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Coaching and Mentoring
Theory and Practice
CREATING A COACHING AND MENTORING CULTURE

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this chapter, we look at creating or developing coaching and mentoring cultures with organizations and offer both theoretical and practical insights into the development of environments supportive of coaching and mentoring. This chapter explores the literature on the subject of coaching and mentoring cultures. We present various models of mentoring and coaching culture while outlining strategies and practices for leaders, managers and specialist coaches and mentors to widen the impact of what they do. The chapter raises some challenging questions and issues for organizations wishing to develop coaching and mentoring.
INTRODUCTION

One of the frontiers in the field of coaching and mentoring is how to harness organizational impact. We have seen the variations of meaning of coaching and mentoring in Chapter 1 and the approaches to gathering evidence to justify and understand coaching and mentoring in Chapter 2. Here, we continue with the same themes of variation and move away from the tired and well-worn track of ‘one best way’. Coaching and mentoring are social phenomena and are therefore influenced by social processes. One size does not fit all. There are many choices that relate to specific contexts. However, in the business world dominated by the rational, pragmatic manager (Garvey and Williamson, 2002), coaching and mentoring advocate risk, losing much of their potential to influence how people manage and work in organizations unless the organizational implications of a coaching and mentoring way of working are considered and acted on.

Coaching and mentoring are essentially one-to-one practices and so those studying, researching and working in the area tend to ignore the wider social and organizational implications of their work. However, research (McGovern et al., 2001; Garvey and Garrett-Harris, 2005) suggests that the impact on the organization is considerable. This chapter seeks to address this issue.

METHODOLOGY

We approach the concept of coaching and mentoring cultures in this chapter from a practical and applied position by drawing on some of the literature on coaching, mentoring and culture as well as practical experience. Consistent with the themes already established in Chapters 1 and 2, we recognize that the form coaching and mentoring take is related to the social context and its perceived purpose. Consequently, we try to avoid prescription and, instead, raise what we see as important questions about the idea of developing a cultural environment that will support and sustain coaching and mentoring activity. However, following this pragmatic discussion, we also raise some critical questions concerning the very concept of a coaching and mentoring culture. The implications of these insights will be discussed in the conclusion.

THE MENTORING ORGANIZATION

Megginson et al. (2006) build on case study research in Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b: 7) to identify the characteristics of a mentoring culture. Eight features of mentoring schemes that pay attention to the organizational dimension are:

1. Clear link to a business issue, with outcome measured
2. Part of a culture-change process
3. Senior management involvement as mentees and mentors
4. Established link to long-term talent management
5. Mentees in the driving seat
6. Light-touch development of individuals and scheme
7. Clear framework, publicized, with stories
8. Scheme designed to focus on business issues and change agenda.
Reading the case examples on which this list is based highlights the perspective noted elsewhere in this book (Chapter 12) that mentoring is often actuated by a social impulse to support those disadvantaged in employment and elsewhere (schools, for example) – women, ethnic minorities, people experiencing bullying, and so on. Nonetheless, in all the cases cited, there was also an emphasis on supporting the development of talent, on working with people at the top of the organization and on future potential leadership.

Carden (1990: 276), when suggesting that mentoring works with the dominant culture of the organization, states that mentoring could ‘exclude(s) the socially different, clone managers and administrators, and maintain a status quo based on “accumulation of advantage” and replication of hierarchical systems’. And Garvey (1994a, 1995b) indicates that mentoring cannot be a ‘cure-all’ for organizational ills and is least effective when viewed as a ‘new initiative’ rather than a natural process and part of normal behaviour at work. Such findings would suggest that mentoring, on its own, is neutral with regard to fundamental organizational cultural change. However, the challenge of mentoring, as argued by, for example, Caruso (1996) and Turban and Dougherty (1994), is to recognize the need to synthesize individual and organizational aspirations as a central condition of organizational success. This coincides with Nonaka’s (1996) recognition of the importance of personal commitment in a knowledge-creating organization.

Caruso (1996) also introduces the concept of power (see Chapter 7) in the organization when he says that often the mentee’s agenda is replaced by the mentor’s or the organization’s objectives (see Chapter 11 for a full exploration of the problem of goals). Given the point made so far in this book that learning happens in a social context, an organization can make it more or less possible for people to learn by its values, processes, policies and actions. Caruso (1996) argues for a theory of mentoring, in which the qualities of learning, as conceptualized, for instance, in the theory of situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991), and the potential benefits of mentoring move away from the traditional one-to-one mentoring relationship to characterize relational activities in the organization as a whole. In practice, this means that a mentor can be a ‘variety of individuals and/or institutions who provide help to a protégé’ (Caruso, 1996). It then becomes appropriate to talk about a ‘mentoring organization’. We characterize this as:

- the compatibility of individual and organizational aspirations
- high employee commitment
- a focus on collaboration and team development
- a complex web of practices and relationships that are supportive and developmental of the individual and the organization

Above all, people who have a developed and enthusiastic sense of themselves as learners inhabit a ‘mentoring organization’. This concept resonates well with Higgins and Kram’s (2001) notion of ‘multiple mentoring relationships’ (discussed in Chapter 8) where any one individual may have a range of developers including coaches and mentors. Therefore, the links between mentoring, coaching and organizational development are strong and this is perhaps why so many different types of organization engage with it.
Reflective Questions

- What does an effective mentoring network look like?
- How might the boundaries between what is and what is not mentoring be understood?

THE COACHING ORGANIZATION

The literature on the coaching organization is more robust and fuller than that on the mentoring organization. It is nonetheless very thin compared with the huge amount of writing (both academic and professional) on the one-to-one coaching relationship. We speculate that one reason for coaching organization literature being more developed than mentoring organization literature is that coaching is widely seen as a mainstream way of managing (Zeus and Skiffington, 2000; Whitmore, 2002; McLeod, 2003; Pemberton, 2006). An early example of this strand in the literature is Megginson and Boydell (1979: 5), where they describe coaching as ‘a process in which a manager, through direct discussion and guided activity, helps a colleague to learn to solve a problem, or to do a task, better than would otherwise have been the case’. This definition sees coaching as being the responsibility of the line manager, and sees it as being centrally ‘concerned with improved task performance’ (1979: 5). With this focus on performance, it is easier to justify coaching as being a fundamental way of managing work relationships rather than mentoring, which is seen as a special intervention to be called on for certain particular and unusual purposes (making major transitions, challenging inequalities, increasing opportunity, and so on).

Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b) have developed one framework, grounded in the practices of major organizations, for creating a coaching culture. This study produced a model of four levels of depth against six main areas that are divided into four sub-areas to produce a $4 \times 24$ matrix for assessing a coaching culture (2005: 99–100). They describe the four levels as:

- nascent
- tactical
- strategic
- embedded.

This framework marks a multi-strand journey from:

- having the idea of making an organizational impact
- through to doing disjointed things to bring it about
- to doing integrated things
- to establishing these things in the DNA of the organization.

The 24 areas identified from the case studies are listed below – the items in italics are those that were found in a high proportion of the cases studied (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005b: 28–9):
CREATING A COACHING AND MENTORING CULTURE

1 Coaching linked to business drivers:
   i. Integrate coaching into strategy, measures and processes
   ii. Integrate coaching and high performance
   iii. Coaching has a core business driver to justify it
   iv. Coaching becomes the way of doing business.

2 Being a coachee is encouraged and supported:
   i. Encourage and trigger being a coachee
   ii. You can challenge your boss to coach
   iii. Extensive training for both coach and coachee
   iv. External coaches used to give coaches experience of being coached.

3 Providing coach training:
   i. Integrate coach training for all
   ii. Coaches receive feedback on their use of coaching
   iii. After their training, coaches are followed up
   iv. Coaches are accredited, certificated or licensed.

4 Rewarding and recognizing coaching:
   i. People are rewarded for knowledge-sharing
   ii. Coaching is promoted as an investment in excellence
   iii. Top team are coaching role models (who seek and use feedback)
   iv. Dedicated coaching leader.

5 Systemic perspective:
   i. Assume people are competent
   ii. Organic, not process-driven
   iii. Initiatives decentralized
   iv. Constructive confrontation.

6 The move to coaching is managed:
   i. Senior group manages move to coaching
   ii. Line manager takes responsibility for coaching culture
   iii. Integrate coaching and culture change
   iv. Coaching supports delegation and empowerment.

This study clearly points out that developing culture change in an organization is not a quick-fix process and that there are many approaches and options.

Other authors who have written about coaching culture include Whitmore (2002), Caplan (2003) and Hardingham et al. (2004), while more recent contributions to the literature include Pemberton (2006), Hunt and Weintraub (2007) and Hawkins (2012).

Hunt and Weintraub (2007) offer a US perspective on the topic. They adopt a similar case study methodology to Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b), so comparison is possible. They focus on what they call ‘developmental coaching’, which they define as ‘relationship-facilitated, on-the-job learning, with the most basic goal of promoting an individual’s ability to do the work associated with that individual’s current or future work roles’ (2007: 27). Within this definition, however, they include ‘whole life’ issues such as ‘career direction and work–life balance’ (2007: 34). Their approach focuses heavily on organization readiness. They also develop an assessment framework that helps individuals or organization representatives to assess readiness to create a coaching organization, and to identify areas for further work within the organization. As such, their list seeks to serve the same function as the one from Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b) outlined above. However, Hunt and Weintraub (2007) focus more on the cultural context and social qualities; for example, they emphasize trust, employees and relationships as ends.
in themselves, valuing learning, truth-telling, diversity, continuous improvement, and place a high bar on entry into the process of developing a coaching culture.

The Pemberton (2006) study is from the UK rather than the USA, and examines how to spread coaching practice widely in an organization. Her book focuses on the manager as coach and she argues (2006: 3) that a tipping point (see Gladwell, 2002) has been reached with coaching so that it is now a pervasive phenomenon in the life of staff in organizations. Pemberton (2006) argues that staff members expect to be coached and the only people who can deliver this coaching in the amount required are line managers. In summary, Pemberton (2006) suggests that all managers need to work in a coaching way because:

- There is now a growing expectation from the organization that managers should coach.
- Employees have experienced coaching outside work and expect it at work too.
- It responds to what is sought by demanding and egocentric staff.
- It delivers the ‘deal’ that employees expect.
- It harnesses the motivation that employees have to contribute to the organization.

Some sources, particularly those that focus on externally provided, psychologically grounded coaching, seek to emphasize the weaknesses or dangers of coaching. Berglas’s (2002) much-cited article is an example of this literature. Another is the chapter in de Haan and Burger entitled ‘Limitations of coaching with colleagues’ (2005: 151–9). At the centre of their concerns are the points that ‘the internal coach is less free with respect to the coachee’s organization’ (2005: 153) and ‘the internal coach has a less well-defined relationship to the coachee’ (2005: 154). They make the challenging but reasonable point that coaching managers ‘sometimes find it hard to put the coachee and his/her issues truly at the centre and to intervene in a way that respects the autonomy of the coachee’ (2005: 155). This difficulty is related to points made in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of this book about the power, control and obedience expectations of managers. It may also be another example of either ‘mindset’ or ‘gaze’ raised in Chapters 1 and 2. While these points have legitimacy, it is also important to remember that these authors also have an agenda and a position to defend.

To extend this argument, we are grateful to Bruno Rihs, a Swiss colleague, for drawing to our attention Platt (2001), who highlights the weaknesses of a particular and specific approach to coaching:

I have generally found that people who practice NLP [neurolinguistic programming] are not receptive or even prepared to countenance critical reviews of this field of study. Indeed, I have come to recognize that ‘Hell hath no fury like an NLP practitioner scorned’ as a result of daring to question some of the practices framed by NLP ... When I published the negative findings of a large number of clinical trials focusing on NLP techniques and also the research of Dr Heap, Principal Clinical Psychologist for Sheffield Health Authority ... the response almost universally condemned the findings stating that they were ‘unscientific’ or that the particular aspects of NLP could not be clinically trialed, or that the areas studied were minor and insignificant when viewed against the entire gamut of the NLP approach. A mass of anecdotal evidence was also cited to challenge the clinical research findings.
In our view, there are two points here. Coaches adopting a strong frame for their interaction need to also have a robust approach to critiquing that frame if they are to avoid the defensive, cult-like reactions noted by Platt. Additionally, we argue for a celebration of difference rather than viewing it as a problem or a challenge to one’s very being. In a world of increasing polarization and extreme positioning, we suggest that an accepting and tolerant position is a more constructive way forward. Creating a coaching culture, even more than individual coaching, requires an ability to liaise and co-operate with others who have differing views of the organization and of the purposes of coaching – in other words, a diversity perspective, as discussed in Chapter 12.

A more recent book, *Creating a Coaching Culture* by Hawkins (2012), is also the one most clearly focused on the topic in the title. It has added to Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b) by presenting a larger number of case studies (30 compared with 8 in the earlier book). Hawkins’s book is actuated by the question, ‘What can coaching uniquely do that the world of tomorrow needs?’ (2012: 1). He sees coaching culture as being about informal, on-the-job learning (2012: 15) and sees it as having three pillars:

- coaching strategy
- alignment with organizational culture change
- coaching infrastructure. (2012: 24)

From this he develops a model which, in keeping with much of his earlier work, focuses on organizational learning as an outcome. This seven-step model is then spelt out in the second part of the book, picking up on many features of the Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b) model outlined above. In the final part of the book, he surveys pitfalls on the journey to a coaching culture, examines the link to continuous professional development and to his work on supervision (Hawkins and Smith, 2006), and positions evaluation and return on investment in the journey. More recent contributions to the debate, for example Lawrence (2015), have tended to focus, like Hawkins (2012) and Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b), on the pragmatic implementation of coaching cultures, but Lawrence (2015), in particular, has emphasized that simply introducing coaching into an organization is not sufficient. In order to move an organization towards embeddedness (in Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005b’s terms), additional mechanisms such as internal coaching skills training need to be introduced.

**Reflective Questions**

- What is a good measure of whether coaching has become embedded in an organization?
- To what extent is it possible to specify appropriate timescales for movement towards an embedded coaching culture?
- Are such timescales useful or desirable?
COACHING AND MENTORING CULTURE: THE NEW FRONTIER

The above literature review has helped to both define the field and identify the parameters to address in taking coaching and mentoring organization-wide.

What is needed next to develop this frontier is a series of organizational quasi-experiments, where scholars and practitioners can co-operate to build a long-term development alliance to make an impact on an organization. To start this process of developing a range of models for creating a coaching and mentoring culture fit for a variety of contexts, we believe it is necessary to examine a number of cultural features. This section introduces these features and offers a rationale for making choices about each. The features, similar to the dimensions framework presented in Chapter 1, are set as opposite points on a continuum as follows.

Change or stability

This variable is key to the development of a mentoring or coaching culture. Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995) noticed that in some companies such as the Swedish part of Nestlé, Svenska Nestlé, retired executives were invited to mentor up-and-coming high-potential managers. This seems to be an example of a strong culture, confident in itself and wanting to perpetuate ‘shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sensemaking’ (Morgan, 1986: 128). In another organization in Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995), each of the 20 members of the top team had an external coach because the chief executive was convinced that no one in the firm (with the possible exception of himself) had the characteristics necessary to drive the organization forward. In our view, this is a weak culture because there is little within the organization to sustain the desired culture. Balancing the amount of help offered to individuals in a culture change process therefore represents a major challenge and leads to the question, ‘How can just enough help be provided from outside to develop coaching so as not to swamp internal efforts and thus to avoid the possibility of dependency being created?’

In one bank we studied some years ago, we found evidence of dependency being deliberately created by a coaching firm that was widely used throughout the bank, in order – it seemed to us – to maximize revenues for the coaching provider. However, strong cultures also present challenges. If people in an organization are good at replicating what they already do well, what happens when the environment changes and what is needed begins to change? Many strong cultures, for example in the UK retail sector Marks and Spencer, suffer when market circumstances change. For some organizations, a pattern of using internal or quasi-internal coaches (such as ex-staff who have gone ‘independent’) needs to change to engaging genuinely external resources to prepare experienced staff to deal with the new situation in new ways.

Being clear whether the culture that is desired is a changed or a stable one is the first question to ask and will influence the form of the answer to many of the questions that follow (see Figure 3.1).
Deficit or appreciative inquiry

Implicit in much writing about coaching is a very traditional human resource development (HRD) model based on identifying needs, planning, implementing and evaluation. This sometimes glories in the name ‘gap analysis’, which implies that there is a gap between what the job requires and what the employee can provide (for a thorough-going critique of this position, see Roy Jacques’s 1996 book *Manufacturing the Employee*).

Models of individual and organizational functioning based on standards and competencies (see Chapter 13 for a fuller account of this issue) are grounded in a similar understanding to the HRD gap analysis model.

Some psychologists also adopt a ‘needs’ model. This bases coaching on what the learner may need to develop into a fully functioning person. For example, Hardingham et al. (2004: 71–7) suggest that coaching must address such topics as belonging, control and closeness needs. A summary of these views is provided in Megginson (2012).

Standing in contrast to these deficit perspectives is positive psychology. This cluster of interrelated theories and practices suggests that creating a coaching culture will involve building on strengths. Strands of this movement are interested in ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), ‘appreciative inquiry’ (Cooperrider, 1995) and, particularly in the world of coaching, the ‘solutions focused approach’ (Berg and Szabó, 2005).

Many HR systems in organizations are posited on the gap model, for example appraisal, performance management and, in many instances, coaching and mentoring. The psychological effect of such a perspective, where people get training, education, development, coaching or mentoring because there is something missing or wrong with them, is considerable. As Garvey and Williamson (2002) suggest, those entering a developmental session of any form may not engage in a positive state of mind if they think they have been sent to be mended. While honouring the benefits of positivity, it is well to be aware of two critiques of this orientation – Ehrenreich (2009), who emphasizes the coerciveness of the demand for positivity, and Burkeman (2012), who values in a coherent and elegant fashion the *via negativa*. 

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**Figure 3.1** Dimensions of coaching and mentoring culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Stability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deficit</td>
<td>Appreciative inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>External coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All managers</td>
<td>Master-coaches/mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Whole life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll-out</td>
<td>Creep in</td>
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If one is to develop a coaching or mentoring culture based on strengths, a major piece of work will be to address the challenge that these embedded systems place in the way of a culture that celebrates, extends and develops strengths. In one such attempt we made some years ago in an insurance company, the biggest challenge the strength-oriented developers faced was the opposition from the HR department. The systems we were advocating would have required a rewriting of every policy HR had. After working with HR, the challenges of engaging line management seemed relatively straightforward!

We leave this dimension with a question: do you think that you are better off going with the grain of existing policies or seeking to develop an alternative set of assumptions about how best to engage people in their own evolution?

Problem or solution?

Related to the dimension about deficit or appreciation is this simple dichotomy in coaching and mentoring thinking. Many well-established models of coaching and mentoring suggest starting by identifying a problem that the client wants to work on. Flaherty (1999) and McLeod (2003) are examples of needs orientation. Flaherty, being a psychologist, emphasizes assessment as a process for determining needs; McLeod, with his performance coaching perspective, focuses on organizational issues such as communication, ‘Who’s the boss?’ and interpersonal conflict.

Grant and Greene (2001), Jackson and McKergow (2002), Berg and Szabó (2005) and Pemberton (2006) offer an alternative perspective based on attention to solutions rather than problems. So, where do the efforts to create a coaching and mentoring culture need to focus? Should they focus on fitting in with the problem-focused orientation so prevalent in our wider culture, or on seeking to create a new orientation to building on strengths, which may set people against powerful organizational interests and societal taken-for-granted assumptions?

Internal or external coaches/mentors?

This dimension relates to the change and stability dimension – in particular, to the question of whether the power-holders believe that there are managers in the organization who display the characteristics sought by change leaders. However, other considerations also shape where the emphasis is placed. One such factor is the extent of the proposed spread of coaching or mentoring. If it is for a relatively narrow group, top management or high-potentials, for example, then the costs of using external, professional coaches may not be prohibitive. On the other hand, if the intent is to coach everyone in the organization, then clearly the costs of external help become too huge to bear. For some organizations, budgets for development are so modest that external coaching for anyone is out of the question.

Many authors (see Caplan, 2003; Hardingham et al., 2004; Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005b) argue that there is a great advantage in engaging managers in the coaching enterprise.
There is also considerable evidence that mentoring is beneficial to the organization, the mentor and the mentee (see Wilson and Elman, 1990; Garvey, 1995a; Devins and Gold, 2000). In fact, many authors on culture in relation to coaching and mentoring suggest that this is a crucial plank in its creation. So does necessity (or capacity) push the organization in the direction of using internal coaches? Do the benefits of engaging people widely in coaching others justify the expenditure of money and effort in enabling everyone to perform in this way?

All managers or master-coaches/mentors?

Some companies seeking to create a coaching or mentoring culture have relied on a cadre of skilled leaders to develop high-level coaching and mentoring skills. In Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b), a case study example of such a company would be Kellogg’s. In the mentoring literature, Garvey and Galloway (2002), for example, illustrate the skills approach to developing a mentoring culture. A number of banks in the UK, prior to the banking crisis, for example HBOS, developed internal mentors while others, such as Lloyds TSB, created a job role of internal coaches, giving this aspect of the manager’s role to specialists. Other cases from Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b) focus on giving all managers the same training, for example in Vodafone.

An argument for specializing is that the master-coaches/mentors can then use their enhanced skills to coach/mentor other managers in coaching/mentoring skills. An argument for the ‘train everybody’ orientation is that it sends a signal that coaching/mentoring is a central part of the manager’s job and not something that can be delegated to anyone else. Sometimes the choice is a function of the size of the business. Sometimes it is a cultural choice based on perceptions of power (see Chapter 7), democracy, individualism or collectivism within the organization, and sometimes it is a function of cost. So, which strategy should be emphasized – a specialist cadre or the widest possible engagement?

Performance or whole life?

Some developers of a coaching and mentoring culture will want to narrow the coaching or mentoring manager’s attention with laser focus onto performance. Authors who support this view include McLeod (2003). Paradoxically, Whitmore’s book Coaching for Performance (2002) has a much wider remit than the title suggests. Other sources, such as Brockbank and McGill’s 2006 book Facilitating Reflective Learning through Mentoring and Coaching, direct their attention more widely, while Alred and Garvey (2000) advocate a wider application of mentoring for a more holistic development of people. And the same can be said for the radically participative, content-free coaches as advocated by exponents such as Downey (2003). So, how focused on performance should coaching and mentoring be in any particular organization?
Roll-out or creep in?

The picture in the heads of the leading coalition about how to introduce change will dictate to which end of this spectrum organization leaders are drawn. The choice is between ‘driving the change through the organization’, which leads to a tendency to roll out training to all in a high-cost, high-profile campaign on the one hand, and on the other to a systemic perspective based on ‘creep in’.

The creep-in approach was characterized by the engineering company cited in Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005b: 68–9), which focused on key decision makers, took time to explore options, thought through the integration of coaching with other initiatives the company was exploring and did not go for extensive training of large numbers as a separate initiative. So, should an organization favour roll-out or creep in? Is the greatest chance of success achieved by following the organization’s norms or by trying something different?

Summary

By examining these variables – change or stability; deficit or appreciative inquiry; problem or solution; internal or external coaches/mentors; all managers or master-coaches/mentors; performance or whole life; roll-out or creep in – it becomes possible to set out the broad direction and strategy for a favoured approach within a specific organization to creating a coaching/mentoring culture.

Reflective Questions

• Are there other dimensions that should be included in any analysis of coaching culture?
• If so, what might they be and why are they important?

Situations to focus on to create a coaching and mentoring culture

We have found from working with organizations in recent years that the strategy of focusing on creating a culture can seem abstract to some decision makers. In such cases, an approach that can be followed is to attend to opportunities to build coaching and mentoring (C&M) into the fabric of the organization. Some impactful examples of these opportunities are:

• C&M as preparation for new roles
• C&M as delegation
• C&M as management style
• C&M as problem solving.

We discuss each of these below.
Coaching and mentoring as preparation for new roles

Ever since Levinson et al. (1978) first suggested that mentoring was associated with transition, mentoring and, latterly, coaching have been linked to supporting people in new job roles. The first 90 days in new roles is a period of intense learning (Porter et al., 2004; Neff and Citrin, 2005; Watkins, 2005). For example, Porter et al. (2004) say that a new CEO is faced with seven surprises:

- You can’t run the company.
- Giving orders is very costly.
- It’s hard to know what’s really going on.
- You are always sending a message.
- You are not the boss.
- Pleasing shareholders is not the goal.
- You’re still only human.

This represents a strong agenda for coaching and mentoring, and similar issues face new job-holders at every level in the organization.

Thinking about the strategic options addressed in the previous section, decisions will need to be made about the extent to which external and internal coaches or mentors will be used. If they are internal, will this be line managers or specially appointed and trained people?

Coaching and mentoring as delegation

Building the expectation of delegation in encounters with managers is the fundamental basis for creating a developmentally aware culture. Companies starting from here do not even have to use the word ‘coaching’ or ‘mentoring’. If it is known that asking a boss what to do will lead to the following sequence of questions, then a delegation culture and thus a coaching/mentoring culture will have been established:

- What are the options?
- Which of these would you prefer or recommend?
- Why don’t you try that and let me know how it goes?

Coaching and mentoring as management style

Building a coaching and mentoring approach into all leadership training is a starting point for this opportunity. There are implicit views about how to manage in all leadership training programmes. Advocates for a coaching and mentoring culture need to spend time exploring with development and training colleagues what these messages are and how they integrate with what is being done and said to propagate coaching and mentoring. They are not two processes, but one.

Coaching and mentoring as problem solving

Coaching and mentoring are not soft forms of managing staff; in fact, they are not even a form of managing staff, hard or soft. They are a means of addressing issues and problems
(or, as solution-focused coaches would say, achieving solutions) that can be used in a wide range of contexts. We have frequently remarked on the enthusiasm with which managers have grasped a coaching framework, like GROW, and found that they can use it in a team setting to deal with a big issue. Thus, an issue to be considered is how an organization’s project-management approach fits with its coaching and mentoring approach.

Perhaps the best way of making sense of this issue, in a pragmatic way, is to use the example in Case Study 3.1.

**Case Study 3.1**

Towards a mentoring culture

One company we have worked with over a number of years is an international scientific consultancy firm. The company has grown substantially over the last 40 years to become a global leader in commercial intelligence for the energy, metals and mining industries. It has grown, in part at least, by the acquisition of smaller specialist businesses, and mentoring has been at the heart of this growth strategy. With the acquisition of business come many social challenges and the need to help people integrate quickly into a new and sometimes alien culture. Mentoring has therefore been employed to support the psychosocial (Kram, 1983) development of people within the business as well as playing an important role in leadership and career development. Being international, the business extensively employs technology to support its business communications and its HR and learning and development activities are no different.

The business first piloted mentoring in 2006. The plan was to:

- formalize the mentoring process
- build a cadre of senior and departmental business-wide mentors
- offer mentoring as a leadership development and induction support activity.

The company was also clear about what mentoring is not, in its own words:

- supervision
- checking up
- providing a hand up
- criticizing or hand holding.

Mentoring became part of the firm’s learning and development (L&D) programmes, a handbook was created, an annual podcast produced to support the programme, case studies on mentoring relationships are regularly published and the names of all trained mentors are public information. The L&D manager manages with a ‘light touch’, offering support and guidance, and participants are invited to let the L&D coordinator know if the relationship comes to an end.

Potential mentors may volunteer or be nominated by their line managers following a developmental discussion. All potential mentors participate in a mentor skills workshop.

Participants are invited to review their relationships regularly.
The L&D function also offers mentors ongoing support in the form of refresher programmes, more advanced skills programmes, troubleshooting phone-ins and webinars. By 2015, over 120 mentors had participated in mentor skills training with over 90 current relationships.

The year 2016 marked a shift in the training programmes for mentors. Rather than face to face or through video conferencing, which had been the norm since 2008, the skills workshop was produced as a series of international webinars where many people from around the world could interact together for short but intensive periods of learning. This had the advantage of cost saving, as well as providing an intensification of the training and an opportunity for participants to practise and try skills between sessions and then report back and raise issues and questions.

Coaching is also employed within the business and although it has engaged external coaches from time to time, the main focus has been on coaching within the line management function. In the company’s own words, ‘coaching is typically provided to enhance capability and skills in a performance management context or in anticipation of a future role. A Line Manager is well placed to provide coaching.’

NB: Through all this, much credit must go to the dogged determination of a small number of committed managers to continually work with the process, adapt, adjust and change.

DISCUSSION OF CASE STUDY 3.1

Looking at coaching and mentoring as practised in this organization, we can see that, in terms of our analysis above, the emphasis is on management style as the focus for the intervention. This is also done, principally, by a more traditional route of developing master mentors and coaches who are internal to the business via internal training and development. As the intention was to formalize the mentoring process with a scheme, the approach was more akin to roll-out rather than a creep-in approach. While the organization is very successful and did not face a ‘burning platform’, there was clearly a recognition that, given the organization’s expansion plans, the mentoring process and, later, the coaching process were developed in response to an organizational problem of integration within the organization’s culture. Therefore, while those sponsoring coaching and mentoring were clearly focused on performance, within a changing organizational context, the overall intent was towards stability and maintaining the success of the organization in the future. However, as we suggest above, there is a challenge for those organizations which principally seek to drive towards a coaching or mentoring culture by mainly or solely drawing on the mentoring that occurs in the organization. As Lawrence (2015) suggests, mentoring and coaching activity itself may be insufficient to embed the activity as part of the taken-for-granted assumption (Schein, 1985) within the organization. Hence, while the organization has, at the present, a core number of willing advocates of coaching and mentoring who seek to perpetuate it within the system, it is, perhaps, telling that there is an implicit need for them to keep this up within the organization, else the organization may ‘revert’ to a more
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traditional, deficit model of performance which is typical of the dominant Managerial discourse (Western, 2012) in many organizations. We are also assuming – as we have so far in this chapter – that it is appropriate to talk about one culture for the entire organization, although this can be questioned, given the organization’s acquisition strategy. Given our experience of this organization, we recognize that it is possible to argue for the existence of sub-cultures within the organization which tend to respond to coaching and mentoring in different ways, depending on the context in which they are introduced. This leads us on to some critical questions about the concept of a coaching or mentoring culture, which we consider below.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A COACHING OR MENTORING CULTURE?

In the majority of literature that we have cited in this chapter so far, the writers appear to make two key assumptions. The first is the uncritical assumption that an organization has one culture, a set of values, beliefs and expectations that are shared by and that influence people who work in that organization. However, cultural researchers such as Debra Meyerson and Joanne Martin (Meyerson and Martin, 1987) have long since challenged what they refer to as an integrative perspective. To use a phrase from the popular Disney franchise, *High School Musical*, the integrative perspective assumes that we are ‘all in this together’ and that conflict with dominant core values is an exception rather than the rule. In this sense, it has much in common with Fox’s (1974) unitary perspective on organizations. However, as Meyerson and Martin (1987) argue, there are two other perspectives on organization culture – differentiation (which recognizes the existence of sub-cultures within organizations) and fragmentation (which argues against hard and fast distinctions about values and recognizes the contingent and uncertain nature of organizational life). Why do these alternative perspectives go unrecognized in organizations? One reason may be that those who have written about creating a coaching culture, in particular, have tended to have a background in organizational consultancy and have tended to work at a senior level with senior management teams and boards, in whose interest it may be to portray a united front. Also, moving onto the second assumption that is made, there is a tendency for those who work within coaching and mentoring to engage in what we have already referred to here as ‘misplaced concreteness’. In other words, it is easier to consider culture as something clear and unambiguous as it renders the behaviour of employees and other stakeholders as being knowable, reliable and predictable. Related to the idea of concreteness, there is, in the literature we have examined thus far, a tendency to view organizational culture as something that can be used to control the behaviour of others by influencing ‘hearts and minds’. This perspective requires culture to be seen as something almost physical but malleable that can be constructed within an organization. Indeed, we have a colleague with whom we have worked for many years who describes how they have ‘put a mentoring culture’ into their organization. This seems to afford a coaching culture a real ontological status (existing independently of those who create it and work with it) as opposed to it being seen as a social construction (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Case Study 3.1 does seem to indicate that the scheme is only really ‘alive’ while those key stakeholders seek to socially construct it. This does raise the question of whether a coaching
and mentoring culture is better seen as a useful metaphor for organization (Morgan, 2006) as opposed to a real entity which has a separate ontological and organizational status. In this way, we wonder whether it makes more sense to see it as being similar in nature to the concept of a learning organization (Argyris and Schön, 1996), which arguably proves to be a useful concept that a range of stakeholders can recognize and buy into. Therefore, while we are for coaching and mentoring and their wider application, as we argue in Chapter 1, we remain somewhat sceptical as to the usefulness of universal prescriptions for creating coaching and mentoring cultures, although we recognize the useful contributions made to the area in terms of defining important dimensions and useful language. Our intent here has been to identify some useful perspectives and language through which the issue of the creation of such cultures might be usefully and critically considered.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have sought to introduce some dimensions of coaching and mentoring that are directed towards impacting the organization as a whole, rather than the usual focus on an individual or a tranche of individuals. We have explored what the literature says about the process and have outlined our sense of the strategic decisions that have to be made and the tactical opportunities that exist to progress this agenda. Finally, without seeking to diminish the contribution made by the literature, we have raised some critical questions about that literature and how it should be used.

In the next chapter, we focus on questions of the design and evaluation of coaching and mentoring schemes.

Future Direction

We discern a widespread interest in creating coaching culture, less so in creating a mentoring culture. This seems appropriate in so far as mentoring is seen as an offline process and coaching as something that can be done by a line manager. However, much can be learned by those interested in developing a coaching culture from the mentoring literature. Here, it is clear that finding ways to minimize the power difference between mentor and mentee seems to have considerable benefit. Perhaps this learning could be applied within the coaching context.

An emphasis on paid external one-to-one coaching takes the eye of the coaching leaders in organizations off the question of creating a coaching culture – indeed it could be seen as threatening the market for external coaching. Similarly, external coaches can leave the topic alone because they are the ones who may feel supplanted. So, if coaching is viewed as ‘a good thing’, then perhaps the future is to find a balance between internal and external coaching work within organizations. A way forward would be to link the drive to the outcomes of coaching with the organizational purpose. This may be considered as a force in shaping the approaches to coaching and mentoring as organizational interventions.
Activity

Identify an organization that you know well in terms of its key personnel and activities. Using the dimensions framework described in this chapter, seek to position it within this in terms of its progress (or lack of) towards a coaching/mentoring culture. What are the barriers to making more progress? What might need to change for this to happen?

Questions

- How far do/does the organization(s) you work with want to push the development of a coaching/mentoring culture?
- What is the business case for developing this culture?
- To what extent is it useful to think of organizations as having only one distinct culture?
- To what extent should a coaching style be seen as the default style of leading and managing in the organization?

Further Reading

