CEO executives, with findings that reveal that when the coachee takes personal responsibility for outcomes of the coaching, the more successful the coaching can be. It is a thought-provoking piece of research that may change the way you initiate your coaching venues.

We believe that this journal issue can make a difference in your thoughts about organizational coaching, its pros and cons, its successes and hindrances, and its viability for employee performance and engagement within organizations. We hope that you are left with at least as many compelling questions as preliminary answers to guide your path.

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Resource Center for Professional Coaching in Organizations

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