

HUMAN CAPITAL

October-December 2015 Issue

Driving business success and excellence

SEEKING SALARY ANSWERS

UP OR DOWN,
WHICH WAY
WILL THEY GO?

SHRI'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

A CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS
OF POWERING HUMAN
CAPITAL IN SINGAPORE


THE FINE ART OF OUTPLACEMENT

AND WHY IT MUST BE
DONE RIGHT



Looking for an external coach to enhance HR practices?

Jaclyn Lee tells **Human Capital** where the value of HR coaching lies.

 Human resource coaches can make a significant difference in raising the expertise levels in an organisation. Some companies may have the advantage of having certified executive HR coaches within their organisations, while others may not. In case of the latter, there is the option of seeking an outsourced partner.

How to select a competent expert HR coach?

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

Although not essential, a background in Psychology would be an added advantage, says HR expert Jaclyn Lee, who is also Senior Director of Human Resources & Organisation Development at the Singapore University of Technology & Design (SUTD).

If outsourcing is the preferred option, she explains, these are the qualities required in a HR coach.

"Very often, external coaches would be more suitable when it comes to coaching the senior management team," she explains, adding that external coaches would be able to overcome matters like day-to-day professional proximity and organisational relationships.

On coaching junior employees, says Lee, the key lies in identifying those with potential who can be groomed to the next level.

Having coached many young professionals, she points out that coaching is neither for the inexperienced nor the faint-hearted.

"You need a very holistic approach to coaching. We need to set specific professional goals for each individual, and this requires a lot of time-investment."

Having said that, she finds great satisfaction in being an in-house coach as she has seen many young professionals that she personally coached, going on to become very successful and even holding senior leadership positions. They in turn can help others, and so the 'baton' is passed on.

How it's done

In a coaching scenario, explains Lee, one would typically need to set specific goals for participants to achieve over a period of time. This would typically be spread over a few months if the company is hiring an external coach as there are costs involved. For an in house coach, this may take longer, as it would be more cost effective and in-house coaching is usually tied to a leadership programme. During the period of coaching, attention is paid to developing specific skillsets of the participant or even highlighting certain improvements he or she can make in the way they manage and interact with their teams.

Coaches deliver these outcomes through "coachable moments" and through regular scheduled meetings, she adds. During the coachable moments, coaches are likely to identify

specific actions that can be improved and help the participant with these improvements.

In a structured approach, the coach works with the trainee using tools and techniques. They typically work on setting a goal and helping the trainee to assess the current situation. The coach then works through a plan with the trainee to help bridge the gap. Assessment tools, evaluation materials, listening techniques, coaching drills and simulations are employed.

Lee stresses that specific outcomes can be measured through the "360-degree" discrete evaluation exercise and feedback from immediate supervisors.

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



Jaclyn Lee,
Senior Director of
Human Resources
& Organisation
Development,
Singapore University of
Technology & Design
(SUTD)

Fostering a coaching climate in HR

Coaching is fast becoming a routine part of talent development as HR leaders increasingly need additional skills.

Some certified training centres, such as SHRI Academy and the Centre For Creative Leadership, offer leadership programmes for HR professionals that provide valuable knowledge and insights to bolster senior managers who need to develop coaching skills for their organisations.

The programmes that are currently available may be a blend of interactive online assignments that prepare participants for the intensive classroom experience, and ongoing learning after the face-to-face programme concludes. Participants are challenged to:

- develop and refine their coaching skills so that they can improve their ability to coach others and model effective development within their organisations;
- partner with organisational leaders to handle people development more effectively so that they can provide valuable feedback; and
- understand where the organisation is headed and use the HR function to help align business strategy with talent needs. **HC**