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Helping organizations and individuals maximize their human assets.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

“If you want to enjoy the rainbow, be prepared to endure the storm.”

-Warren Wiersbe

IN THIS ISSUE:

Avoiding Holiday Depression and Stress

Although the holidays are supposed to be a time full of joy, good cheer and optimistic hopes for a new year, many people experience seasonal “blues.” What’s important to know is that there are steps you can take to help beat the blues this holiday season. [MORE...](#)

<http://medicalreporter.health.org>

Corporate Coaching

More and more, EAP’s are identifying opportunities to expand their services to both individual and corporate clients. One such opportunity is coaching- a service historically considered different from, and beyond the scope of, employee assistance. [MORE...](#)

Article Courtesy of The Journal of Employee Assistance

Financial Corner: Holiday Spending on a Tight Budget

Holiday shoppers, like Santa Claus, could stand a little belt tightening. With the economy still on the ropes, shrunken investment portfolios and dramatically rising costs for such things as health and homeowner’s insurance, many families should be keeping their holiday spending in check. [MORE...](#)

Article Courtesy of The Financial Planning Association

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Coaching The Problem Executive

Providing one-on-one assistance to a poorly performing executive can improve the performance not only of the individual but of the entire work organization.

by Susan Q. Bratton, Ph.D.

Coaching is now a part of the corporate consciousness because it is necessary. It addresses many needs posed by changes in the workplace: to shift thinking from maintenance to innovation, to improve personal and interpersonal skills, and to develop an entrepreneurial approach to employment. In addition, coaching can provide guidance and support when traditional structures, such as job specifications, are lacking.



Properly delivered, coaching can help us understand what we are truly good at and how we can use our abilities to strengthen organizational culture and address change. It provides in-depth solutions that no classroom or seminar can offer. In fact, no conventional form of learning has shown a comparable capability to help people make profound and difficult changes in the way they approach their work and their life, and to make those changes last.

Most urgently of all, coaching responds to the intense need for renewal in the ranks of senior leaders and managers. It accelerates the growth in effectiveness of supervisors, and the impact of these personal transformations ripples outward to affect all levels of management and employees. The benefits are often dramatic, improving teamwork, productivity, profitability, and the quality of work and life.

Organizations that adopt a coaching perspective as part of their culture find themselves moving closer to the Holy Grail of sustainable growth by

protecting their investment in human capital and refreshing those who possess irreplaceable knowledge and specialized skills. Coaching increases the likelihood that valued senior managers will remain productive and loyal, yet the cost is modest compared to recruiting and training replacements.

Today's coaching is an up-to-date spin on a venerable tradition. It is based on an ancient form of learning—one person helping another to learn using individualized encouragement, guidance, instruction and inspiration. Throughout history, monarchs, and other world leaders have credited their success to mentors, sages, and confidantes. Now it is the turn of coaching to revitalize the business world.

CAREER TRANSITIONS

The single most important reason that employers contact me to provide coaching services is the desire to improve health and organizational functioning of their executives. Because coaching is an intensive, one-on-one process, employers rarely utilize it with line em-

ployees unless they are seeking to develop an employee into a supervisor. More often it is used with an upper-level manager or executive with whom the coach will spend several months. Executive coaching services typically focus on complex situations that evolve over time and generally cannot be addressed by single providers. Through intensive strategies designed to enhance or improve overall health, well-being, and performance, coaching

helps employers realize the optimal potential of their key executives.

Coaching not only supports the health and organizational effectiveness of the executive, it also provides the company with a recruiting edge in attracting and retaining top talent. In today's competitive labor market, talented professionals are more discriminating than ever in their choice of where and for whom to work.

Likewise, coaching is an appropriate and perhaps life-changing opportunity for the growing number of executives who are facing career transitions stemming from corporate relocations, outsourcing, downsizing, or other transitional situations. These transitions can put executives at risk for health and/or behavioral problems that can affect the performance not only of affected individuals but also the entire organization.

Coaching can help these executives develop the behaviors and skills necessary to give them the competitive edge that is so crucial in today's professional environment.

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Coaching continued...

Following is an example of a situation ideally suited to the use of coaching to address poor performance by executives. A top producer and valued senior employee in a national brokerage firm began exhibiting behavioral and performance problems. He was not generating the revenue he once had and was often disruptive in meetings. In addition, he appeared to be preoccupied with personal matters, had put on a significant amount of weight, would occasionally fall asleep on the job and lacked the energy and enthusiasm he once had. The manager to whom he reported was concerned about him and feared that if things didn't change quickly, his career would surely be in jeopardy and the company would lose valuable clients.

Coaching provides an integrated approach to solving such career-jeopardizing problems. The coaching method I use, for example, employs a variety of physical, psychological, emotional, social, and occupational evaluations to identify the health, human factor, and occupational issues preventing the poor performing executive from achieving business success. I then develop a four phase coaching and case management philosophy for each executive. These four phases are as follows:

The first phase is the **contracting phase**, during which time relevant information is gathered that leads to a clear agreement between the sponsor, coachee, and coach about the expectations and objectives for coaching.

The second phase is the **assessment phase** and includes a number of physical, psychological, social and organizational assessments. This phase provides interpretation and feedback to the coachee on the assessments and identifies developmental opportunities. This information enables the coach to help the coachee create a vision for personal and professional success.

The **program phase** follows the assessments and feedback and includes weekly coaching and case management. In this phase (the longest of the four), the coachee is very active, performing experiments in self-development and integrating new behaviors into his/her repertoire. Throughout the program phase, the coach and coachee use a process of action and reflection to develop solutions that are practical, self-reinforcing, and sustainable and take into account the challenges posed by the organization's culture. The emphasis of this phase is on four development concepts: increasing the level of self-awareness and the ability to reflect; developing new skills and behaviors; retaining this learning; and engaging the power of evaluation. These are essential supports for every form of learning.

The completion phase begins when the coach and coachee prepare for the conclusion of coaching, the challenge of continued growth, and the successful management of obstacles. It assesses the work performed during the previous months but focuses more on coachee's future than the past. The completion phase includes the following aspects; mutual agreement that the work is complete; evaluation of the coachee; evaluation of the organization; preparation to prevent relapse; scheduling follow-up sessions; and determining whether the coach will remain available for further consultation.

MEASURABLE IMPROVEMENT

These four phases take anywhere from six months to a year, with most of it devoted to coaching and a couple months dedicated to follow-up activities. In this particular case, the executive was diagnosed with, and treated for, sleep apnea, clinical depression, and obesity. After eight months he was experiencing sustained success in managing his sleep apnea and depression and had lost more than 30 pounds. He was exercising regularly and had developed a renewed sense of energy and enthusiasm. He began attending Alanon, a support group for family members of alcoholics, to help him better understand his wife's alcoholism and know how to cope with her disease (it also helped him deal with his stepdaughter's drug addiction).

Throughout the process of identifying and addressing his personal issues, the executive worked on his business objectives. He improved his communication skills and ultimately his relationships with co-workers and clients. By making consistent behavioral improvements, he was able to rebuild trust with his clients, perform his duties efficiently and effectively, and ultimately generate more revenue than he had in his prior years with the company.

Because I coached not only the executive but his manager as well, I was able to help the two improve their communications and avert conflicts. I had the results of the executive's psychometric evaluations and was able to use this information to explain to his manager how best to interact with the executive and help him achieve his goals and objectives.

The ultimate value of the coaching process to the executive was a measurable improvement in his physical, psychological, and behavioral functioning. The ultimate value to the organization was restoring and retaining a valued employee. The bottom line was improved productivity, a reduction in potential healthcare costs, and great overall profitability.

Holiday Spending

That's easier said than done. Americans routinely overspend what they plan to every holiday. By the end of the 2002 holiday season, for example, shoppers had spent 81 percent more than they had anticipated they would two months earlier, according to a survey by the International Mass Retail Association. Average holiday spending was \$1,558 per household—up 38 percent over 2001, despite a continued weak economy and stock market. And early predictions are for holiday spending to be up six percent from last 2002.

Here are some tips from CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professionals to help you keep your spending in check and the New Year free of burdensome holiday debt.

Put a bright bow on your budget. Shopping for gifts during the holidays is no different from shopping the rest of the year—you'll want to determine how much you can realistically afford to spend. Look at your holiday budget in light of your overall budget, especially during these tough times. (Don't forget to include wrapping paper, postage, decorations, travel and entertainment expenses associated with the holidays.) Let your family know you're watching your pennies this season. This may not sound "in the holiday spirit," but you don't want the bright greens and reds of the holiday turning to the blues of January and February as you struggle to pay off your holiday debts. The best gift you can give your family is financial stability.

Don't count on money you don't have. Don't base your holiday budget on a hot stock sale or a bonus or raise that may not come through by the end of the year.

Make a gift list and stick to it. With your overall budget in mind, make a list of the people (and charities) you want to buy for, what you want to buy for them and the amount you want to spend for each person. Take the list with you when you go shopping and avoid impulse shopping, which is a major contributor to budget-busting spending during the holidays. Take a calculator along, if necessary, to make sure you don't exceed your limits. Gift certificates also can curb expenditures.

Start early. You may not be in the holiday shopping mood yet, but shopping early provides several advantages. First, you can comparison shop and watch for sales, which can mean a huge savings. Second, you're less prone to impulse shopping. Third, waiting until the last days often means you can't be as selective and you're more likely to pay full price or simply grab something expensive out of desperation. Waiting to the last minute also can mean expensive last-minute postage.

Start late. The opposite strategy is to start late—after the holidays, when retailers hold big post-holiday sales. You may not want to do this for smaller items, but it can really pay for big ticket items (just let the person who's receiving the gift know what you're doing).

Pay cash. If you've got the discipline and the cash to pay off all credit-card charges every month, fine. But even then, it's easier to overspend with a credit card than by paying cold hard cash. Credit cards are a major source for debt problems any time of the year, but especially during the holidays. Credit counselors report that debt problems rise substantially following the holidays. Rebuff credit card and department-store card offers. The holiday deals may be tempting, but you could easily end up spending far more than you save with them during the rest of the year. Be creative. Homemade gifts or offers to baby sit or do something special for someone can be an inexpensive yet very personal gift.

Start saving for next year. It never hurts to sock away a little money every month between now and the next holiday season. You'll earn a little interest and when next season rolls around, you'll have the cash to pay for gifts instead of having running up debt.

