

How Organisations can thrive in 2010 and beyond by Stephen Pauley.



The economic downturn has thrown up many challenges for organisations with profitability down, budgets under pressure, a need to control costs, reduced staff numbers and morale due to job insecurity and workplace stress. The need for collaboration, efficiency and excellent teamwork has never been greater.

As with all adversity it presents an opportunity to re evaluate working practices and find creative ways to create a supportive and collaborative working environment that helps target to be met.

It is often said that if you want different results, you have do something different. It may be that an Increase in the use of coaching skills and techniques is the answer and can play a vital role in helping to overcome the challenges that are facing many.

Coaching does not have to be for remedial work or under performance. Used appropriately it can help people to feel more confident, valued and energise them and it can unlock hidden opportunities, potential, and help increase profitability.

One to one coaching provided by an external coach is a powerful development intervention for leaders and managers and provides a safe space to help think things through and deal with challenges. It helps them to manage significant change, validate plans and maximise potential.

Leaders and Managers can gain much from these sessions and they can derive more benefit by learning and having a greater understanding of the core qualities of a coach, coaching models and benefits. With this increased awareness, they can make the connection with their own workplace and integrate key coaching skills into their style. This helps them to work with their teams to come up with practical solutions which can transform their workplaces and lead to increased staff engagement. Excellent coaching skills will help organisations thrive and not just meet the challenges posed by the economic downturn. Coaching is not just something that has to be performed by external coaches or reserved for a monthly or quarterly one to one.

Some of the skills of an excellent coach are good self awareness, a belief in people's potential, effective questioning, active listening, they encourage trust and openness, connect with people and build rapport easily, help set clear outcomes, they are flexible in their thinking and can remain objective.

By using more coaching skills, in just 20 minutes a manager can help a team member to get clear on goals, overcome challenges, create options and spark some action steps.

One of the most popular models used to structure coaching sessions is the GROW model devised by Sir John Whitmore:-

Goal – What do you we want to achieve?

Reality – What is the current position? What barriers need to be overcome?

Options – What are the options?

Will (way forward) – What action steps are going to be taken forward?

Some of the practical benefits that good coaching brings to organisations and workplaces include having a clear sense of direction, goals and priorities. As a result people have greater clarity on their role and how they “fit in.” This helps to increase staff engagement and satisfaction. Creativity sees an increase, as does team working. People start to take greater personal responsibility and accountability for their goals and results. Staff report that they feel more valued, listened to and respected. This contributes towards an increase in morale and reduction in workplace stress.

Customer satisfaction and retention improves as there is a greater awareness of customer needs and how these can be met due to more effective questions and listening. Sales improve and this combined with greater efficiency helps to increase profitability. A reduction in staff absenteeism and turnover of key staff also saves money and sees profits go up.

Stephen Pauley, is a Director of Your Business Matters Limited who have supplied one to one coaching to Leaders in many public and private sector companies since 2001. The company also offer coaching skills training which is accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management. Their next Foundation Coaching Programme takes place on June 16 and 17. Full details can be found at www.your-business-matters.com