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LEADERSHIP COACHING

March 2019

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Abstract and Key words

Coaching can be defined as “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them” (Whitemore, 2009). This main objective of this study is to understand the importance of coaching and its effect on managerial performance and impact. This paper studies the impact that coaching had on the senior level team of a leading private sector organization in Sri Lanka. According to this study it was found out that the coaching process helped to build awareness among the leadership in terms of modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling the others to act and encouraging the heart. This study examines how coaching can have an impact when the leader behavior in each department differs.

Key words : leadership coaching, executive coaching, coaching competencies, coaching dialog flow chart, leadership challenge

Introduction:

Being an effective leader in an organization is not always easy today with the nature of challenges that organizations faces internally and externally, locally and internationally. Hence one set of skills may not been adequate to face the challenges ahead. Any skill, it takes time and effort to learn and needs nurturing. Hence the importance of coaching can support the leader to develop self and his team. A coach can support a leader in his journey of mastering leadership skills and qualities.

Leadership can often involve facing difficulties and obstacles that will test your skills and patience so it makes sense to be prepared for lots of different circumstances that require your leadership skills.

The problem is that most people in leadership roles are busy with the day-to-day running of the company or doing/overseeing the work that needs to be done. How can you give time to hone your hidden leadership skills and update your knowledge on the strategic things if you're busy with meetings, paper works, agendas, etc.?

This is where a leadership coaching becomes important. He/she will help you to make room for improvement in becoming a better leader. In essence the key to leadership effectiveness is coaching and mentoring. Here are seven reasons as to why it's so important to have a leadership coach...

- Sometimes due to pressure of work and operations, we don't find time to learn and grow – i.e. no accountability to self-development
- You may not have understood your strengths/weaknesses
- You may not have an impartial sounding board for your ideas, concerns, challenges...
- You may not have an unbiased partner, committed to your growth and success, who will point out your blind spots and help you deal with them
- You may not receive feedback on the areas that are currently holding you back
- You want to move to the next level but don't know how
- You need to create more balance in your life, but seem to be caught up in so many things...STRESSED OUT

These limitations can be addressed through leadership coaching.

Literature Review

What is coaching?

The term "coaching" is used to describe a wide a range of interventions as there is no legally binding definition in place. Some definition of coaching is given below.

Coaching is “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them” (Whitemore, 2009)

Coaching is “ a collaborative, solution focus, results orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self directed learning and personal growth of the coachee” (Grant, 1999), (Association of coaching, 2006)

Coaching is “a professional partnership between a qualified coach and an individual or a team that supports the achievement of extraordinary results, based on goals set by the individual or team” (ICF, 2005)

Coaching is “the art of facilitating the unleashing of people’s potential to reach meaningful important objectives” (Rosinski, 2003)

Commonly mentioned benefits of coaching include enhanced personal and organizational performance, better work life balance, higher motivation, better self reflection, optimized decision making and improved change management

What is Leadership Coaching?

Leadership Coaching is a collaborative, individualized relationship between a leader and the coach. The leader could well be an executive, manager, supervisor, team leader or business owner for example anyone in charge or responsible for a group of people. Coaching is a partnership in which both sides work to reach an agreed-upon destination. The aim of the partnership is to bring about sustained behavioral change and transform the quality of the leader’s working and personal life.

Leadership coaching is an individualized process that builds a leader’s capability to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals. Coaching is personalized, customized, and usually conducted one-on-one for a defined period of time and with a specific business purpose in mind. Initially instituted to save derailing managers, leadership coaching now typically focuses on enhancing performance for leaders at all levels.

What is Executive Coaching?

Executive coaching is an experiential and individualized leader development process that builds a manager’s capability to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals. It is conducted through one-on-one interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and

based on mutual trust and respect. The organization, a manager (the coaches), and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum impact. Executive coaching involves three levels of learning: tactical problem solving; developing leadership capabilities and new ways of thinking and acting that generalize to other situations and roles; and ‘learning how to learn’. Learning how to learn means developing skills and habits of self-reflection that ensure that learning will continue after coaching ends. Its aims are to eliminate an executive's long-term dependency on his coach and teach habits of learning and self-reflection that will last a lifetime, enabling him to keep developing throughout his career.

Executive coaching is primarily concerned with the development of the manager (coachee) in the context of organizational needs. The coaching objective is to maximize the manager’s effectiveness and his or her contribution to the organization. The coach develops an understanding of the broader business context in which the manager operates, with particular emphasis on key business initiatives directly relevant to the manager. The manager and coach then agree upon specific results that best reflect the organization’s business objectives. Successful executive coaching links a business focus with human processes by closely aligning the manager’s development with critical business needs.

Approaches to Coaching

- *Leadership Approach*; this enables the coach to approach each client meeting with the skills to engage the client either in task or relationship behavior. The three-skill approach —technical, human and conceptual— creates a well-rounded executive coach but most executive coaching scenarios do not require the technical or professional aspect. Executive coaches must develop a balance between relationship and task when using the style approach in order to move easily between the two as needed during the coaching engagement. The coach must also look at his or her strengths or weaknesses, in terms of traits and style, and develop a plan to create some balance between the two or simply focus on strengths and manage around weaknesses. This is where the four aspects of emotional intelligence (EI) become important: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, social skills. Since these aspects can complement a coaching relationship, I will review those that make the greatest impact.
- *Self-management Approach*; this refers to the ability of the coach to achieve goals using such skills as self-awareness, self-regulation, self-evaluation, flexibility and time management. The coach with good self-management can assess clients, actively create

and pursue a developmental plan, and work the plan with the client. This is a strength for the coach in that she or he takes time to reflect and determine if they are creating a balanced coaching encounter or not. If the coach is unaware of any biases through lack of self-awareness; if the coach can't regulate cognitions through a lack of self-regulation; if a coach isn't flexible as the coaching engagement proceeds; if the coach isn't conscious of time during the coaching session, the coach comes across as off balance, unprofessional, and inflexible. The coach sets the standard for the coaching relationship, and self-management is a key aspect of it.

- *Cognitive adeptness Approach*; The effective coach uses whole brain thinking. The left brain analyzes; the right brain creates. The left brain deals with numbers, rational thought processes, sequences which the effective coach needs to analyze the situation, determine the appropriate approach or style, and handle administrative details. Right brain thinkers focus more on the emotions, relationships, intuition, integrating, and synthesizing highly perceptual issues. The effective coach builds a relationship with the client that leads to coaching goals that might include skills or performance coaching. The ability to help the client succeed rests on the coach's ability to create the emotional connection with the client by using more right brain thinking. Effective coaches shift back and forth between right and left brain thinking, adapting their style to assist the client. If the coach's style is too task related, the relationship might be jeopardized; if the coach's style is too relationship related, goals may not be achieved. The goal is to combine the two styles to positively impact the interaction.
- *Interpersonal adeptness Approach*; A coach must be skilled in interpersonal relationships. Coaching is a collaborative relationship. The coach must acquire the ability to listen differently based on the situation or person. When a person can really listen to another at the level that the other person needs, relations are deepened; new understandings are created; we gain a greater appreciation for who the other person is and where they are at and what they need. We really hear what is being said without bias; understand what is heard; and become aware of our listening styles (reactive, explorative or attentive). The coach must ask questions using the exploratory style to help the client create their own answers, and then use attentive listening during the engagement. Attentive listening is collaborative—it uses observation, nonverbal and verbal responses to move closer, emotionally, to the client. A coach can acknowledge the client through the use of attention, mirroring, pace, and focus. The effective coach

listens for what is being said in between the lines—where the truth or real need lies. A client may say he wants a promotion when in fact, he wants his boss to give him more at-boys. A client may say she wants to change careers when, in fact, she needs to take a stand for her salary and bonus. An effective coach can listen for this and respond at the level of real need.

- *Social and political skills Approach*; The best organizations proactively seek innovative ideas to move forward. This may include a change or shift in culture. If so, expect resistance. An executive coach may assist a key executive to develop attributes to engage in the change process, showing the executive how his or her modeling affects other individuals. The executive might have business acumen but lack social acumen. Emotional intelligence is a predictor of effective leadership. Social skills are needed to create a new culture. The executive who uses social skills to transform his or her relationship with people will attain followers rather than employees. When an executive coach helps the executive focus on social skills, greater results can be achieved

The Coaching Relationship

In a coaching relationship the coachee retains responsibility and ownership of the outcomes and is the leader of the whole coaching process while the coach tailors the coaching around the coachee's needs and remain detached. In order to have a good coaching relationship it is important to establish a coaching contract. The coaching relationship is an equal one and neither participant being superior nor subordinate to others.

Coaching draws influences from and stands on the shoulders of a wide range of disciplines including counseling, management consultancy, personal development and psychology. The below metaphor of driving a car highlight the relationship difference

- A *therapist* will explore what is stopping you from driving your car
- A *counselor* will listen to your anxieties about the car
- A *mentor* will share tips from his or her own experience of driving cars
- A *consultant* will advise you on how to drive the car
- A *coach* will encourage and support you in driving the car

Potential coachees can include members of the CXO suite or their direct reports. Tentatively, the objective is to groom them for further responsibility and/or develop them to become even more effective in their current roles. Specific objectives can be defined during the pre-coaching discussion. The Coach will gather confidential 360degree feedback about the coachee managers from concerned stakeholders to identify strengths and development areas. The initial coaching relationship is usually for 3 to 6 months, with up to four, weekly conversations each month. The details of each session are confidential between the coach and the coachee. A review meeting can be held with the coachee, the coach and the organization sponsor once each quarter.

According to the International Coaching Federation (www.coachfederation.org) coaching is an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. A coach helps improve the work performance and enhance the quality of life by using a process of inquiry and personal discovery to build the client's level of awareness and responsibility, as well as provides the client with structure, support, and effective feedback. Thus, coaching is a process of discovery, goal-setting and strategic action that leads to extraordinary results. This is achieved by helping the client establish what is important to them and by clarifying their values. With the client's input the coach co-creates value based goals and a plan to achieve them. Through collaboration, the coach supports the client to achieve these goals. (Annexure on ICF Coaching Competencies)

Coaching is not psychotherapy or counseling. One of the most obvious differences is that therapy tends to focus on feelings and experiences related to past events, whereas coaching is oriented towards goal setting and encourages the client to move forward. A coach works with a functional person to get them to become exceptional. A coach works with people who are already emotionally healthy to move them to magnificent levels. Coaching does not rely on past issues for achieving growth, but rather focuses on goals towards the future. Coaching is action oriented. The focus is on where the client is right now, where they want to be next, and how to get them there.

Therefore, coaching is an experiential and individualized leader development process that builds a manager's capability to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals. It is conducted through one-on-one interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect. It involves three levels of learning: tactical problem solving; developing leadership capabilities and new ways of thinking and acting that generalize to other

situations and roles; and 'learning how to learn'. Learning how to learn means developing skills and habits of self-reflection that ensure that learning will continue after coaching ends. Its aims are to eliminate an executive's long-term dependency on his coach and teach habits of learning and self-reflection that will last a lifetime, enabling him to keep developing throughout his career.

In coaching the primarily concerned is with the development of the manager (client) in the context of organizational needs. The coaching objective is to maximize the client's effectiveness and his or her contribution to the organization. The coach develops an understanding of the broader business context in which the client operates, with particular emphasis on key business initiatives directly relevant to the manager. The client and coach then agree upon specific results that best reflect the organization's business objectives. Successful executive coaching links a business focus with human processes by closely aligning the client's development with critical business needs.

Methodology /The Coaching Process

Dialogue, fuelled through powerful questions, is at the heart of the coaching process. In coaching conversations, managers think aloud, become more reflective, and gain access to their own tacit knowledge and unexplored ideas. The coach's role is to act as a sounding board, confidant, partner, challenger, and catalyst for change. The emphasis in coaching is on building the manager's ability to deal with the issues using his or her own decision-making skills, as against telling him or her specific actions to undertake. Since coaching addresses specific performance or behavioral gaps, it is more effective than general-purpose training because it gives high-performing busy managers an opportunity to reflect on feedback, focus on developing goals, and have someone to hold them accountable for executing their goals.

The confidential coaching relationship also creates a safe space for managers to share their concerns. Managers who engage in a coaching relationship can expect to experience fresh perspectives on personal challenges and opportunities, enhanced thinking and decision making skills, enhanced interpersonal effectiveness, and increased confidence in carrying out their chosen work and life roles.

Based on the client's needs, the coach develops a customized program that varies in time (3 – 6 months) and scope. While coaching can be done face-to-face, the international practice is that most coaching is done through scheduled telephonic conversations. This saves the client time and effort in commuting and enables coaching in the privacy of the client's home or office. It also removes geographical constraints as much coaching happens across national borders and time zones. Typically, 45- 60 minute telephone conversations or face to face times are scheduled up to four times a month, depending on the scope of the engagement. Most engagements are initiated with an exploratory session in which the coach and client get to know each other, explore initial needs, and discuss the logistics and process. The exploratory session gives the client an opportunity to evaluate his or her comfort level with the coach and the process.

Coaching Techniques and Skills

In coaching the techniques of listening, questioning, clarifying and giving feedback are essential to make the coaching process work effectively.

Listening has many levels

- Level 1- Waiting for your turn to speak

Planning what to say instead of listening to what the speaker is saying. The speaker can notice that the listener is not listening by observing the body language and words spoken

- Level 2- Giving your own experience

Giving a reply about the listener, not the speaker.

- Level 3- Giving advice

This is still more about the listener than speaker and can be right because the listener has not explored what the speaker's real issue

- Level 4- Listening and asking more

Ask questions to clarify the message

- Level 5- Active Listening

The speakers thought processes are helped by promoting questions

Questioning

- In coaching questioning is a very powerful tool. This include what, how, where, when and why questions directed as open clarifying questions to make the coach think differently. It is always encouraged to have open questions than closed questions towards a better dialogue.

Clarifying

- Is the art of para phrasing the words spoken by the coachee and summarizing and reflecting back?

Benefits of Coaching

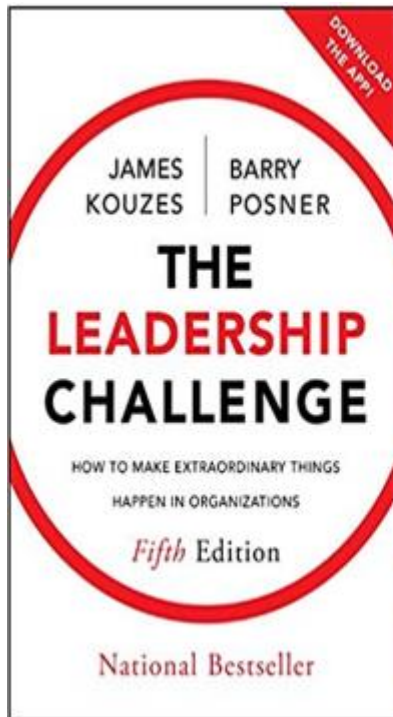
Compared to traditional leadership development workshops, executive coaching has tremendous benefits since it is done almost entirely in real business time and focuses on specific, real-life contextual issues. In addition, the executive coaching process is personalized, as opposed to a ‘one-size-fits all’ approach. According to research by Turner (2006), executives identified five significant benefits of executive coaching as a leadership strategy. These benefits were continuous one-on-one attention; expanded thinking through dialogue with a curious outsider; self-awareness, including blind spots; personal accountability for development; and, Justin-time learning. Individuals who engage in a coaching relationship can expect to experience fresh perspectives on personal challenges and opportunities, enhanced thinking and decision making skills, enhanced interpersonal effectiveness, and increased confidence in carrying out their chosen work and life roles. In a research study by Parker-Wilkins (2006), respondents stated that coaching assisted them in the development of three main competencies: leadership behavior (82 percent), building teams (41 percent), and developing staff (36 percent). Refer Tab1 for further analysis of the benefits.

Coaching Benefits		
Individual Level	Team Level	Organizational Level

Better self-awareness and self-reflection	improved team efficiency/ performance	improved organizational performance
increased individual performance	improved team spirit and conflict management	higher profitability/ ROI/ productivity/ sales
higher motivation & commitment	higher motivation & commitment	better staff motivation & retention
better leadership skills	clearer vision development and objectives	open and productive organization culture
personal growth	creating synergies	less absenteeism
higher quality of life and work life balance	unleashing group potential	sustainable learning and development
improved communication and relationships	improved communication and relationships	more effective communication

Tab 1

- Conducting DISC Profile on all Coachees and their Direct Reports
- Obtain 360 degree feedback from Peers, Direct Reports, Boss, Self
- Conducted One on One Coaching sessions weekly since Sept 2016
- Conducted Group Coaching Sessions with team members



- Model the Way**
 - Clarify Values
 - Set the Example
- Inspire a Shared Vision**
 - Envision the Future
 - Enlist Others
- Challenge the Process**
 - Search for Opportunities
 - Experiment and Take Risks
- Enable Others to Act**
 - Foster Collaboration
 - Strengthen Others
- Encourage the Heart**
 - Recognize Contributions
 - Celebrate the Values and Victories

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership®	Ten Commitments
Model the Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared ideals. • Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.
Inspire a Shared Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. • Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
Challenge the Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve. • Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.
Enable Others to Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships. • Strengthen others by increasing self determination and developing competence.
Encourage the Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. • Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

DISC Profiling Concept



DISC Profiling Styles



Discussion and Findings

The organization under review is a specialized manufacturer in Lead Acid Batteries. In addition to the Automotive Lead Acid Batteries produced by the company, it also produces Deep cycle Batteries for Solar and Trawler boat applications. The company commenced commercial operations 50 years back and currently produce over 50,000 batteries per month. Local marketing done via a large group which operates over 500 plus outlets .Currently export to Dubai, Singapore, Maldives and Myanmar.

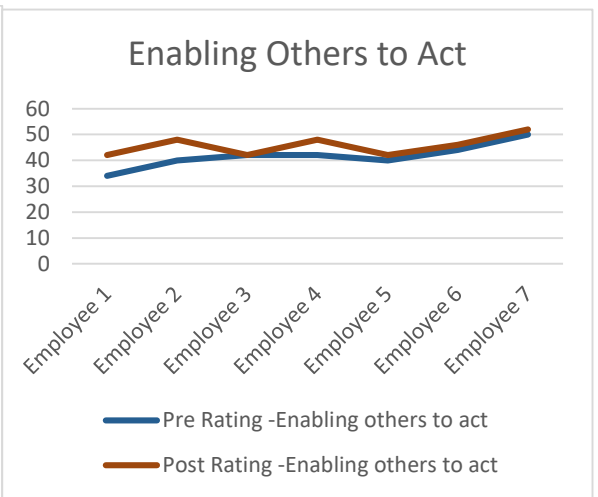
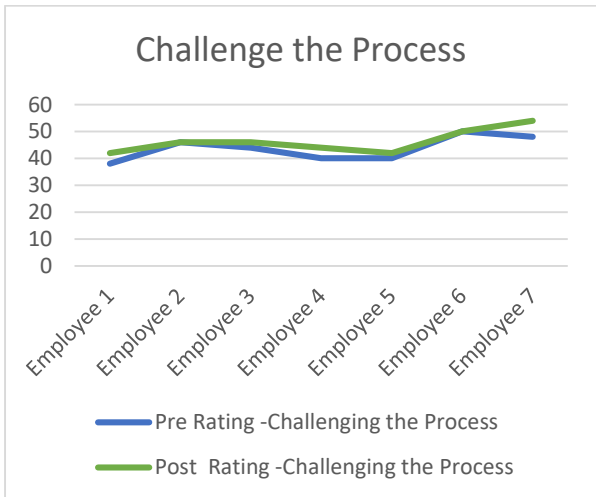
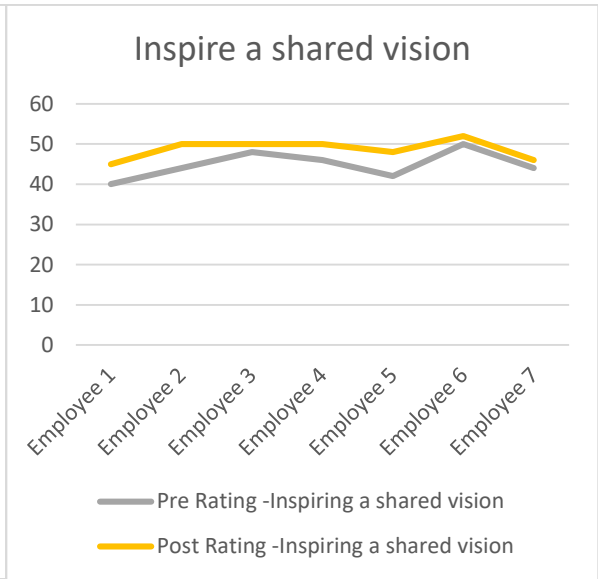
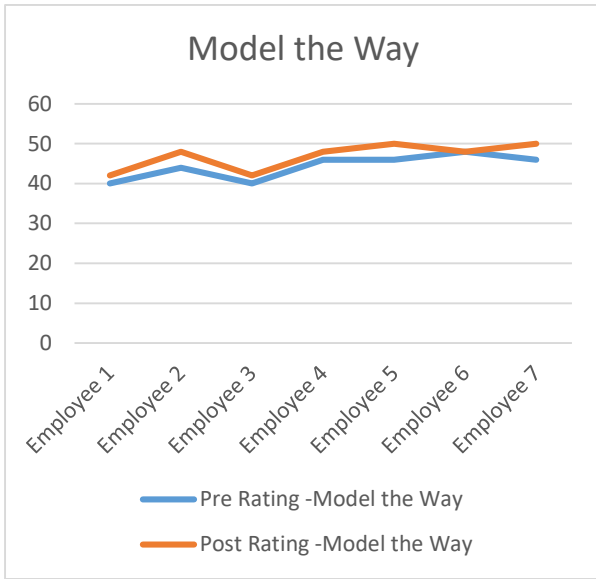
A survey was conducted for each of the departmental heads by their respective team mates to access the current leadership perception. The feedback was obtained from 10 personal covering Self, Boss, Peers (3), Direct Reports (3) and Service Recipient (2). Once the survey results are obtained the table below is prepared using the averages.

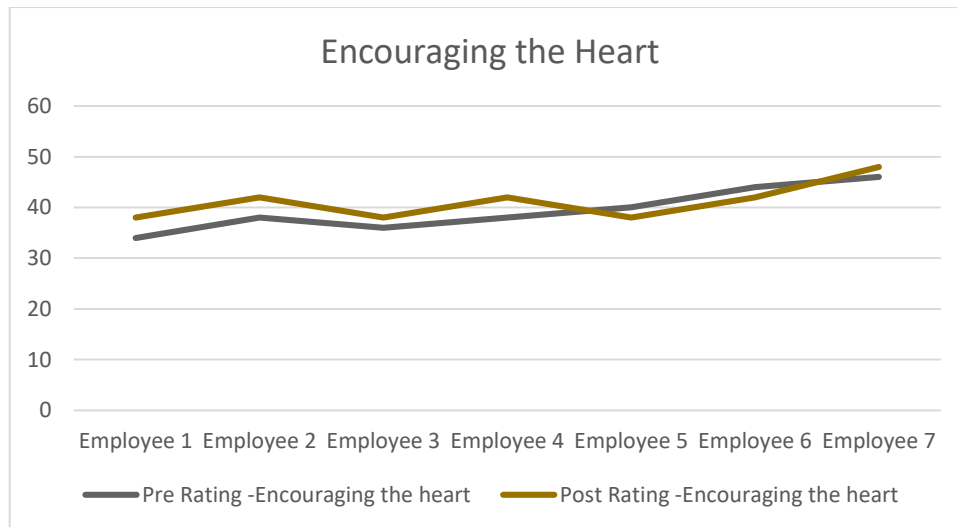
The result obtained Pre Coaching and Post Coaching is given below.

Pre Coaching Data and Post Coaching Data										
	Pre Rating -Model the Way	Post Rating -Model the Way	Pre Rating -Inspiring a shared vision	Post Rating -Inspiring a shared vision	Pre Rating -Challenging the Process	Post Rating -Challenging the Process	Pre Rating -Enabling others to act	Post Rating -Enabling others to act	Pre Rating -Encouraging the heart	Post Rating -Encouraging the heart
Employee 1	40	42	40	45	38	42	34	42	34	38
Employee 2	44	48	44	50	46	46	40	48	38	42
Employee 3	40	42	48	50	44	46	42	42	36	38
Employee 4	46	48	46	50	40	44	42	48	38	42
Employee 5	46	50	42	48	40	42	40	42	40	38
Employee 6	48	48	50	52	50	50	44	46	44	42
Employee 7	46	50	44	46	48	54	50	52	46	48
Average	44.29	46.86	44.86	48.71	43.71	46.29	41.71	45.71	39.43	41.14

The above table shows the coaching data on each key leadership challenges how each employee behavior was rated by the stakeholders mentioned above. This shows that for each leadership challenge the ratings has improved. The largest improvement was seen in the key leadership challenge enabling the others to act with 4.0 average points gaining from pre coaching data to post coaching data and the lowest improvement was seen in leadership challenge encouraging the heart with 1.71 average points.

The graphical representation of the data is shown below.





Key Observations

- **Employee 1 (5147)- Creative Profile**
 Organized. Methodical. Focused. Maintain coaching Logs. Technically Competent. Analytical. Strong will to learn. Need to improve on Team Leadership. Ie inspirational
- **Employee 2 (6533)- Result Oriented Profile**
 Focused. Technically Competent. Need to Organize and be methodical. Need to Improve on Team Leadership, Delegation, and follow up skills. Need to control emotions, patience.
- **Employee 3 (2755) – Practitioner Profile**
 Organized, Methodical, Focused. Technically Competent. Good Manager but need to work on his leadership skills, need to get more involved in Conflict Management, Process Control and Managing Emotions.
- **Employee 4 (5443) – Result Oriented Profile**
 Need to get organized. Positive attitude. Emotional. Need to delegate and establish trust with team mates and others
- **Employee 5 (4453)- Specialist Profile**
 Need to get organized. Be methodical and drive the team. Good Individual worker. Lacks leadership / managerial skills ie meetings/ follow up / directing/ guiding and trusting team mates
- **Employee 6 (6434)- Result Oriented Profile**
 Organized. Methodical. Need to work as a team and delegate

- **Employee 7 (1257)- Perfectionist Profile**

Organized. Self-motivated. Need to take ownership for action. Lack Team Leadership
eg Passive

Recommendation and Conclusion

The typical approach to management development until date has been to send managers to classroom (or outbound) sessions on leadership. While this effort is any day better than no development activity, it has certain limitations that organizations need to consider carefully. First, each manager has different development needs that may or may not be addressed in a standard workshop. Secondly, even if the workshop is well received by the managers, there is no accountability for implementing the new knowledge and skills learned at the workplace, essentially because managers are often too busy to do so. Thirdly, traditional leadership development workshops are based on the premise that if people understand, then they will do. Unfortunately, research proves that while many understand, very few actually do. Lastly, it is unrealistic to expect management development to happen if input is limited to occasional training events, which do not have a follow-up process.

Hence Leadership Coaching is an essential requirement in driving the key leaders towards performance and growth. Since the process involves obtaining feedback from different stakeholders and working on with the leader one on one makes it a very effective leadership development initiative. The challenge is to ensure both coach and coachee work on a short to medium term understanding so that results can be measured after 3 to 6 month engagement

Based on the profiling data using DISC Analysis and Coaching Data obtained from each of the leadership challenge dimensions the following recommendations were shared with the organization for further engagement and development

Employee 1 – Need to focus on developing team leadership skills in the short term (3 to 6 months) and focus on trust building initiative in the medium to long term (6 months - 2 years). The employee has the potential to be promoted to the next grade within the next two years.

Employee 2 – Need to focus on developing organizing and communication skills in the short (3 months – 6 months) to medium term (6 months to 1 year) and to focus on challenging self and processes related status quo

Employee 3- Need to focus on developing team leadership skills and conflict handling skills in the short (3months – 6 months) to medium term (6 months to 2 years) and to focus on empowering the next level via delegation

Employee 4 – Need to focus on organizing skills in the short (3months – 6 months) to medium term (6 months to 2 years) and to focus on walking the talk, modelling the way by setting examples

Employee 5 – Need to focus on developing team leadership skills in the short term (3 to 6 months) and focus on trust building initiative in the medium to long term (6 months - 2 years).

Employee 6 – Need to focus on developing team leadership skills in the short term (3 to 6 months) and focus on trust building initiative and need to challenge the status quo and set examples for other to follow in the medium to long term (6 months - 2 years).

Employee 7 – Need to focus on developing organizing and communication skills in the short (3 months – 6 months) to medium term (6 months to 1 year) and to focus on challenging self and processes related status quo

Hence coaching individually and aligning them towards the organizational direction was a challenge. In addition the organization work in teams. Many team building initiatives are currently underway.

Further study to be done in order to understand team structure, team dynamics and team coaching in the organization

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