

# Developing People

## A Coach's Handbook

Managers should focus on developing employees who see themselves as crucial to the success of a business

By Bruce Hodes

**M**anaging is about *getting things done* (task oriented). This is a critical function in the business environment. It's also the traditional mode of working with each other in business organizations. Coaching is about *helping people develop* (learning oriented).

Coaching is not better than managing; it's different. Coaching is working with people in a developmental way.

### THE 'MANAGING' MODEL

In traditional managing, the manager is the focal point. Basically, everyone else is around to do the manager's work. The name of the game is to do what the manager tells you to do. Some of the antiquated beliefs that justify this design are: knowledge flows up in organizations; the higher up you are in the organization, the more you're supposed to know; compensation flows up; power flows up. The goal in our work culture is to become a manager. To remain at a lower level is demeaning and has negative connotations. The higher up you are, the *better* you are.

"Better" is meant in a superior sense here, so that managers are literally the superior ones in this model. Problems flow down. Whatever problems there are at the top are passed down to those below for solution, fault or blame. Many of these beliefs have become unconscious and unexamined. They come with the territory of our work-lives and culture. This hierarchical/mana-

gerial design is a historic model. It's ancient—almost barbaric. It was developed for industry at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. People from the country sought work in factories. They needed to be organized in an efficient way. The work was routine and fairly simple. Hence, the system, which the organizational chart represents, was born. Under this system, the manager knows what to do and the worker follows orders and does exactly what the boss says.

Up until around 1970, this system changed relatively little. It was geared toward producing mediocre or average products. As long as you met the standard, you could keep your job. As in school, a grade of "C" was tolerable.

Another aspect of this system is that for the sake of efficiency, different departments in organizations gave rise to their own bureaucracies. These departments created their own fiefdoms, and the famous 'turf wars' began pitting marketing against finance, engineering against operations, etc. So on these types of organizations created cultures that mostly benefited managers at the expense of front-line workers and, ultimately, the consumer.

Over time, and particularly in the past 20 years, work life and business culture have changed dramatically. This is an understatement. The business world has turned upside down several times. Workers are better educated and more sophisticated. Many routine tasks have become automated and computerized. Decision making





is now more complex and requires more from both workers and management. The globalization of markets has made business much more competitive, requiring more knowledge from those involved. Innovation and speed have evolved into key underpinnings of business survival. Let's not even talk about e-mail and technology.

It's clear that many traditional principles ought to be and are being questioned. It's also clear that managers don't know everything, nor are they intrinsically better than anyone else.

The past system is not working for most business organizations. The forward-looking organizations are designing and creating a new way of organizing themselves.

## **TWO MODELS: 'COACHING' VS. 'MANAGING'**

Coaching revolves around the concept (metaphor) of a game. In sports, one

plays because he or she wants to. Both players and coaches are vital to the outcome of the game. Coaches are a resource to the players. Serious teams, of course, need a coach. Even serious athletes at the top of their game will employ a coach. Why? It's because the perspective, knowledge and skill of the coach is not only appreciated, but required to excel.

In sports, there's always a notion that you have to develop yourself in order to be competitive. The coach is instrumental and vital to that development. This is in strong contrast to business, where managers are seldom seen as resources to the employees.

In fact, many employees see their bosses as impediments to maximizing individual potential. Furthermore, managers may take all the credit for their employees' successes and, thereby, become the center point of the organization.

In sports (and acting) the coach never goes on the actual playing field. The purpose of the coach is to continually enhance the effectiveness of the players who are on the field. Coaches stand on the sidelines. This is a very different role than that of a traditional manager.

One of the reasons a coach is useful during a game is that he or she isn't embroiled in the action. The coach has a different perspective from those on the field, or the spectators in the stands. Coaches aren't there to be entertained, like the spectators. The coach is there to speak to the players, so that the ball is moved most effectively in the right direction. This sideline perspective often proves to be the winning edge.

In business, managers could be used for their perspective and coaching. Instead, they often go onto the field and become embroiled in the game, rather than coaching the action. This is similar to being a team captain vs. being a coach.



Let's look at this from a different slant. Instead of examining "the coach," let's look at the act of coaching. "Development" and "coaching" are synonymous and not by any means the exclusive property of coaches. On great teams, be it sports, debate, families or dramas, team members are coaching each other, too.

In order for a manager to become a coach, he or she has to give the employee the responsibility and accountability for the outcome of the game. In order for the employees to become players, they need to see themselves as the determinants in the outcome and their managers as resources. Clearly, the players must "own" the outcomes; to see themselves as responsible for achieving the desired outcomes.

### RETHINKING MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

Who determines the fate of our organizations and corporations? If one believes in the notion of rugged individualism and a "can do" spirit (these and other individualistic values are deeply appreciated in our culture), one would say that CEOs, presidents, and managers are responsible for whatever happens. This is reflected by the CEO's high salaries. However, as the world in which we live becomes more complex, a new perspective is demanded.

The buy-in of groups of people, not individuals, will be essential to moving ahead in business. From this vantage point, one can see that the followers determine the fate of leaders. There is example after example in which the fate and/or success of the enterprise is

related to what the people who are on the field do.

In our culture, we tend to fixate on the leader/manager, as if he or she will be the sole ingredient in the outcome. The truth is that the success or failure of our businesses is already in the hands of the people who work there. We just haven't acknowledged it.

The rethinking we are suggesting is that top managers shift attention off themselves and see their jobs as one of developing the players. Employees also have to rethink their roles. It is very easy to see oneself as just a cog in the wheel—just following orders. It's different to consider yourself a major determinant of where the business is going.



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When an employee sees him or herself as a crucial player, a partnership with management can be established in which they view each other as resources playing a common game with a common goal. With this point of view, partnership, innovation and improved velocity can occur on the field.

Looking at the sports model, a good coach is one whose players (employees) are clearly more skilled at playing their positions than the coach (manager) is. The coach is hired by the players and used by them to enhance their ability to do a good job, because they have invested themselves in the game and in doing well. A useful coach stands for excellence and attracts people who want to be excellent.

Translate this to business life, and the focus shifts to the employees and their ability to be effective in their jobs throughout the company. The managers are there to empower and enroll employees in being effective. This is radically different from telling people what to do.

In the coach/player inverted pyramid model, there is an element of "game." People participate because they want to play. Employees enjoy it. When people are at work because they want to be, and are doing what they want to do, coaching becomes useful. Victims are not truly coachable. Victimizers are not able to coach powerfully.

### COACHING AS ART, NOT SCIENCE

While we've discussed the structure of the coaching relationship, we've said little about the actual process of effective coaching. How does one learn to function as an effective coach? What skills and abilities does one need to have? Can coaching be taught in

### ARE YOU COACHING?

Below are questions to ask yourself to see if you're an extraordinary coach.

1. Would people around you say that your team gets extraordinary results (i.e., it enables the production of results beyond business as usual)?
2. Is there evidence that you are someone who develops great players? By a "great player," we mean people who are able to make things happen far beyond what one might expect, given history and past predictions of your organization?
3. Do you consistently demonstrate the ability to bring the capabilities and possibilities of co-workers to a more advanced or effective state? The coach does this with whomever he or she interfaces with, either directly or indirectly, in the organization. The coach develops people in a 360 degree circle—above, below and laterally within the organization.
4. Do your commitments and sphere of influence go beyond traditional business channels and relationships? The coach does not get entrapped by his or her position in the organization. This person uses influence and coaching to move the ball wherever he or she moves within the organization.
5. Are you a person who presents yourself for coaching? Are you coachable?
6. Do you take on projects that require self-development?

Your answers should give you a sense of whether or not you're coaching. Be tough on yourself and differentiate between your coaching activities and management activities. All too often, we find executives claiming to coach, but they're really managing.

the same way we teach a science or technology? Or, is coaching more like an art, which can be expressed, but can never be formalized into a general set of rules or procedures?

We take the position that coaching is more like a performing art, rather than a structured technology for human interaction. We have already acknowledged that coaches often make use of rules, techniques, and other methodologies when they are needed. At the heart of the process of coaching lies a more fundamental, nonstructured responsiveness, which results in uniquely human expressions such as: compassion, leadership, creativity, wisdom, vision and commitment. You cannot pretend these things; they come from the soul.

In a similar illustration, professional dancers, athletes and other artistic performers need certain basic skills and abilities to reach a high level of professional performance. However, the source of their actions and behaviors is not merely those skills themselves. A human being doesn't perform coaching as a simple product of learned skills and behaviors. More is required for successful coaching.

### EXTRAORDINARY COACHING

Extraordinary coaching is brought about by fusing the uniquely human characteristics mentioned above. An extraordinary coach will be one who truly measures his/her performance by the performance of the employees



(the players). This approach will yield superior results.

## FACING THE FUTURE

Managing and coaching are different systems of human interaction. Both are necessary for successful organizational life. In managing, one tends to make decisions based on established directions, emphasizing knowledge and reason supported by intuition and acting in the present based on the past.

Coaches base their decisions on an envisioned future. A coach emphasizes

intuition supported by reason, belief and commitment in others, and acting toward the future based on the present.

Coaching as a predominant style is a new development because of the changes and pressures which are overwhelming business. In the future, it will be a prominent management style. Managers and team leaders who are going to be successful need to invest themselves in this system and become extraordinarily proficient at it.

All employees in business need to shift from being victims to being players.

The view that work is a 'have to' needs to be redirected to work as a privilege and a growth path. Once people come to work in order to grow, develop and learn—as well as make a living—the transition from managing to coaching will be relatively simple and a profoundly beneficial thing to do. **TS**

**Bruce Hodes** is the CEO of CMI, Oak Park, IL. This article is excerpted from Hodes' new book, *Front Line Heroes: Battling the Business Tsunami with Performance Oriented Cultures*. To learn more, visit [www.cmiteamwork.com/Hodes-Front-Line-Heroes.htm](http://www.cmiteamwork.com/Hodes-Front-Line-Heroes.htm). Contact Hodes at 708/383-7970 or [bhodes@cmiteamwork.com](mailto:bhodes@cmiteamwork.com).

## BELIEFS OF A DEVELOPMENTAL COACH

Here is a chart that contrasts coaching beliefs with managerial assumptions. This will give you a sense of the difference between a control-oriented management system and a commitment-oriented coaching system.

Employee Assumptions When They Feel They Need Help	Typical Manager's Presuppositions When Employees Need Help	A Direction To Move In Toward Powerful Coaching
I can't handle my problem; I need help!	This employee is right! He/she needs my expertise to help solve the problems he/she presents.	People have all the resources they need to handle the job problems for which they seek help.
I am limited. I can see only one or two ways to handle the problems because my work is so difficult.	This employee needs to work through the pain and difficulty in order to move on and do effective work.	There is no intrinsic limit to the possibility of radically transforming the ability of the employee to deal constructively with his/her problem.
My past controls my present behavior, thoughts and my feelings.	This employee has a bad marriage, is not very smart, not well trained, etc. How can he or she help being the way that they are? He or she needs me to help them understand. He or she needs me in order to improve.	The present work circumstances of the person, including thoughts, feelings and history of behavior, are always seen as an opportunity for a breakthrough. Quick movement is possible. Current difficulties are a doorway to development.
My personality dictates my reactions. I am a product of my environment. I can't help being the way I am. If I hadn't had the parents I had, I could do much better. (If I had a better boss, peers, job, etc.) It's just my nature to handle things the way I do.	Personality is fixed by the age of four. This employee has work problems and must be treated in a prescribed manner. Employees with this kind of problem are hard to change. I don't expect them to change much, just get better at coping with their problem.	The past doesn't have to predict the future. There's no absolute causal relationship between thoughts or emotions and behavior. Committed action can still be taken and goals accomplished in spite of one's thoughts and feelings. History is treated as that which has happened and is not flung forward into the future. The future is seen as a possibility for action that will then form a new history.