

BACKGROUND FOR A NEW CONCEPTION OF COACHING IN BUSINESS

THE CURRENT BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The challenges facing businesses today require an innovative response. Executives, managers and employees are experiencing concerns that they find difficult to articulate - ranging from ambiguity and complexity (resulting from the accelerating rate of change in the overall business environment) to the practical concerns of accomplishing their goals and objectives with shrinking budgets, resources and timeframes. Having leveraged their capital and taken advantage of innovations in technology, managers are now asking how they can achieve measurable gains in both their personal and team performance.

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW BUSINESS PRACTICES

We can view a business from different perspectives; the vision that it is striving towards, the strategy to achieve the vision, the operational business processes, the organizational design and structure, etc. Our view focuses on Business and Work Practices. When we speak of business effectiveness we are referring to a set of interrelated work practices, that, if well coordinated and well performed will produce successful business outcomes. Traditional business practices such as planning and project management are being augmented by 'new' practices such as Coaching, Leading and Building Teams and Work Design. Our approach involves both a renewal of our traditional business practices as well as building the Knowledge, Capacities, Competencies and Skills required for these new business practices.

COACHING - THE KEY TO BREAKTHROUGHS IN PERFORMANCE

In many competitive fields where performance is vital to success, (athletics, performing arts, etc.) the performers work closely with a coach. The coach and the performer(s) form a partnership to produce the desired results. In business, the role of coaching is not well understood, and for the

most part is limited to encouraging and giving positive/corrective feedback. True coaching gets at the heart of the matter - what is required to GENERATE performance, to leave people in action. When effective coaching is happening it is possible to produce breakthroughs in performance. Without effective coaching we are left with sporadic and incremental improvements, and levels of performance far below what we know is actually possible.

To achieve this new possibility for coaching, traditional skill building and knowledge acquisition alone will be insufficient. We must first establish a new, practical foundation for observing and producing effective action. Coaching competencies are then built upon a new conception of action that allows the coach to make more powerful observations and interventions. The result is a new capacity for producing performance breakthroughs.