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ANNIVERSARY

the magazine of professional coaching

NEW HORIZONS *in Leadership*

Pushing boundaries
in coaching

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In this issue, we discover new ways to push boundaries in coaching, asking: How can coaching support the prediction of upcoming changes in leadership trends? How is coaching best integrated with technology, changes in initiatives, and human capital processes? What are the important connections between coaching and culture with the individual and society? How do we generate a new understanding of integration and culture that makes transformation possible? Join us as we take a comprehensive look at advancing the frontiers of coaching.

Put HUMANS FIRST

Purpose-led team coaching to support cultural and leadership transformation

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What is shifting in your team coaching practice? Organizations are experiencing shifts in culture and leadership as a result of the pandemic. Globally, we have seen trends towards the employee experience and resilience, as well as hybrid workplaces; greater technological adoption; DEI organization initiatives; and more collaborative, flattened leadership structures. As systemic coaches working with organizations, teams and leaders, we are aware of these shifts and the changes required in systems to support them.

How much can team coaching assist in closing the gap between the present state of organizational culture and leadership, and the needed future state? A lot! Systemic team coaches hold the ethic of serving life's agenda as well as the team's (Hawkins and Carr, 2022). They partner with stakeholders to gather outside-in and future-back feedback; galvanize shared team purpose; coach the team dynamic from a broader system lens; foster action learning with feedback loops; and co-create team results in service of the human and non-human stakeholder world.

With the permission of our clients, we are able to share trends and patterns across the system to address what might not have been seen before. We also have opportunities to

provide “team of teams” support and to coach “the space in between” teams. We can engage teams to bring in more diverse stakeholder views and to move beyond becoming high performing teams and more towards “value creating teams” (Hawkins, Peter). Thus, better collaboration and insights can be shared not only within teams, but across teams and even across boundaries and organizations. Imagine how many silos would be addressed and how many more would be aligned with the overall good and the potential positive impact on ecological systems!

As more organizations are integrating hybrid practices, many are questioning how “culture” will now be defined. Culture is not determined by location, but rather by how team members work with one another. This will require a significant mind shift and a growth mindset by many.

Many traditional leaders and organizations feel that culture was defined by onsite workplace practices as that was their experience. Will they continue to reward those who show up at the office vs. those who don't? Will they offer flexibility for both location and hours of work and is this a choice if they want to hang onto their staff?

Building culture in this new world will require intentional relationship building, which might have been easier when everyone worked on-site. However, we can invite offsite people onsite for team connection and collaboration sessions. Integrating practices such as check-ins and time for the social agenda in hybrid meetings will also help. Sharing stories and celebrating successes will also define a team's culture.



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Having a buddy to check in with about your intentions and work goals helps foster intimacy, connection, and belonging. Leaders will also need to adopt not knowing as much as they profess to know and bring humility around not knowing and a desire to build cultural competence, psychological safety, and team trust. All of this will require learning, unlearning and experimentation, to be an employer of choice and create culture by design for the future.

Mental health and wellbeing of leaders and their teams used to be a specialty area; it's now a given for team coaches to support. As a result of high levels of stress, fatigue and burnout arising from the pandemic, many organizations have implemented well being programs for their employees. Many are focused on individual strategies. Teams will need to go further to identify the root causes of stress and burnout, and design ways of addressing them and supporting them together.

Organizations must also look at ways of working that contribute to burnout. Current organizational practices may need to change to allow greater flexibility in the workplace around things such as hybrid working and meetings. The number of meetings and strategic priorities in organizations is at an all-time high leaving leaders and teams very little time to do the actual work and to do it effectively.

We are working with organizations to create protected time to actually do the work (implementing No Meeting Monday vs. Monday Madness, or Meetings are for Afternoons), to have strategic thinking and working time, and to protect breaks. Furthermore, we work with teams to have more effective meetings in shorter time frames, and to hold them for dialogue and decision making.

Clear agendas, clear roles, action plans and the right people in the room to achieve the outcomes should all be addressed. As well, team coaches can support teams in addressing priorities and ensuring line of sight to strategic objectives.

Remember when Covid first happened? Health & safety and remote working were the clear priorities. Now we are trying to focus on DEI, recruiting and retaining talent along with all of the

existing business priorities. Team coaches can enable the team to revisit priorities and focus on realistic, achievable goals.

This might mean saying no to those priorities that don't align with strategic priorities. As Steve Jobs said, "it is more important where you say no than where you say yes."

Team structures are also shifting more rapidly than before due to the "Great Resignation." Team membership is changing frequently as well as leadership of the team. Team resets may be required to help the team re-establish new team norms, onboard new team members and address ways of working together. As well, many leaders are postponing work on business or team goals until the new talent is successfully onboarded.

As team coaches, we can encourage them to continue the work. Just because members change, doesn't mean the work stops. As systemic team coaches, we are there in service of the work their team purpose is requiring them to do. Leaders and even team coaches will need to get more comfortable with the fluid engagement of the team, focusing on coaching the team where it is and focusing on the 'teamwork.'

If this weren't enough, we also have two more challenges. First, how are coaches keeping up with exponential and disruptive technology changes? How many of you had to learn at least one new application over the last year? Are your teams discussing which type of application to use for different purposes or are they overwhelmed in receiving information? Finally, there is an increasing role and expectation of team coaches to support sustainable development goals. There are many issues – such a climate change and adaptation, biodiversity loss, war, supply chain disruption and more – that propel us to move from being a neutral coach to a 'purpose-driven coach' who makes a difference in the world.

Although adapting to changes uncovered and magnified by the pandemic can be challenging, we as team coaches are also hopeful about the possibilities and opportunities to develop into the kind of coaches who will help create more human-centered workplaces, communities ... and world. •