

SKYLINE G

Taking Leadership Coaching to the Next Level:

Scaling the Results and Impact of Leadership
Coaching Throughout Your Company

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www.SkylineG.com



Leadership coaching is considered one of the most impactful ways to develop leaders for many reasons. First, it is highly personalized, giving the leader being coached a great deal of ownership—and accountability—over the process and its success. Second, coaching’s personalized nature makes it constantly applicable, allowing the leader to tackle timely real-world problems during coaching sessions and to swiftly apply the lessons in the workplace for immediate impact.¹ Third, unlike a number of other development methods, coaching can create sustainable learning and lasting behavior change.²

In a 2011 study by the American Management Association, 35% of coaching participants stated coaching delivered a measurable business impact more often than other development tools, such as on-the-job training, workshops, and formal courses³. Another study out of the University of London found that 76% of coaching participants felt “no other development tool could offer similar benefits,” including “increased motivation,” the ability to “manage ambiguity” and “confidence and personal well being.”⁴

Now, imagine the extraordinary business impact if employees at all levels had access to coaching instead of only top-level executives.

Coaching has long been seen as only for the few at the top. There have been a number of obstacles to making coaching available throughout an organization to a broad segment of a company’s employee population. The good news—and what we want to explore here—is that no longer does coaching need to be a “haves” vs. the “have-nots” development proposition.

This white paper provides ideas for what you can do and an example of what Facebook did to cost-effectively scale coaching by using technology, leveraging company leaders and identifying and harnessing the coaches within your workforce.

The Biggest Challenge for Businesses: Engagement

The real success of a company comes from the committed effort put forth by motivated employees. We know this, yet statistics on employee engagement remain disheartening. According to Gallup, less than a third of U.S. workers were engaged in 2014—and these are the highest numbers since 2000! It is clear that companies have yet to crack the code on personalizing the employee experience. Current methods designed to tap into what motivates employees simply are not moving the needle.

¹ Nick Petrie, “Future Trends in Leadership Development,” Center for Creative Leadership, December 2014, p. 16.

² Alec Levenson, “Measuring and maximizing the business impact of executive coaching,” Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, Vol 61(2), June 2009, pp. 103-121.

³ American Management Association, “Executive Coaching’s Effectiveness Questioned,” Amanet.org, <http://www.amanet.org/news/6929.aspx#sthash.4aGEiu5C.dpuf>, , December 7, 2011.

⁴ Dr. Caroline Horner, “Executive Coaching: The Leadership Development Tool of the Future?,” Imperial College of Science, Technology And Medicine, University of London, The Management School, 2002, p. 22.

Learning new things and developing new skills are critical sources of motivation. We all desire to be challenged and stimulated.⁵ Yet, despite the hundreds of millions of dollars invested to stimulate, engage, grow and assess employees' connections to their job, many in-house learning and development (L&D) programs still fail to reflect the motivations of employees. One of the underlying causes of this disconnect is because most of these programs are developed solely by L&D staff without finding out from employees what they really want and need to learn about, the skills they want to develop and how they would like to learn. This "de-personalization" renders the programs un-engaging and ineffective.

It is here in the gap between de-personalized programs and individual needs where the highly personalized, participant-driven features of coaching can make a huge positive difference in engagement and business impact.

What Makes Coaching So Effective?

Coaching is highly effective because it is an intrinsic and extrinsic motivator. Participating in coaching makes people "feel good inside" about the company they are working for because the company is investing in them. They then are motivated to give back to the company. Additionally, coaching allows people to learn new skills that are aligned with company needs. As such, mastering and applying these new skills in the workplace leads to extrinsic rewards, like promotions and other kinds of public recognition.

Another critical benefit of coaching is accelerated learning. Through expert guidance and a highly personalized and practical development method, allows the coaching participant to master new skills much faster than by trial and error or rote classroom learning. Although the coach may design the approach, the content of each session is driven by the specific needs of the coaching participant. In fact, to make the most of the coaching engagement, the coachee is expected to be open about his or her current issues and prepared to work on them with the coach.

Last, coaching is effective because there is ongoing involvement with key stakeholders to ensure the organization's and the participant's needs are being met and aligned. The first step of the coaching process is usually a 360-degree assessment of the person being coached. This assessment incorporates feedback from all of the employee's stakeholders, including managers, peers, direct reports, cross-functional partners, and when appropriate, customers (internal and external). Then the coaching sessions are developed to specifically address the stakeholder feedback to positively impact the business. Finally, managers and human resources (HR) business partners contribute ongoing feedback to the coach and to the participant to help track the impact of the sessions.

Coaching can be effectively performed by an external coach or by employees of the company (i.e., internal coaches). There are pros and cons to going either way. While external coaches

⁵ Thuy and Milo Sindell, *Hidden Strengths: Unleashing the Crucial Leadership Skills You Already Have*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015, p. 49.

come well equipped with experience and expertise, they may be perceived as lacking awareness of the organization's unique culture. Internal coaches may lack expertise such as coaching experience, business acumen, or leadership development knowledge. As they are also employees of the company, issues of confidentiality and time away from primary duties can also arise. Last, internal coaches who are embedded in the culture may not be able to provide a broader outside perspective or act as neutral third parties.

Coaching for All

Although coaching has been proven effective as a motivator and a means of accelerated learning for executives, it has generally not been available to employees outside the most senior executive ranks. Traditional leadership coaching engagements are simply too expensive to be deployed across an entire organization. They are not structured to be scalable; they are structured for senior leaders. However, with advanced technological platforms, and new coaching methods and creativity, companies have the opportunity to deploy the best aspects of leadership coaching and scale a coaching experience to a wide range of employees.

Moving beyond the traditional high-touch model of leadership coaching requires an exploration of new tools, processes, and perspectives on what coaching should look like. For example, emerging hybrid, peer and group coaching methods all break free from the typical one-on-one in-person coaching model. These methods of scaling coaching can employ technology to scale coaching for an entire organization in a cost-effective and systematic way that maps employee needs to business goals. As a result, coaching becomes a powerful and highly effective way to not only increase engagement but also grow talent within the organization.

The Role of Technology

Like everything else in our world, new technology is changing the way leadership coaches operate. The most critical tool for scaling coaching within an organization is an agile technology platform that provides anytime/anywhere content, and consistently manages, measures and tracks the impact of coaching initiatives. One such example is the Coaching for Excellence solution (www.c4x.com), offered by the Skyline Group. This highly impactful combination of coaching and technology provides a systematic way of identifying developmental opportunities that are aligned with organizational business objectives; providing tailored, competency-based, online learning with performance-based behavioral adaptation through one-on-one coaching sessions; Robust reporting on coaching sessions and tracking progress toward established goals; assessing coaching participant performance improvement; and tracking business results.

The key emphasis is that the technology platform underpins the entire effort to make coaching scalable by cutting manual tracking and delivery costs, ensuring alignment with set company goals and a consistent learning approach and providing measurable results.

Hybrid Coaching

Hybrid coaching gets its name from its use of traditional coaching methods as well as technology for consistency and cost-effectiveness. In a hybrid coaching scenario, the initial 360-degree assessment of the coaching participant may be carried out online to reduce the time and manpower it would take to do in-person or phone interviews with all stakeholders and to ensure that the data is collected in a systematic way so that it can be easily analyzed. Online 360s also create more robust datasets as more people can participate.

Another way technology is used in hybrid coaching is to deliver content, such as through interactive online programs that complement in-person coaching sessions. In this way, the number of coaching sessions can be reduced without decreasing the coaching participant's accountability or results. Coaching sessions can be carried out over the phone to accommodate time and cost constraints. In addition, a coaching management tool (CMS) can be utilized to track the number of coaching engagements, objectives, and coach / coachee pairing.

Peer and Group Coaching

Peer and group coaching methods leverage existing employees to create “sticky” learning experiences that speak directly to the concerns and needs of coaching participants and the organization. For peer coaching, influential leaders who are interested in learning and coaching are identified and given training to grow their coaching skills. These internal peer coaches then work with leaders at their level or lower much in the same way an external coach would but for a lower cost.

Moving away from a one-on-one to a one-to-many coaching model is also a clear way to make coaching more cost-effective and scalable for an organization. Group coaching, like the name suggests, calls for small groups to meet regularly with a seasoned coach to work on specific and related workplace issues. Here, the coach is truly a facilitator, and it is the participants who drive the agenda for each meeting.

Coaching Scaled in Action: Facebook

Skyline Group recently worked with Facebook to develop a company-wide coaching program using the methods outlined above. The goal of Facebook's program was to make some form of coaching available to every employee who wanted it. In reality, this meant that traditional one-on-one leadership coaching was available to employees at the director level or higher; hybrid, peer and group coaching were available to managers; and peer and group coaching were available to independent contributors.

In this section, we use Facebook as a case study to bust lingering coaching myths and quell any doubts that coaching is truly scalable for an entire organization.

Myth #1: One-on-one coaching is too expensive.

This myth is only half-wrong—making traditional one-on-one coaching available to every person in an organization would probably be cost-prohibitive. However, hybrid coaching allows for the standardization of certain elements of the coaching process so fewer resources are needed. In addition, new peer and group coaching methods provide the benefits of coaching to a wider audience without incurring the traditional one-on-one costs.

What Facebook did: The company embraced technology in the form of online 360-degree assessments for coaching participants, online tools and resources to match skill sets to be developed with company goals, and a digital dashboard to manage the coaching deployment and track results.

Myth #2: You only need to hire expensive outside consultants.

The amount of external coaching assistance needed depends on the strength of the leaders a company already has in place and its ability to train them as coaches.

What Facebook did: Facebook hired external coaches, it also used its “hidden resources” to develop peer coaches among its employees to help develop new skills and behaviors that reinforce company values and culture. The process began with finding those with something to teach (i.e., potential peer coaches) and connecting them with those who have something to learn (i.e., coaching participants). Those potential peer coaches took part in workshops to grow their coaching skills. Then they were given clear guidelines and goals for how the people they coached would need to improve to have an impact on the business.

Myth #3: There is a long lead-time before results.

Long lead-times mean higher costs—this is true whether you are a Fortune 500 company or a 5-person start-up. With coaching, timeframes can be effectively shortened by using technology to deliver standard components and ensuring each session has an actionable goal.

What Facebook did: Coaching timeframes were halved from the traditional six months to three months. Skyline worked with Facebook to develop an accelerated, compressed coaching model of only six sessions for which the mandate was to “move the needle” in each session. For example, the goal of one leader was to improve his ability to exert influence across different parts of the organization. The goals set for him in the first three coaching sessions were:

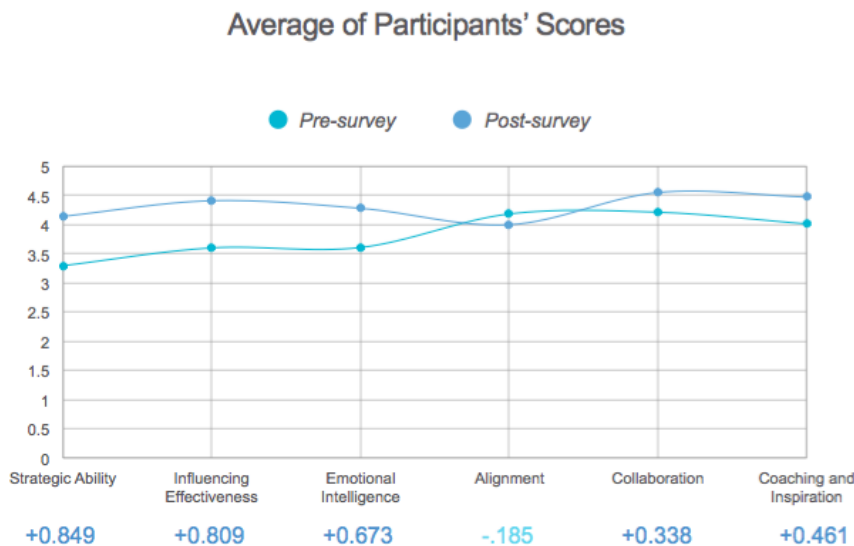
- Identify key relationships to establish or strengthen.
- Learn techniques for building credibility.
- Learn techniques for establishing common ground to effectively influence.

Myth #4: Coaching results are hard to track.

The highly personalized nature of coaching does make it difficult to track results—without a technology platform. A digital dashboard makes it possible to manage all the coaches within an organization, all the skills employees are being coached on and the goals set out for each coaching session whether in-person, on-phone, online, peer or group.

What Facebook did: First, the company determined the key measures it wanted its coaching program to have an impact on: strategic ability, influencing effectiveness, emotional intelligence, alignment, collaboration, coaching and inspiration. Then, it used an online solution to assess coaching participants on these key measures so that it could track the impact of coaching on their scores. Below is a chart developed from pre- and post-coaching data showing the positive impact of coaching⁶. In addition, using the data collected from the technology platform, the company was able to determine that people receiving coaching were promoted twice as fast as those who did not.⁷ These results underscored the value of the coaching program as a leadership-development and engagement tool.

Impact of Coaching on Facebook Employees



⁶ Skyline Group, “Go Inside Facebook’s Strategy to Grow, Innovate & Engage,” Society for Human Resource Management 2015 Annual Conference & Expo, presentation, July 1, 2015.

⁷ Skyline Group, “Go Inside Facebook’s Strategy to Grow, Innovate & Engage,” Society for Human Resource Management 2015 Annual Conference & Expo, presentation, July 1, 2015.

Source: Skyline Group, “Go Inside Facebook’s Strategy to Grow, Innovate & Engage,” Society for Human Resource Management 2015 Annual Conference & Expo, presentation, July 1, 2015.⁸

Conclusion

Making coaching available to your entire organization is the most effective way to motivate employees and grow talent. By leveraging an agile technology platform and the strong leaders and coaches among existing employees, any organization can implement and realize the deep benefits of company-wide coaching.

The linchpin to any scaling effort is the use of technology. Below are the key features any technology platform must have for a successful coaching deployment:

- Standardized assessments so employees can be easily evaluated and coaching progress tracked.
- Mapping of skills employees are coached on to specific company objectives.
- Online tools and resources to deliver standard components of the coaching process.
- Management of the coaching program, including tracking of:
 1. All coaches within an organization and the employees being coached,
 2. All skills employees are being coached on
 3. Goals set out for each coaching session for each employee
 4. Outcome of each coaching session and measurement of the impact of coaching on each individual and on the organization according to set indicators, such as time to promotion, time to productivity for new hires, performance reviews, employee engagement and satisfaction, customer satisfaction, team cohesion and employee longevity.

There is an amazing opportunity for companies to address their leadership and employee development challenges in a way that makes a powerful difference and moves beyond the usual tried and failed solutions. The promises of online training have not delivered, classroom training does not stick and off-site executive development does not scale. Using the power of connection, personalization, cost effectiveness and impact of coaching should be part of every company’s talent development strategy. Yes, you can crack the code on scaling and personalizing the employee leadership development experience.

⁸ The chart shows an increase in post-survey metrics except for “alignment.” This was because once coaching participants began having honest conversations with their managers as part of the coaching process, they realized that their job expectations had not been aligned with those of their managers’.

About Skyline Group

Skyline Group is the leading provider of scalable leadership solutions with a foundation built upon decades of executive coaching with some of the most recognized companies in the world. We are revolutionizing the leadership development industry with our C4X coaching platform. C4X is the only coaching solution that gives you the ability to develop all of your leaders consistently and systematically from onboarding to executive development. C4X combines a flexible technology platform (integrated assessment, content, metrics, and coach management system) with the personalized impact and connection of 1:1 coaching. Learn more at www.SkylineGroup.com and www.C4X.com.



Leadership Coaching



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