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COACHING BY THE NUMBERS

Dave Valentine • Dan Call
Coaching can be one of the most rewarding experiences you have in your interactions with other people. While many of us have positions in which coaching is part of our job description, coaching opportunities can come from many other sources as well. These opportunities are often quite unexpected. The results that can come from an effective coach can be life changing. For example, take John Wooden, legendary coach at UCLA. While he is known for the many championships that his NCAA basketball team won, the legacy he left with his players is how he affected their lives off of the court. To listen to Bill Walton speak about his beloved coach, the man changed his life. Walton said, “In four years, Wooden taught us everything we’d ever need to know. Not about basketball...about life.”

Coach Wooden was famous for his maxims, many handed down from his father Joshua. This is one of our favorites:

“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.”

Coach Wooden really got it. It isn’t just about the score at the end of the game; it’s the score at the end of life that counts. Have you really mattered? That is what is truly motivating about being a coach: the chance that you might affect someone’s life in a positive way. A true coach has clean motives. The motive is to help someone else, not what you, the coach, might gain from the relationship.
COACHES VERSUS ROLE MODELS

There is a distinct difference between coaches and role models. Coaches are those people who work to develop the characteristics or traits in the individual they are coaching. They can provide valuable insight into the process, since they have gone through it themselves. Role models, on the other hand, naturally possess the characteristics an individual desires to emulate.

While both are positive forces in developing positive attributes in others, it is the coach who sees the potential and is able to tap into the drive that brings out the best an individual has to offer.

Great athletes do not achieve great success alone. No matter how much raw talent one has, that alone is not enough to win the “Gold.” The successful pursuit of Gold is a partnership between the athlete and coach. A coach challenges the athlete’s growth, comment on progress along the way, and inspire the athlete to push forward even more than he or she already is.
COACHING BY MOTIVE

Before we discuss the coaching models, we must understand the end goal. The end goal of coaching is to fulfill the needs and wants of each individual while achieving the organizational business goals. This can be accomplished by helping each individual minimize his personal limitations while he harnesses his strengths to improve his own ability. You must identify and eliminate limitations that are truly inhibiting an individual from moving up in the company or, at the least, endangering his long-term position with the company. For example, a Red can be impatient or argumentative, a Blue might be moody and overly sensitive, a White can be silently stubborn and unmotivated and finally a Yellow might be uncommitted and disorganized.

Remember that each color is motivated differently and has specific needs, which must be met. Not everyone wants to be CEO or manager. Some people are content having an 8 to 5 job, but their success always comes back to what they need or want. As long as their needs or wants are met, they will continue being an asset to your organization.

DIRECTIVE and NON-DIRECTIVE COACHING

Coaching is the process of unlocking a person’s potential to enhance his performance with the final goal of maximizing personal success. Developing individual skill and improving personal performance are the true end goals of any coaching model. Coaching models can be divided into two categories: directive and non-directive. Directive coaching is the process by which a coach teaches and provides guidance to improve one’s skills. Non-directive coaching is the process in which a coach listens, asks questions, explores, probes, and allows the person being coached to find his own solutions to the
problems. Both directive and non-directive coaching can be utilized when applying the Color Code in a coaching model. Depending on your own strengths and limitations, you will find you prefer one method to the other. Both types can be utilized effectively and will have a great impact on those you are coaching if you use motive as your coaching basis.

**DIRECTIVE COACHING MODEL**

In coaching, there is a time-tested directive methodology for helping people become successful or get where they want to be. Nothing earth shattering here; you have heard this all before. But, like all principle-based learning, this still stands the test of time—it works. This directive coaching model is a simple three-step process.

1. **Clearly define your expectations.** When possible, write them down. Expectations that are written are usually easier to follow and refer to. Verbal directions are very often forgotten or misinterpreted. A visual map, however, is much easier to understand and refer to. You will usually prioritize what you deem to be the most important of your expectations and you may include time frames that you think should work for each of them. Be as specific as you can to avoid any confusion. This process also applies when you are coaching someone who is setting his or her own goals or expectations. Coaching is about inspiring your team and setting a standard. As a coach, you are able to communicate your vision of success. A coach supplies the team with the goals to achieve.
Follow up on your expectations. Just show up, ask some questions, and determine what progress is being made. Be involved in the process, whatever it may be. If you want to see results, you have to have measurement. You have to know the score. When you see the results, say something! People want and need praise and recognition. When we notice people’s good work and say something about it, they will usually repeat the behavior because they want more recognition. Make it safe to fail, learn the lessons from the failure and move on. Team pride grows out of a sense of accomplishment.

Hold people accountable for their results. Both the good and the bad. Good work that gets noticed gets repeated. Poor work that gets noticed and redirected improves. People like to know how they are doing. If rules were not meant to be followed, we wouldn’t call them rules, we would call them suggestions. Benjamin Franklin said, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.” When talking to someone about his failure to achieve a goal, we often hear, “I know what I did wrong and I will get the issue resolved.” (Or something to that affect.) We usually walk away thinking that we have done our job as a coach. The individual or team knows that they have not achieved the goal and are actively working to resolve the issue. When we return later we see that the problem has not been resolved and that the results are the same. Why? It’s not that they don’t want to resolve the issue or problem; it is simply that in the day-to-day work people tend to go back to how they have always done things. It is difficult to look for new and inventive ways to resolve our problems. Enter the coach,
who now asks one additional question: “Specifically, what are you going to do differently to achieve the goal?” This takes more time, but that one additional coaching question will always lead to better results. Obviously what has been done is not working. Working harder on a bad process just gets us to the wrong result that much faster.

**NON-DIRECTIVE COACHING MODEL**

Depending on your own leadership and coaching style, you might find the non-directive coaching model to be the most effective for you personally. It takes a great deal of effort to continue moving an individual along in this process but it can have a more lasting effect because of the individual’s role in making a positive change on his own. It is a process of leading individuals to a conclusion on their own. There are five steps to this non-directive model.

1. **Listen and question.** After identifying which color you are coaching, begin a relationship built on trust by listening and questioning the individual being coached without bias. You must be able to read people and actively listen to both word and gesture. As you listen, form effective questions that can give you more information and depth about the individual and what he or she is striving for. Ask questions that are open ended rather than closed, typically 7 words or less. This will allow you to begin the process of moving the individual towards a specific goal. The process of listening and questioning is the most vital to effective coaching.
2 Analyze the individual and the organization. Identify where the individual fits into the organization, where he would excel, and analyze if this matches up with his individual needs and wants. Some individuals are at an organization only because of the benefits, and that fulfills their specific needs. Others say they want nothing more but they are still dissatisfied as employees. Employee dissatisfaction is nothing more than an individual not being aligned with his specific needs and wants. A Red not moving up in the company, a Blue not being appreciated, a White who is in the midst of conflict, or a Yellow with no freedom can all lead to employee dissatisfaction. Whether the employees know it or not, as a coach you must help them understand where they fit and where they are misaligned with their needs and wants. Sometimes there is a huge gap between their perception and reality; your goal as a coach is to help them understand where they truly are, both personally and within the organization. You must lead them to all final conclusions rather than forcing them. These subtle epiphanies can create lasting change.

3 Set goals and accountability. Constructively challenge those you are coaching to make a change by allowing them to set goals, which will enable them to maximize their own ability. Be blunt while maintaining a positive relationship at the same time. You must be able to challenge those being coached and set goals that will make them stretch past their own abilities. But just setting the goals is not enough; you must hold them accountable to reach the goals they set. Accountability is one of the most powerful aspects of coaching. Studies have shown that people have a 95% chance of achieving an objective when they have accountability in place. When
people commit to doing something and they know that they will be held accountable, it drives them forward past their own expectations. Setting the right goals and holding individuals accountable is a powerful and vital step to coaching.

Encourage and support. Encouraging and supporting an individual can be the difference between someone continuing on or giving up. Each of the four Colors needs to be supported differently. You must speak to their core. To encourage a Blue or a Yellow, you must speak to their emotions and support them through their personal issues. Show Blues that you appreciate their hard work and offer rewards to a Yellow. To encourage a Red or a White, you must approach things from a logical perspective. Offer your respect to Reds and let the Whites set their own pace. That little bit of encouragement may be just what they need. As a coach, you have the distinct ability to change people’s lives for the better, but you must first understand how to motivate them to push through the pain.

Lead with a vision. Lead to the possibilities of the big picture. You must have the ability to paint that which they have never seen and inspire them to paint their own masterpiece. The vision to see past who an individual is and instead see who he could become is the greatest element of coaching. This begins with a quick analysis of where people are and the creativity and optimism to show them what they could become. This power comes only from the belief that each of us can be greater than we are and that all we need is someone to believe in us and show us the way.
CONCLUSION

Coaching can certainly be applied in a variety of situations, such as motivating staff, delegating, problem solving, relationship issues, teambuilding, and staff development, but the end goal is always the same: individual maximization. The beauty of coaching individuals is that while you are assisting them to improve, you are also achieving your organizational goals simultaneously. All organizations can benefit from implementing a coaching program if it is managed correctly and led by individuals who have the ability to use either of the methods and steps mentioned above. A focus on the individual enhances a company’s effectiveness and therefore affects the bottom line positively. By its simplest definition, coaching is one person helping another.

The Color Code provides coaches with an insight into people and the knowledge of how to better lead each individual. Each of us has a chance to be a Coach Wooden in someone else’s life. Every day we have opportunities to inspire others and lead them to a better existence. Being a successful coach can be one of the most rewarding experiences that you ever have. Now go out there and make a difference.