
Leadership Development

A Blueprint for Building a Coaching Culture

By Debra Hamilton

In a highly volatile, uncertain, ambiguous environment, leaders face more information, constant change, and intense time pressures leaving them running at high adrenaline and high momentum with little time to think, strategize, and lead. How does a leader reconcile what is truly important? What is the path for leadership development? And how do internal learning and organizational development practitioners support the growth of leaders? While no one set of answers may exist, one fact is certain: despite this more challenging environment, leaders are being asked to execute at higher levels of complexity and change.

The Center for Learning & Talent Development at Fulton Financial Corporation (FFC) was curious about how to best enable successful leader performance, and we set out to identify the most critical development needs for our leaders. The team conducted interviews with senior leaders and HR Business Partners, reviewed data from employee engagement surveys, and outlined what was working and what was missing. Hidden in the interconnected complexities and pressures facing our leaders, surfaced a primary role that all leaders play—that of being an effective coach. The themes we heard kept pointing to coaching as a primary lever for leadership and organizational success. Coaching was already being done by our Consumer and Commercial business line sales leaders; however, our senior leaders were interested in quality coaching performed consistently across the organization.

We defined coaching as an interactive dialogue between manager and direct report, the goal of which is to explore growth, deepen learning, and unlock an employee's potential toward the achievement of individual, team, and organizational goals. The types of coaching conversations important to leadership at FFC range from the annual performance review, to coaching-in-the-moment, to stay interviews. There is a well-known adage worth repeating: if meaningful coaching is occurring throughout the year, there should be no surprises at the annual review. A number of day-to-day coaching opportunities exist to support the annual performance review, such as: taking on a stretch assignment, establishing new direction, building new skill sets, and navigating through change. The stay interview further contributes to trust building between the manager and employee. This type of coaching conversation can be a powerful way to address important topics and learn worthwhile information that may not surface in day-to-day coaching.

Championed by our senior leaders and HR Business Partners, our opportunity was to make coaching a foundational skill for all 800+ leaders and managers across the enterprise. We asked, how does a manager make the transition to coaching? What is most challenging about this? Most important, if we assume that coaching is a key aspect of every leader's role, how do we prepare leaders to build coaching competence and what is the impact? This article presents two case studies on preparing leaders and managers to become effective coaches

Table 1. *Fulton Financial Corporation Values*

Change We innovate by continuously learning.	Collaboration We work together. We win together.
Customer Focus We Care, Listen, Understand, and Deliver.	Ethics & Integrity We do what is right.
Performance I own my results.	Organizational Health We bring positive energy to all we do.

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while building coaching competence into the culture—ideally, we envisioned leadership development as the blueprint for building a coaching culture.

Background

With roughly 3,600 employees, Fulton Financial Corporation is a regional financial services holding company headquartered in Lancaster, PA. In the shadow of the 2008 global financial crisis, the company, like most financial institutions, became mired in regulatory reform. During this time, senior management wanted to focus on boosting the spirit and performance of all employees, so they turned to culture, knowing that successful companies shape their cultures instead of allowing their cultures to shape the company. While the current culture was not broken, senior management wanted to fortify a healthy, high-performing culture. As such, the company worked with a vendor, Senn Delaney, to implement an enterprise-wide culture-shaping program. The program provided an opportunity to reset the company's purpose statement and core values—distilling eleven company values down to six core values and guiding behaviors (see *Table 1*). One of those values is "Performance: I own my results." At the same time, the company's CHRO had a plan to more formally measure employee engagement. The focus on performance and engagement became the catalyst for building a coaching culture so that coaching would become the preeminent way of leading and managing throughout the organization.

Why Focus on Coaching?

Great leaders inspire, coach, and develop others. Through skillful coaching, leaders create a culture of learning and empowerment. Zenger and Folkman (2014) report empirical evidence that echoes myriad studies in finding that effective coaching raises employee commitment and engagement, productivity, retention rates, customer loyalty, and subordinate's perception of the strength of upper-level leadership. Gallup organizational research indicates that a significant portion of the variance in team engagement is explained by the quality of the manager or team leader and that coaching plays a role in improved scores; team leaders influence whether workers are able to use their strengths to do what they do best, give team members recognition for good work, and hold ongoing conversations to coach their employees (Harter, 2018).

According to Dr. Kelly Monahan, Talent Research Lead Senior Principal with Accenture, organizations still rely on autocratic leadership methods. With technology moving at a pace beyond what humans can adapt to, *social capital* (interpersonal skills, connections) is the new currency in the future of work where higher levels of trust and collaboration are needed. Leaders who use coaching will facilitate deeper connections and the growth of social capital (Monahan 2019).

Research conducted by the Human Capital Institute (HCI) and the International Coach Federation (ICF) points to a business case for a strong coaching culture: employee engagement in organizations with a strong coaching culture is 12%

higher than other organizations (Filipkowski, Heverin, & Ruth 2016).

A global survey conducted by *Harvard Business Review* and SuccessFactors found that 1,400 millennial respondents wanted more feedback from their managers. In fact, millennials said they desired this type of one-on-one contact 50 percent more than their colleagues of different ages. They would also like to meet with their manager(s) once a month for a discussion on their personal progress (Landrum, 2018). Furthermore, when coaching skills are integrated into a leader's daily practice, it sends a loud and clear message that "I care about you. I care about your future. I care about your growth. I'm here to create a climate in which you blossom and flourish (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, as cited in Goldsmith, 2012)."

Hard financial benefits (e.g., increased productivity and quality), intangible benefits (e.g., improved relationships, teamwork and job satisfaction), soft benefits (e.g., decreased stress and increased resilience/well-being and engagement) and behavior change (e.g., better time management, faster onboarding, and better decision making) have all been observed as a result of coaching in organizations (Filipkowski, Heverin, & Ruth 2016, as cited in Trenner, 2013).

The quantifiable impact of coaching is often seen more dramatically in sales results. Teams that receive fewer than two hours of coaching per representative per month achieve 90% of goal. In contrast, managers who deliver three or more hours of coaching per representative per month see performance rise to 107% of goal (Corporate Executive Board, 2007).

As coaching has taken hold in organizations, a big question remains: individual coaching is great, but how can we deliver its benefits to the whole organization (Hawkins, 2012)? Peter Hawkins, who has spent more than 30 years helping organizations transform their cultures, shares his aspirational definition of a coaching culture: "A coaching culture exists in an organization when a coaching approach is a key aspect of how the leaders, managers, and staff engage and develop all their people and engage their stakeholders, in ways that

create increased individual, team, and organizational performance and shared value for all stakeholders (Hawkins, 2012)."

Start with a Coaching Mindset

With our objective of building foundational coaching skills for all leaders and managers, the first order of business was to create the mindset for coaching. While coaching is one way for managers to improve engagement and boost productivity, many managers don't see coaching as an important part of their role, attributing either a

of learning and growth and discern that coaching is not something that is done *to someone* but rather done *with someone* to build trust and achieve results. According to researcher and psychologist, Carol Dweck, a fixed mindset creates an internal monologue that is intent on judging, whereas a growth mindset generates a curiosity that is focused on learning (Dweck, 2006). When applied to coaching, the leader with a fixed mindset might say, "That is not how we do it here," and the leader with a growth mindset might say, "How else can we look at this?" Manag-

Coaching, like many other requisite leadership skills, does not come naturally to most leaders and requires a genuine interest in helping others to learn and develop—the soft skills of the job—which are actually quite hard to master. Consequently, training managers to be effective at coaching is important, even if overlooked by many organizations.

lack of time or lack of skill for their disinterest (Valcour, 2014). For many managers, and for Fulton's leaders, it comes down to the "player-coach" mindset and the struggle to balance leading with doing. How much should leaders roll up their sleeves, act as "players," and produce great work themselves? How much should leaders serve as coaches, engage with employees, and inspire them to produce great work (Murphy 2016)?

According to Weintraub and Hunt, (2015), managers who coach their direct reports believe in the value of coaching, it is core to their coaching mindset, for four reasons:

- » They see coaching as an essential tool for achieving business goals.
- » They enjoy helping people develop.
- » They are curious.
- » They are interested in establishing connections.

Without a focus on mindset, the role of coaching can be somewhat vague and mysterious, so it was important for Fulton's managers to view coaching through a lens

of learning and growth and discern that coaching is not something that is done *to someone* but rather done *with someone* to build trust and achieve results. According to researcher and psychologist, Carol Dweck, a fixed mindset creates an internal monologue that is intent on judging, whereas a growth mindset generates a curiosity that is focused on learning (Dweck, 2006). When applied to coaching, the leader with a fixed mindset might say, "That is not how we do it here," and the leader with a growth mindset might say, "How else can we look at this?" Manag-

ers with a growth mindset are agile and curious and will ask questions to explore a spectrum of possibilities, often empowering employees to come up with their own solutions and then showing gratitude for what is working. Such curiosity leads to valuable insight and wisdom.

Mindset is what helped Fulton's leaders embrace the company's core values and culture concepts and make the transition to coaching. For instance, one of the culture concepts, "be here now" encouraged managers to move beyond surface-level conversations and build deeper connections and trust with direct reports. Mindset helped to move coaching from the fixed position of "telling" to an open partnership of "asking" and empowering—while still holding others accountable for results. As Hunt and Weintraub advocate, coaching is a relationship-based activity (2007, p. 59) and managers have to possess a clear, almost line-of-sight ability to see that taking some time to hold a work-related coaching discussion is not a distraction from the tasks at hand and is not driven by the desire to be nice (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007, p.17).

The Need to Build Coaching Skills

Most managers and leaders are promoted because of their technical competence or functional expertise, and once promoted, find themselves naively wearing many new hats with little or no development on how to succeed in their "new normal." As Roger Delves puts it, "they are accidental leaders" (2018). They are given the responsibility, but often not the support. They receive the title, but often not the training (Delves, 2018). Coaching, like many other requisite leadership skills, does not come naturally to most leaders and requires a genuine interest in helping others to learn and develop—the soft skills of the job—which are actually quite hard to master. Consequently, training managers to be effective at coaching is important, even if overlooked by many organizations. Eighty-seven percent of HCI & ICF survey respondents in organizations with strong coaching cultures report that their current training for managers/leaders has been instrumental in building those cultures, compared to 43% of all other respondents (Filipkowski, Heverin, & Ruth 2016). One respondent from the HCI & ICF (2016) research stated, "Managers do need to know the distinction between coaching (empowering an employee to find their way) versus directing (requiring specific actions) or supporting (letting a person drive and be there as needed) an individual."

Case Studies

The two case studies describe our approach to building coaching competence across the organization to achieve breadth—all *people managers*—and depth within a major business line. Both demonstrate a partnership between FFC's Center for Learning & Talent Development and an external leadership coach practitioner to co-design and facilitate acquisition of coaching skills using a variety of learning modalities. More than just a workshop, these programs were established to reinforce culture concepts, develop and elevate leadership capability, and stretch across the enterprise to improve employee engagement.

FULTON MODEL

CONTEXT

Goal, opportunity, or situation to be explored. What do you want to discuss? Why is it important?

OPEN DIALOGUE

Seek and share information about the situation; compare perceptions, ask questions, listen, check for understanding, agree on the gap or opportunity, and explore solutions.

AGREEMENT

Agree on a solution and specific action steps; consider/remove barriers or obstacles; identify roles, responsibilities, and timeframe.

COMMITMENT

Summarize and confirm, raise the value of being accountable; create line of sight to operations and business strategy (reference development plan as appropriate).

HIGH NOTE

Set positive expectations and appreciate the time investment; strengthen the relationship/trust.

RESPECT & TRUST

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FEEDBACK

RELATIONSHIPS

proprietary COACH model (Figure 1). COACH provides a simple and repeatable structure for having a results-focused conversation: Context; Open dialogue; Agreement; Commitment; High-note. This positioned coaching as a non-negotiable leadership skill that would deepen the relationship and trust between a manager and direct report, increase employee engagement, and improve results.

To teach the COACH model, we designed a Coaching & Feedback for Results program that encompassed several learning modalities, shown below.

- » **Prework:** To prepare for the program, participants scripted a real life coaching scenario using a Coaching Conversation-Planner template. This exercise would become the focal point for the role play during the program.
- » **One-and-a-half-day Workshop:** Co-designed and led by an external leadership coach practitioner, the course objectives included: coaching presence, giving feedback, asking purposeful open-ended questions, CAPS active listening model: Clarify, Acknowledge, Probe, Summarize (Morgan, 2016), and managing resistance—all skills were aligned to the COACH model.

- **Role Playing:** In teams of five, participants gained practice through 5:1 coaching role play rounds. Roles included one trained internal facilitator at each group acting as the employee, one participant in the manager role (delivering the coaching), and the remaining participants in the observer role.

- **Feedback:** Each group completed five rounds of coaching practice, with self, observer, and instructor feedback to strengthen learning.

- » **Action Plan:** Each participant completed a “stop/start/continue” action plan to set the stage for learning transfer.
- » **Post-Program Assignment:** Within 30 days following the workshop, each participant was asked to (1) conduct three one-on-one coaching conversations using the new tools and (2) schedule a one-hour Coach-the-Coach session

Figure 1. Fulton COACH Model

Case Study #1

Achieving Breadth—Foundational Coaching Skills for All Managers

Opportunity

Amidst an enterprise-wide culture-shaping initiative, FFC’s Center for Learning & Talent Development was charged with building a culture of coaching. From the 2016 engagement survey, 67.3% of employees agreed “my manager regularly gives me feedback on my job performance,” and 61.7% agreed “my manager effectively coaches me through structured one-on-one time.” These results represented opportunities to more effectively engage, develop, and retain employees through coaching. Yet, how would we train some 800 managers to adopt a growth mindset and become better coaches? More important, how would coaching become the way we

lead and ultimately, the way we do business across the enterprise?

The three key objectives of the initiative were to:

- » Increase the frequency of coaching conversations
- » Improve the quality of the dialogue and outcomes
- » Embed our culture-shaping behaviors into the language and practice of coaching

Furthermore, we wanted an enterprise solution that would be actionable and sustainable up, down, and across the organization for leaders at all levels.

Solution

After assessing needs, studying numerous coaching models, and drawing on our team’s expertise, we developed a

Table 2. *Coaching & Feedback for Results — Program Metrics*

Workshop Attendance	Over a two-year period, a total of 794 participants attended: 687 exempt managers and 107 nonexempt supervisors.		
Participant Feedback using Metrics That Matter (MTM)	• 88% of participants who attended agreed that the “program will improve my ability to be an effective leader.” • 90% who attended agreed that the “program will have a significant impact on increasing employee engagement.”		
Post-Program Assignment	Each participant was asked to conduct three one-on-one coaching conversations using the new tools within 30 days of the program; 97.3% of participants reported completion.		
Coach-the Coach Session	• 75% of exempt managers attended the post-program session and reported an increase in coaching confidence from an average of 5.6/10 before the program to 8.0/10 after program. • This represented an increase of 2.4 points which equates to a 43% lift in confidence.		
Engagement Survey Results	Employee engagement improved. Over the span of the program, we tracked two specific engagement survey items, shown below.		
	ENGAGEMENT SURVEY ITEMS MEASURED	2016	2018
	My manager regularly gives me feedback on my job performance.	67.3%	72.8%
	My manager effectively coaches me through structured one-on-one time.	61.7%	71.4%

with the external leadership coach practitioner to practice a real-world coaching situation.

- » **Reinforcement:** We launched a Leader’s Toolbox on our internal Share-Point site to include the coaching tools, templates, articles, and links to TED talks. We connected these resources to our Sales Management Toolkit which contained coaching job aids on team huddles, joint calling, and pipeline management.

Evaluation Framework and Results

Within a two-year timeframe, the company went from only the sales side of the business conducting coaching to an enterprise COACH model that now fosters both formal and informal coaching across the organization. The idea of coaching, previously regarded by some as punitive performance improvement, came out of the shadows as a valuable practice for employees to learn, grow, and develop. The metrics shown in *Table 2* indicate an increase in coaching conversations, higher manager confidence in coaching, and higher

engagement scores demonstrating improved coaching outcomes.

Case Study #2

Achieving Depth: The Leadership Journey for Commercial Sales Leadership

Opportunity

Commercial Market Executives, a senior sales leadership team, wanted to manage their markets with a broader, enterprise mindset. As a team they needed to be regarded as the “influencers” to more strategically deliver on their new segmentation model. The primary learning needs included:

- » Creating a player/coach balance to lead more readily at the enterprise level and drive business growth
- » Establishing leadership team norms to uniformly inspire high-performance across the business line
- » Coaching their teams along the change commitment curve to fully adopt the segmentation model
- » Coaching to the sales model with more skill and authenticity to reduce

dependency on the manager to jump in and take over

- » Replacing old mindsets and overlearned behaviors with more thought leadership and versatility
- » Engaging in peer-to-peer coaching networks to broaden thinking

A strong partnership was forged with business line leadership, an external leadership coach practitioner, and FFC’s Center for Learning & Talent Development to create a leadership journey for the cohort of 30 leaders that would deepen the coaching culture and demonstrate increased leadership capability—*helping leaders to lead at the right level.*

Solution

As a starting point, we built a series of four leadership retreats—each formatted as a one-day workshop spread over an 18-month timeline with interim work. The leadership journey encompassed several learning modalities, tools, and theories summarized in *Table 3*. In the first workshop, we facilitated a SPOT analysis (Strengths, Problems, Opportunities, and Threats) which set the stage for robust discussions on change, leadership team norms, high-priority projects, and coaching best practices.

Next we administered the Hogan Leadership Forecast assessment which provided themes on strengths and development areas for each individual. To gain a holistic view of team strengths and derailers, we ran the Hogan Team Report. From this, for example, we learned that leaders were steeped in tradition and highly risk averse. Not surprising for a financial services firm. This finding helped us to design learning exercises to help leaders step out of their comfort zones and think more strategically.

We followed the Hogan with the Leadership Versatility Index® (LVI) 360-Degree Feedback Instrument. This provided a 360 view of each leader’s versatility and where they needed to achieve more balance. For instance, the LVI uses a “too little/too much” rating scale to provide specific feedback about what a leader should do more—or perhaps less—to be more effective. Leaders gained new perspectives on how to focus time and energy on the right things.

Table 3. Highlights of 18-Month Leadership Development Program

COMMERCIAL SALES TEAM LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DESIGN <i>Program Outcome: Lead with a broader enterprise mindset to more strategically deliver on results</i>	
<i>Phase of the Program</i>	<i>Theories and Tools Covered</i>
Prerequisite	• <i>Coaching & Feedback for Results Workshop</i> (1.5-day program)
Leadership Retreat #1 <i>Full day—offsite</i>	• <i>SPOT Analysis Exercise</i> to identify leadership and business growth opportunities • <i>Change Commitment Curve Analysis</i> • <i>Leadership Team Norms Exercise</i> • <i>Coaching Opportunities and Practice Rounds</i>
Interim Work—Hogan Leadership Assessment	• <i>Hogan Leadership Forecast Survey</i> • <i>Face-to-face Debrief with Facilitator/Coach</i> • <i>Guided Reflection Exercise</i>
Leadership Retreat #2 <i>Full day—offsite</i>	• <i>Peer Coaching Groups</i> to share insights from Hogan Assessment data • <i>Hogan Team Report Analysis</i> • <i>Leadership Roundtables</i> to expand thinking on critical leadership practices • <i>Coaching Practice: Powerful Coaching Questions</i> • <i>Daily Reflection: Small wins, insights, and priorities</i>
Interim Work—LVI 360-Degree Feedback Instrument	• <i>Leadership Versatility Index® (LVI) 360 Survey</i> • <i>Executive Coaching Program: 5 Coaching Sessions</i> • <i>Leadership Development Plan</i>, presented to manager
Leadership Retreat #3 <i>Full day—offsite</i>	• <i>Power of Small Wins</i> to share coaching successes • <i>Visual Exploration Exercise: Reflect on your leadership journey; share insights, shift in mindset, behaviors, and results</i> • <i>Neuroscience of Strategic Leadership/VUCA</i> • <i>Peer Coaching Groups</i> to discuss leading at the enterprise level and apply to high-priority ventures • <i>Daily Reflection: Small wins, insights, and priorities</i>
Leadership Retreat #4 <i>Half day—offsite</i>	• <i>Leaders As Teachers: Capstone Exercise</i> • <i>Group 1: Player/Coach Mindset</i> • <i>Group 2: Strategic Balance</i> • <i>Group 3: Transformational Coaching</i> • <i>Group 4: Leading through VUCA</i> • <i>Journaling: What have you learned about yourself as a leader? What is your focus area or “next practice” in leading self-team-enterprise? Write your six-word leadership story.</i>

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Throughout the program, we introduced self-reflection and journaling as a form of mindfulness and used insights from Harry Kraemer, clinical professor of strategy at the Kellogg School and former CEO of Baxter International. “Instead of constant acceleration,” Kraemer says, “leadership demands periods of restraint and consideration; productivity demands self-reflection (Kraemer 2016).” The journaling prompts centered on how leaders can prioritize what’s important, coach more effectively, and build stronger teams—basically how to slow down in order to speed up.

The program also aimed to bring the leaders together as peer coaches; this provided another setting for practicing coaching skills. Peer coaching groups were formed to provide a way of slowing down momentum, exploring critical challenges, and holding each other accountable for exploring the right next answer. Peers assumed the role of a coach: Asking questions to explore solutions (“What are your options?”); reflecting back and questioning assumptions; providing observations (“I am sensing you are really stuck on this.”); and listening with positive intent, while suspending judgement and advice.

Intangible Benefits and Impact of the Program

Six months after the leadership journey concluded, we invited participants to share their best practices and the impact of the program. Here is what they said.

- » **Use Two-way Dialogue**—“I continue to hold regular coaching sessions with my teams. The focus is not to have a one-way conversation but to create a two-way dialogue to dig into any issues or roadblocks that the RMs are experiencing.”
- » **Listen**—“It obviously sounds simple, but listening is a learned behavior that you have to really focus on. “Be here now” and “be present” are phrases I am always repeating to myself.”
- » **Ask Questions**—“Get a deeper understanding of what the issue might be with an individual. Well-thought-out questions allow you to gather so much more information than you

would have received by just reacting to the situation.”

- » **Don’t Enable**—“Too many times in the past people would come to me and ask me what to do, and I would solve the problem for them. This does not help their problem-solving abilities and it hurt me from a time management perspective. I changed by asking them questions, and helping them think through their own issues. Fast forward a year or so—most people come in to my office with an ideas of how to attack a problem or opportunity.”
- » **Transparency**—“The process of going through my Hogan and completing the 360 was very beneficial. I shared my feedback with my team and told them I am working with an executive coach. I shared that this commitment to investing in our talent shows that Senior Management is serious about coaching and committed to coaching and career development.”
- » **Peer Coaching**—“This has helped to strengthen ties among our current and future leaders, connecting folks who would normally not be interacting, given our ever-expanding footprint, our vertical lines of business, and our unique geographic markets.”
- » **Consistency**—“Using a consistent coaching process has helped to create better expectations and engagement; valuable information is discussed during coaching sessions that would not happen otherwise.”
- » **Strategic Thinking**—“During coaching sessions, we are thinking more strategically about problem solving, generating more business, and navigating processes or personnel. This has opened up the space to address wins, challenges, and opportunities.”
- » **Career Development**—“I’m having more meaningful career development conversations with the team which is leading to a higher level of employee engagement and offering more leadership opportunities for my team.”
- » **Leadership Development Plan**—“I personally have already benefited greatly from having an executive coach. I’ve built a leadership development plan

and have already executed several initiatives.”

- » **Engagement**—“Fortunately, my Hogan and 360 feedback tied nicely to areas of opportunity noted in my team’s employee engagement survey. I’ve tied the two together and have begun making changes that have been welcomed by the team.”
- » **Team Meetings**—“I have started to intertwine coaching into our team meetings, so that coaching is always a part of how we work together both one-on-one and as a group. I am also trying to ask for more feedback on myself so that everyone knows coaching goes both ways and I’m open to getting better just like everyone else.”

Lessons Learned

Like most complex learning and organizational development programs, we identified ways we could have strengthened the program:

- » Build stronger business line metrics up front, for example, increase in customer satisfaction or average sales per person. While we did measure participants’ feedback on the training and collected qualitative post-program data, we did not have an approach to measure business line results or ROI.
- » Create an actionable and sustainable reinforcement plan to transfer the learning to real-world behavior change. While we had some blended learning components and follow-through, we also would have preferred to engage participants’ managers in the process—before, during, and after. This would keep managers more accountable to the change and transfer process.
- » Survey the participants’ direct reports at the 30- to 60-day mark to learn if coaching conversations were taking place and understand the quality of those conversations and outcomes from the direct report’s experience.

Implications for Organizations and OD Practitioners

Among all of the roles that a leader must play, coaching is pivotal to building

relationships, developing people, building high-performing teams, improving productivity, leading change, and achieving results. Starting with the tone at the top, and through innovative leadership development programs that are actionable and sustainable, coaching has the power to become the way of doing business. It is a mindset and a journey that requires careful planning, perpetual skill building, and strong senior leadership buy-in. Too often managers are not provided with the time and focus to conduct effective coaching. In some cases the manager's span of control is too large. Under the frenetic pressures of day-to-day operations, coaching gets watered down to providing updates and reactively solving problems. On the contrary, coaching is a partnership between the manager and the coachee—this requires deepening trust, slowing down, and opening up the space for transparent conversations. Similarly, the coachee needs to be willing to be coached; in fact, Hunt & Weintraub say, when it comes to learning, the coachee, not the coaching manager, is in the driver's seat (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002). It is in this space of coaching where tough problems can genuinely be understood and addressed through mutual learning, the growth mindset, and with a sense of empowerment. It is where great leaders can create the conditions for others to flourish.

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