About the Tutorial

**Mentoring** is the act of identifying and nurturing potential areas of improvement in an individual. This could be a short-term action plan targeted towards a specific goal in mind, like career growth, higher learning, or could be a life-long process of improvement. The goals and processes are always set here by the learner. The job of the mentor here is to just facilitate, guide, and provide feedback after long stages of intensive observation.

**Coaching** relates primarily to performance improvement, and is more often a short-term achievement in a specific skills area. The goals, process and suggestion are that of the coach. While the learner has primary ownership of the goal, the coach has primary ownership of the process. Feedback is often shared instantaneously.

Audience

This tutorial is designed primarily for those working professionals who are assigned the responsibility to either coach or mentor the new employees or junior talents in their companies to improve their skill-sets, or help them grow in their careers. This tutorial aims at teaching trainers the difference between coaching and mentoring, and how the approaches change as per the requirement of the learner.

Prerequisites

Before proceeding with this tutorial, you are expected to have a detailed knowledge on the working process of your company, and the job responsibilities that you will handle, and the expectation your management has of you, in terms of productivity and performance.

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Part 1 – Coaching
In today’s competitive business world, there are two basic realities that drive the workforces. First one is getting people who get results. Second is to get people who get results stay.

Today’s world of globalization, customized employee enhancement plans, competitive benefits, and demographic changes make it very tough on companies to get and then retain talent. That’s how the managers of today are not just managers. They are recruiters, planners, motivators, and trainers, all rolled into one.

To keep this already-complex chain of operation from spiraling out of control, the companies have found the best way to manage their staff is to coach them. The role of a coach in a company, in this regard, is to take a group of people with diversified proficiency, understand their strengths and improve them, and at the same time, realize the cause of their weaknesses and eradicate them.

The Role of a Coach

The role of a coach is significantly different from that of an instructor. In coaching, employees are asked to grow in their strengths and address their weaknesses so that they realize their self-growth. It keeps them motivated and happy in the workplace – both keys to retaining talent.

Leaders take their staff from where they are to where they’ve never been before. Nothing could define coaching better than this statement from Henry Kissinger.
Coaching, in the true sense, is tailor-made for people who have the potential to grow to greater heights and yet, are too content in delivering just satisfactory performance. These employees are different from slackers who don't perform properly, either due to non-interest or inferior knowledge.

The employees we are addressing are employees who like their professional life just the way it is at the moment, and have fit in snugly to the demands of the workplace, which is not bad in itself, however, every organization needs its employees to grow. That’s the way every organization grows too, being a sum total of different talented groups. The job of a coach, therefore, is to ensure that the employees improve their job performance through a constant process of encouraging and suggesting improvements.
In today’s competitive world, recruiters no longer hold on to traditional methods of recruiting through traditional one-to-one interviews. Thanks to the added competition, which has resulted in a shortage of talent, companies are fast resorting to technology, and platforms like Skype, GoToMeetings are fast replacing the old model of interviewing.

Companies are increasingly adopting employee-centric approaches to working by providing flexi-times, work-from-home initiatives, in addition to many other perks and benefits. Organizations are also getting the option to employ people they want, as compared to the ones who were available to them.

When an organization is located over multiple areas, the big challenge is to connect all the employees located in different offices spread all across the world, to the organization’s vision, identity, and rules – the big picture. That’s where coaching comes in. It is the best way to develop junior talent and provide the skills and expertise to make them experts.

Having said that, mentoring provides ample space for a person to retain his individuality and his personal sensibilities. Note that the goal of mentoring isn’t to create clones. Instead, it is to help people achieve their highest potential while being in sync with the organization’s vision and objectives.

Coaching is not an innate ability; you are not born with the art of coaching. The other misunderstanding that’s often associated with coaching is that it’s related only to sports. Coaching is about pumping people’s spirits, and motivating them. Lack of motivation doesn’t come only in sports. There are times when employees too feel a need for motivation to deliver good results. Coaching helps these employees in holding their own in their team and being a productive group.

Coaching is the method of making people realize the heights they can achieve if only they kept persevering and putting proper effort. Mainly, coaching calls for a change of thinking and approach to a task. It’s about getting the person think positively about his chances of achieving his goal. It includes employee orientation towards the workplace politics, and to assist in removing the barriers to work performance.

Optimal and Optimum

There is a difference between the usages of words optimal and optimum. If a company specifies that they are interested in obtaining optimum results, they mean they want the best output from their employees. On the other hand, if they say they are looking for optimal results, that would mean that they are interested in obtaining the best work out of you in the given circumstances, or working conditions.

There are occasions when the line between optimum and optimal are blurred in coaching. Situations like these arise when an organization starts working on a new project and they need to ram up the office fast with people who are experienced in working on similar projects.
In situations like these, the job of a coach is not only to provide high levels of motivation to employees to excel in their performance, but also to ensure that the employees perform at their peak even if the requisite resources are not always available. It’s about lifting their spirit and keeping it high throughout tough times.
Let us take an example to understand how coaching benefits employees. Morgan was recently promoted to the post of a Team Manager, something he doesn't have a lot of experience on. He has been given the task to manage one of the teams in the company, so he sought help from a company coach to help him in understanding the requirements for the job, and to **cultivate the right approach for the job**. Morgan enrolled for a two-day per week course, and was assigned a coach named Stanley, who would be coaching him for the next few months.

Stanley started by asking Morgan to carry a workbook with him, in which Morgan will keep a record of the discussions and guiding points that Stanley will provide to him during the learning. At their first meeting, Stanley asked a couple of questions to Morgan to know more about him, just to get acquainted. Then they discussed how they are going to work together, and with other people, in realizing the goals that have been set.

In the subsequent meetings, Stanley and Morgan discussed what Morgan’s strengths and weaknesses were, and what the improvements in skill-sets were that Morgan had to bring in him to excel at his job. Over the next few months, Morgan and Stanley met regularly to understand and analyze their progress.

They also spent time on discussing **game play, tactics, and team building**. Stanley constantly referred to his old coaching logs and Morgan’s own workbook as evidences of improvement and encouraged Morgan to keep pushing his boundaries. **Mock grills and role-plays** were organized to check Morgan’s improvement in team-managing under diverse and difficult scenarios.

At the end of the coaching, Morgan commented on how useful he found the coaching process and how it made him realize the potential inside him that he had no idea he possessed. **He is now a successful team-manager** and a part-time coach himself to the new employees who join the company.
End of ebook preview
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