

# COACH

## MANAGERS SHARE STRATEGIES TO

**INSIGHT**  
OF  
*Coaching*

The primary purpose of coaching is to develop the individual's skills and competencies. A coach helps you do what you know you must do."

— James A. Belasco, author, "Flight of the Buffalo"

A successful sailing captain charts a clear course and is the unquestioned leader of the crew. But winning the race requires the talent and effort of the entire crew working together.

Dealership managers face that same challenge every day as they lead their own teams. The success of any team relies on the coach's ability to help employees improve performance. The coach has to provide direction, build individual confidence and foster team spirit.

Many Chevrolet/Geo dealership managers say utilizing techniques typically used by sports team coaches helps them increase department and individual productivity. The coaching techniques they use include:

- Analyzing employee skills
- Identifying clear roles
- Fostering teamwork
- Setting realistic goals
- Listening to employee ideas.

When managers use these techniques, they abandon the old management style of telling people what to do and begin helping employees perform their jobs better.

### ANALYZING SKILLS

"The key in coaching is letting everyone know what contribution they are making to the team," says Dealer Ricky Salyer at Ricky Salyer Chevrolet-Geo in Brookhaven, Miss. "Part of it is going out every day and talking about a person's performance, not just how they're doing but why they perform as they do.

"Analyzing the reasons for someone's performance and listening to him or her is the first step toward improvement."

Salyer's sales manager, Mickey Garon,

says that he finds himself analyzing employee performance in much the same way as a coach goes over game films.

"I'm always looking at how individuals are doing and analyzing how we can improve," Garon says.

To give his staff an occasional boost, Garon will greet them in the morning and announce an "eight to eat" day, in which eight new car sales by the department will result in a group breakfast the next day.

"Those kind of things keep it simple and make our goals short-term and realistic," Garon says.

Garon also recognizes a need to help salespeople get out of occasional slumps.

"When I sit down with salespeople, one-on-one or as a group, I don't tell them what they did right or wrong; I listen and have them tell me what's going well and what needs work," he says. "We vent frustrations and celebrate successes together."

### FOSTERING TEAMWORK

Garon emphasizes that his team of salespeople is similar to an athletic team in some respects. He organizes frequent social outings to build the team's cohesiveness.

"We do little things like go fishing or have holiday family get-togethers," he says. "It might not seem as if those things are that important on the surface, but they really bring us together as a team."

Garon credits attending Chevrolet's Customer Focus Academy for helping him develop some of the coaching techniques he uses. He strives to help employees understand their role in and value to the organization — giving them pride in their jobs.

David Solon at Team Chevrolet-Geo in

# THING

## BOOST EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Colorado Springs, Colo., also attended a Customer Focus Academy pilot program. He says the Academy contributed many new ideas to his coaching philosophy — especially the importance of developing strong teams. (For more details on the Academy, see page 14.) This emphasis on teamwork is even implied in the name of the dealership — Team Chevrolet.

"Our name is an indication of how we try to work together," Solon says.

### REALISTIC GOALS

The dealership has problem-solving teams made up of managers and employees at all levels, from different departments. The managers usually identify problems in operations and work with employees to find solutions.

To increase the effectiveness of such teams, Solon recommends managers ensure each group has a specific problem to attack.

For example, a "customer enthusiasm" team likely would find its goal too general and too large to tackle. However, a team given a specific task and a process to follow can produce powerful results.

Recently, one team targeted the service department's problem of a high shop supplies expenditure. The result: Technicians on the team devised a new purchasing system, and shop supply expense was cut in half. Another team attacked service comebacks and reduced the "second effort" rate to be-

low the Zone average.

The management team has a winning record in tackling a universal problem — employee turnover. The dealership has cut employee turnover by more than 100 percent in four years. Solon attributes this success to the team spirit permeating his dealership.

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weaknesses.'*

"The key is to start small, lay down clear goals, establish ground rules and set a time limit for the team," Solon says. "We always thought we were open-minded to suggestions, but until there is a mechanism in place to encourage new ideas, you won't get that input.

"If people are a part of the process, they'll go after the solutions much better."

### TRUSTING ENVIRONMENT

Managers at Hoffman Chevrolet-Geo in Bloomfield, N.J., share this philosophy. To

them, empowering employees to solve problems and identify training needs isn't a concept, it's a requirement.

"Let's face it, the better ideas for solving everyday problems are most likely to come from the people most familiar with them — for me that usually means the technicians," says Service Manager Bob Policastro.

Like most service managers, Policastro regularly meets with service consultants and technicians. The difference is, when they meet, he doesn't do most of the talking.

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### INSIGHT ON COACHING

"I don't believe  
you can effectively manage  
people without helping them  
understand where they fit into the  
goals of the organization."

— Tom Landry,  
former Dallas Cowboys coach

## COACHING

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"Basically, I ask them what I can do to make their jobs easier or more efficient," he says.

Gaining honest insight from employees is easier when dealers and managers create a trusting, open environment. They develop an atmosphere where employees feel safe and accountable for the team's success, according to Alan Fine, president of InsideOut Development, a performance improvement consulting firm in Provo, Utah.

"When an order or a dictate comes down from on high, there can be fear, and that fear is interference," Fine says. "Where some managers feel the impulse to control employees, coaching turns the emphasis to helping employees."

#### REMOVING INTERFERENCE

Managers who remove "interference" to create a trusting environment will have more motivated,

productive employees, according to Fine. His idea of interference refers to any external or internal factors that get in the way of learning.

Common examples of interference for employees are fear of being demoted or fired, misconceptions about the goals of the job, lack of training or the pressure of focusing on too many things.

Fine trains coaches to remove these types of interference for employees. He suggests managers simplify their employees' tasks by helping them focus on the aspects that are critical to success.

"When people are clear on what the game is, what the goals are and what their value is, then managers can help them increase that value,"

he says.

The same is true for managers. Fine recommends that managers keep in mind that coaches don't score touchdowns; instead, they help their players score them.

The shift from player to coach can be difficult, so managers need to learn when to manage and when to coach.

"Managers manage tasks and leaders set direction, while coaches should help people," Alan Fine says. "It's a hard shift from being a performer to helping others perform."

"Remember, a good coach creates an environment where people respect and learn from one another. Coaches try to harness strengths and strengthen weaknesses." ■

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## Learning Process Key to Employee Growth, Success

Many dealers and managers emulate coaching legends like Vince Lombardi, Don Shula, Pat Riley and John Wooden. Certainly sports coaching greats are fine examples for anyone to admire.

But Alan Fine, president of InsideOut Development in Provo, Utah, cautions that the parallels between sports and management have limits.

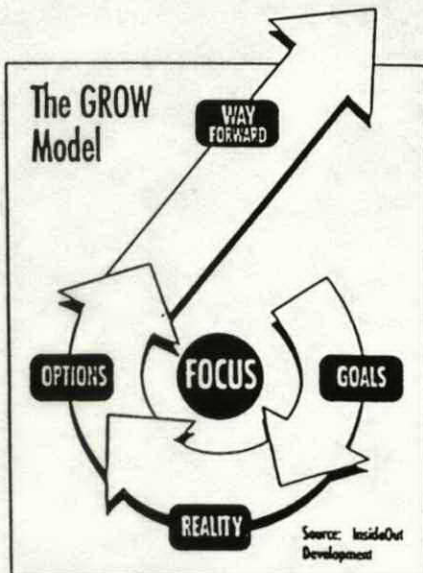
"Sports are short-term, often timed activities, and coaches use emotional ploys to motivate players for intense action," Fine says. "In business, managers want sustained, long-term improvement, so berating and threatening players is not the way to go. However, sports coaches are a good model for their sense of mission and their constant analysis of their players' strengths and weaknesses."

The key to solid coaching is understanding how people learn, according to Fine. He has helped groups and individuals as diverse as manufacturing workers, corporate boards of directors and successful pro golfers improve performance.

He uses his GROW model to help managers better understand how employees learn. The model includes these four stages of learning:

- **Goals** — Develop "SMART" goals, meaning ones that are Specific, Measurable, Accepted and Agreed, Realistic and Time-phased.
- **Reality** — Explore current reality to understand what is happening, what has been tried and what the obstacles are.
- **Options** — Brainstorm and listen to develop choices for action.
- **Way Forward** — Work together to find the best next steps to the goals. Establish clear expectations and a time guideline.

"Whether it's one-on-one or with a group, this process gives coaches a simple method to follow to find out what a team's critical success factors are," Fine says. "High performance always starts with a focus on doing the simple things well." ■



# Roots of Personal Coaching

By Rich Fettke

It seems that coaching just jumped onto the consulting scene and became one of the most talked about activities in personal and professional development. Actually, it took almost twenty years for coaching to become an "overnight success." I credit five factors with creating the industry we know today.

**Personal development seminar programs:** In the early eighties there were several large personal development seminars that challenged participants to breakthrough their limiting beliefs, take responsibility for their lives and take action on what really mattered both personally and professionally. In these programs participants were often teamed up with a "coach" who would work with them either in person or by phone to clarify their goals, give them feedback and hold them accountable to what they said they would do.

Several of these coaches created businesses working with private clients in a similar method. Client success created referrals and greater demand for coaches nationwide.

**Corporate executives:**

About the same time as coaches were working with individual clients in the private sector, high-level executives were hiring motivational psychologists, sports coaches, and professional speakers to help them develop an "edge" over their competitors.

The work was focused on clarifying priorities, creating awareness of strengths and weaknesses, and improving their focus and leadership. These executives found the effectiveness of this work so important that they began to suggest that their "coach" work with the company's managers. Executives and managers began suggesting that their spouses and children work with these trained "motivators." "Executive coaching" began to move beyond the corporate arena.

**People interested in coaching:** The very attractiveness of coaching as a profession has helped increase the marketplace. Changes in the services managed care would pay for fueled a desire on the part of some for-



mer therapists to enter the coaching profession. In addition, people are drawn to a profession that allows working on a one-to-one basis, enables a flexible schedule, and helps clients get results. As coaches enter the business, their marketing effort increases the profile of the industry. Some of their clients might have sought a coach anyway; some responded to the coach.

**Coach training organizations:** Another major factor that affected the growth of the coaching profession is the number of coach training organizations that have been founded since the early nineties. This year, during the International Coach Federation fifth annual conference, we will present a moderated panel of representatives from coach training organizations around the world.

When I began planning this event I thought there were three or four such organizations. I discovered that there are actually at least twenty organizations in the business of formal coaching training. These schools have continued to create a supply of coaches that helped bring coaching to all parts of the world. Therefore, the number of trained coaches has increased the availability and quality of coaching which has resulted in the exponential growth of people working with coaches today.

**Coaching industry associations:** In 1998 two coaching organizations merged to create what is now the International Coach Federation (ICF). This "formalization" of the industry has created a good amount of media attention, which has helped inform the public about coaching—what it is, how it works, and how to find a coach. That has helped people find the information they wanted to make decisions about whether to employ a coach, what kind, and which one. For more information about the ICF visit [www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org).

It is estimated that today there are over 10,000 full and part-time coaches worldwide. Membership in the ICF has grown over 400% in the last two years and doesn't seem to be slowing down. Coaching works, and because it works we will continue to see it grow and evolve for many years to come.

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*"Coaching works, and because it works, we will continue to see it grow."*

## Executive Female

"Coaching is having a dedicated mentor; it's getting knowledgeable support and encouragement and a new way of looking at things when you need it."

# Where Does Executive Coaching Come From?

By Robert Witherspoon

For decades, top athletes, public speakers, and performing artists have turned to coaches to help them perform better. For these individuals, already atop their fields, the next level of performance can not be taught, but it can be learned.

Now this approach has taken hold in organizations, where top executives are turning to coaches to reach their business and personal best.

Coaching is about bringing out the best in people. To my knowledge, the very first use of the word "coach" in English occurred in the 1500s to refer to a particular kind of carriage. (It still does.) Hence, the root meaning of the verb "to coach" is to convey a valued person from where he or she is to where he or she wants to be. That's still a good starting point for coaching executives today.

Consider this working definition: *Executive coaching is an action learning process to enhance effective action and learning agility.* It involves a professional relationship and a deliberate, personalized process to provide an executive with valid information, free and informed choices based on that information, and internal commitment to those choices.

One outcome of this process is that the executive can accomplish more (effective action) after coaching

*"Executive coaching is an action learning process to enhance effective action and learning agility."*

than otherwise. Another outcome is that the executive can learn better (learning agility) after coaching—for example, by asking for feedback and reflecting before and after action—than otherwise.

My coaching draws from many wells. The experience I bring to coaching comes from my work with a diverse group of clients and colleagues, as well as my own coaches and mentors over the years. The theory and practice I bring to coaching comes from three main sources: Action Research, Organization Development (OD) consulting, and Action Science.

Taken together, I believe these three models also help me to think more clearly about coaching and to improve my competence over time. These models are not mutually exclusive, and all stem from the original thinking of Kurt Lewin, who contributed so much to the field of OD as well.

A first wellspring for my coaching comes from the **action research** model for planned change. Action research means research on action with the goal of mak-

ing that action more effective.

Applied to my practice, action research combines research on executives (e.g. collecting 360° feedback data) with service to them (e.g. coaching sessions).

Action research forms the core of my professional practice. It helps me think about planned change. As Lewin said, "no action without research and no research without action." A good source for reading about Lewin and action research is Marvin Weisbord's *Productive Workplaces* (1987).

A second wellspring for my executive coaching comes from **Organization Development**. The OD consulting model helps organize my coaching engagements. It provides me a generic road map for getting from here to there. For example, I might organize a coaching engagement into six phases, as follows: Contracting, Assessment, Feedback & Discussion, Action steps, Progress reviews.

A third wellspring for my executive coaching stems from **action science**—and specifically from the practice of reflective conversations. Action science helps me hold coaching conversations that produce valid information, free and informed choice and internal commitment to those choices.

Action science also helps me have deeper dialogue with my clients—talk that leads to more lasting learning and development—than would otherwise be possible.

Two skills are central to this work. They are reflection (or "reflecting-in-action")—when we slow down our thinking to become more aware of how we form our mental models—and advocacy and inquiry (or "interaction skills")—when we hold conversations which openly share views and develop knowledge about each other's assumptions.

The theory of these skills comes from Chris Argyris of Harvard, who speaks of "interaction skills" for individual and organization learning, and Donald Schön of MIT, who coined the term "reflecting-in-action." I first learned the application of reflecting-in-action and reflective conversations from workshops at the Action Design Institute in Boston.

Last but not least, my coaching also stems from early applications of coaching to consulting, education and other fields—key forerunners that shape my coaching today. One example is pioneering work at

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