

HR DEVELOPMENT

Professionalising HR Expertise Through Coaching

By Dr Jaclyn Lee



Human resource coaches can make a significant difference in raising the level of expertise in an organisation. Some organisations may be blessed with certified executive HR coaches. Some may not. When your organisation does not have one, there is the option through seeking an outsourced partner.

The question that then arises is: How can an organisation select a competent expert HR coach?

A good starting point would be to look for someone with a certified qualification. Having someone who has been in the HR trade or in a senior leadership position with the accompanying experience of, perhaps, 20 to 30 years would be a welcome bonus.

It would even be better if the coach has “life” experience in having dealt with the vagaries of today’s world. Although not essential, someone with a background in Psychology would be an added advantage.

Very often external coaches would be more suitable when it comes to coaching the senior management team as they are able to overcome matters like day-to-day professional proximity and organisational relationships. Sometimes, it is matter of professional colleagues wanting their own space within the context of the coaching advice being delivered.

On coaching junior people within an organisation, it is a slightly simpler route for certified coaches. The start lies in identifying promising junior people with good potential who can be groomed to the next level.

Having coach many “young professionals” previously and also currently, I would say that this is neither for the inexperienced nor the faint hearted. A very holistic approach to coaching is needed.

You need to set specific professional goals for each individual and this requires a lot of time-investment. However, great satisfaction can be derived when you see people that you coach go on to become very successful in their career.

I have personally worked with people that I coach who are now holding very respectable senior leadership positions. These folks, can in turn help others so it passes on.

In a coaching scenario, you would typically need to set specific goals for the “coachee” to achieve over a period of time. This typically spreads over a few months if you are hiring an external coach as there are costs involved.

For an in-house coach, you might take a longer period, as it is more cost effective and in-house coaching is usually tied to a leadership program. During the period of coaching, attention is paid to developing specific skill sets of the person or even highlighting certain improvements the person can make in the way they manage and interact with their teams.

Coaches deliver these outcomes through “coachable moments” and through regular scheduled meetings. During the coachable moments, coaches are likely to identify specific instances where they see actions that can be improved and help the coachee along these improvements.

Coaching Structured Approach

In the structured approach, the coach works through the coaching session with the trainee using coaching tools and techniques that they employ. They typically work on setting a goal for the trainee to achieve and help the trainee to assess the current situation.

The coach then work through a plan with the trainee to help bridge the gap. Assessment tools, evaluation materials, listening techniques, coaching drills and simulations are employed throughout the process.

Specific outcomes can be measured. One is through the “360-degree” evaluation exercise done discretely. Others include feedback from immediate supervisors to see if there are observed improvements.

Coaching is a valuable business tool used to help senior executives as well as young potential leaders improve their management capabilities. Used appropriately, it can have a very positive impact on organizational performance.