

Organisational development and the individual Learning Experience, offers a robust commercial case for coaching

No matter what the organisational size, product or service, reason and cultural or commercial position, surely the fundamental rationale is for training development and learning, to be an investment that results in a return. Achieving a return for that investment is a question that is essential at the planning of the business process and requires buy-in at board level, however this process and higher level consideration is often the shortfall in the lack lustre results that should see change and improvement at the least, or transformation at its best.

This type of learning results in organisational change, effected by improvement of people and their behaviour. This is the learning that affects the bottom line. So what are the influential factors that make learning effective and commercially viable as well as essential?

The shadow of the organisational plan:

“Really knowing your people” The individual entry point to any learning or development is to a certain extent the shadow, or the unknown quantity. Organisational planning, integrates the existing learning of the department organisational function and the individual to devise a learning strategy to achieve a maximum learning shift. The information held, and personal data that is recorded about the learning and performance of individuals, is gathered and inputs of the course or learning outcomes are designed with due consideration to integration with the business plan, talent and workforce plan. The result and quality of these sources of information can be both informative and detrimental, as attitude sets, and documentary data is a result of the quality of the relationships that pre-exists. In addition to board level approval, the actual outcomes of the individual experience require recognition and work as part of pre brief, and de brief by the line manager as being essential to integrating any new learning, as well as monitoring and reviewing the change in performance.

General organisational & personal process:

Outcome focussed learning is what organisations want to see as part of the learning and change process, that is the department function and the individual has improved as a result of the investment and that the learning produces a shift of measurable change. In order to produce a shift, there is a challenge as part of the learning process. The nature of the challenge combines the individual’s preconceived experiences and learning and produce’s the required outcome with varying degrees of success. The variation depends upon the individual entry point personal attitude, as well as other contributing factors. The learning challenge during progression and once achieved becomes the responsibility of all who have a role in people management and performance outcomes, they have a part in ensuring that the business investment has every opportunity to be realised and effective. Line managers and other ‘s within the senior team, have a significant role in transforming learning, with their active involvement new learning transforms into improved working practice, the practice that achieves bottom line results.

The two diagrams below indicate two levels of outcomes personal and organisational aims, when considering the training or learning plan (from left to right). The organisational expectations are that a shift of personal learning that improves performance. The personal influencers are the already existent behaviours brought by the individual into any new learning experience.

Organisational outcomes:

1. Performance	2. Attitude	3. Behaviour	4. Performance Outcome
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Personal influencers:

1. Previous Performance	2. Previous Attitude	3. Previous Behaviour	4. Outcome = Level of Transformation
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In examining our performance, our personal behaviour is the result of our multifaceted experience of life. Work roles changes in the environment and learning, are expected to integrate all our facets, communication, behaviours and experiences and somehow work them together effectively personally to deliver the best results within our work role, or area of responsibility. For example, each manager could be exposed to a course on organisational communication; each one manager will have a different understanding and interpretation of what open lines of communication actually mean in practice

Transformational learning is when the form of our understanding changes.

To achieve any consistent performance, it is fundamental to change inherent attitudes that are in opposition. To change the attitude of an individual challenges their very basic understanding and experience of how we have learnt to achieve results. This is the challenge. The sometimes, oppositional learning has become endemic to our being, on an emotional, mental, physical and spiritual level. It is our experience of our own reality of what works for us. Whilst change is going forward on an individual learning level or being integrated into a new experience and working strategies, it is essential also to explore, support the coping strategies to face personal and environmental implications. Coaching provides the very essence of a whole person and whole organisation perspective, by meeting both parties where they are, each small shift provides the foundation that adds up to seeing the world with a different more qualitative understanding.

The Coaching potential:

The Coaching experience should be challenging on all personal levels, those academic and relational attitudes and experiential learning, personal principles and perceptions of culture. The coach works within the framework of respecting the organisational values and their position strategically; there is little room for judgement on an organisational level. The client (both organisation and employee) is the source and the director of change.

Recognising the example given earlier of open communication and how the understanding of each line manager can differ in relation to how this understanding relates practice. If we then extend this to include the understanding of all employees, the perspective become even broader and will affect relational, operational outcomes. This issue dealt with through coaching gives the opportunity to examine the cognitive experiential and the practice alignment through appreciation and reflection of the actual individual experience. Communication, through guided understanding and appreciation

of the organisational perspective can assist the individual in understanding it in operational practice from a broader perspective than just their own personal experience.

Organisational coaching, meets the learning experience of both the individual in respect and respectful, of the organisational setting and its purpose. It is about meeting both where they are. By challenging the individual interpretation, it will reform with balance through the coaching process, to release a new way of perceiving and ultimately relating to others.

In providing a platform of learning to the individual and the organisation, it is possible to pierce through the personal struggles and the shadows that exist at an individual organisational level. There is no necessity, to analyse or debate the detail of the rights and wrongs of influencers and decisions makers. Through greater self-understanding we learn that when we change ourselves we have the greatest impact.

By facing the shadows, facing the individual learning style and exploring experientially our own learning can bring great revelation that is portable to understanding others. By meeting each person and organisation, where they are and considering how we can improve attitude is the way to enhance and raise levels of understanding and awareness. What is the cause and effect of our behaviour on others, how does that work with the bigger picture? Exploration of, the what if scenario, looking at our interconnections, in a safe environment, using recent learning or experience to assist awareness of what could be outworn and established personal values, that may no longer be working is both insightful and challenging. What could now be realised as being misplaced judgements, that are too often a result of poor unintentional communication to reveal a “ha, ha” moment that brings learning on several levels. Or by simply, having the opportunity to hear our own internal voice, actually verbalise thoughts, fears, experience and having the time to reflect on them.

We do not operate in isolation we are beings that connect, from the quality of our connection there exists the basis of learning and transformation.

As a platform for change, real transformational change, coaching for organisational and individual change has got to be one of the most cost effective tools. By giving meaning and power to learning for the organisation and the individual. And what will change raises the fundamental question for us all, and specifically one that the coach needs to ask the individual and the organisation. What will you do differently as a result of learning?

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