

The Improvement Tool for the New Millennium

Throughout time people have been looking for ways to improve, both personally and professionally. They have invested heavily in programmes and gurus. They've gone with the 'flavour of the month' [which is usually last month's flavour repackaged and called something different]. People sought out the 'quick fix' and wondered why it didn't create the change they expected it to. Organisations did the same.

A common scenario: Unhappy with some aspect of your life you decide to change it. You buy the book, do the course, and make big plans. You tell everyone that you are going to change X. Everyone's on your side.

You get sidetracked. You lose interest or meet seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Or worse, you meet with lukewarm success and think "Was that it?" You are discouraged and you give up.

Sensible people, in and out of organisations, aren't looking for quick answers any more. They are looking for ways to produce enduring change. The traditional consultant doesn't really bring about enduring change and we know that most of the training we do neither changes behaviour nor improves performance in the long term.

Enter the improvement tool for the new millennium - the coach !

Coaching is a new profession.

Coaching is the next evolutionary stage of consulting.

Coaching helps people get more of what they want out of life.

It's no secret that it is hard to change anything in your life unless you know and use the tools for making effective change. They include:

- knowing what you want
- taking focussed action
- a support structure for the 'down' days
- someone or something to get you back on track and keep you focussed on the important things.

A coach can be the one valuable resource or improvement tool that makes change work for you.

"Executive coaches are not for the meek. They are for people who value unambiguous feedback. All coaches have one thing in common, it's that they are results oriented." FAST COMPANY

Coaches:

- help people / teams / organisations set better goals and then reach those goals.
- ask their clients to do more than they would have done on their own.
- focus their clients better to more quickly produce results.
- provide the tools, support and structure to accomplish more.

Who hires a coach and why ?

People hire a coach because:

- they want more
- they want to grow
- they want it easier

It's as simple as that. Coaches help a client get all three. Quickly!

“Across corporate America, coaching sessions at many companies have become as routine for managers as budget forecasts and quota meetings.” INVESTORS BUSINESS DAILY

What happens when you hire a coach ?

A number of things but perhaps the most important are:

- you take yourself more seriously.
- you take more effective and focussed actions immediately.
- you stop putting up with what is dragging you down.
- you create momentum so it's easier to get results.
- you set better goals that you might not have done without a coach.

“. . . companies . . . offer coaching as a prerequisite to proven managers, in the understanding that everyone can benefit from a detached observer.” NEW YORK TIMES

The Coaching Process

When you first contact a coach they will ask you about your goals, your habits, your work, your challenges. All this information gathering is intended to get to the heart of the matter, to address your most pressing concerns or issues. Some of the resources used by a coach may be familiar to you but you may have lacked the motivation or discipline to use them successfully in the past. A coach will help you push through your resistance and get results.

Usually, you will set up a schedule of contact times, initially once or twice a week for a couple of months. This may be in person, over the phone or by e-mail.

Frequent contact and progress reports are a usual part of the process. A coach might give you assignments, ask you to keep records of your actions

and outcomes, and will also ask you to do 'post-mortems' on any setbacks. Your coach will celebrate your wins, your accomplishments and your new insights and will make sure that you take full credit for all the steps you take towards achieving your goals.

"The goal of business coaching is the goal of good management - to make the most of an organisation's valuable resources."

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW

So if you've done the courses, bought the tapes, met the gurus - and you still want more, then use the improvement tool for the new millennium - hire a coach.

"Coaching takes a holistic view of the individual: work, values, personal needs and career development are made to work in synergy, not against each other."

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