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The Coach Equation

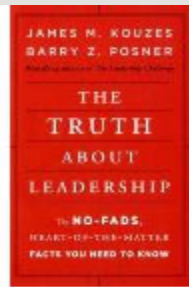
Solutions for the performance puzzle

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This article has 736 words and should take 2.94 minutes or less to read. A small price for knowledge!

Featured Book:



The Truth about Leadership: The No-fads, Heart-of-the-Matter Facts You Need to Know by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner

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Hey Coach, Let Go!

A client called with a question about a new project: creating a succession plan. This will affect a number of people in their region and she wanted to use it as an opportunity to develop some of her team members. We started at the beginning. "What skills needed to be developed?" "What would the outcomes provide the learner and the organization?" and proceeded to develop a plan that would increase the skills and confidence of the team member and provide my client with an opportunity to have a successful coaching experience.

She felt he would welcome the assignment and she wanted to be more of the "guide on the side" throughout the process. Here are some of the factors we developed and how she handled them.

Determine the tasks and scope of the project. My client had to decide which task(s) were to be assigned. She knew that delegating this project was not part of his normal job requirements, so needed to be clear about the tasks and the check in points along the way. It was an important project and she wanted to be sure to clarify as many elements of the project at the start date.

Clarify the results you want. She held a meeting so she could fully explain the scope of the project and the desired results. Since this was an important project, she advised her team member that he could use his own methods to accomplish the task. She reviewed the specifics of the process within the organization that needed close attention as well as restated the due date.

Clearly define the team member's responsibility. One of his first questions was "how much authority do I have to make sure people respond to my requests?" Good question! She reviewed the parameters, explained that she would serve as his support, and reviewed his level of responsibility and authority. She explained which decisions he could make independently and which would require her approval. Because she wanted him to be successful, she asked him to repeat back to her what he understood about the task and expected outcomes.

Communicate the team member's authority. This project would mean a lot of interaction with different levels of management. To demonstrate her support and his authority, she outlined the project and his responsibility of the task to her colleagues.

Establish a time limit. Time means different thing to different people. My client felt confident that this project could be completed in the time allowed. However, she made sure that he clearly understood what needed to be done, by when, and by whom to meet the due date.

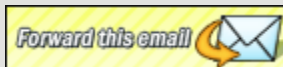
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Establish a follow-up schedule. She set a series of check-in points so that both of them could monitor his progress and determine any need for assistance. One outcome of the plan - schedule more meetings! At first, the time in between meetings was too long. Once they determined that he needed to meet more frequently, he was confident that he would complete the project on time.

What The Client Learned. My client was determined to learn more about her team member and to practice her coaching throughout the assignment. At one point, he had a difficult time obtaining information and missed a check in. She thought about taking him off the assignment. Instead, she saw it as the perfect opportunity for coaching. She asked some "curiosity" and "problem solving" questions. He determined that he wanted this project to be successful and he was going to make it happen. She explained to me that he really needed to stepback, check his perceptions, and approach people differently. The coaching had a significant impact.

Coaching Tip: Take time to walk through every step of a plan. It provides insights into potential obstacles as well as where support may be needed. My client was committed to being a good leader. By giving her team member an opportunity to handle a new and challenging task, she was able to manage disappointment, strengthen communication skills, and skillfully coach a growth situation. She shared that giving up control on this project was not easy. There were times when she wanted to take it back and do it "right". Instead, she stayed focused on the goal - professional development and growth for her team member and let go of her need to do it her way. Time, support, and coaching are keys to a successful outcome!

Sherry Greenleaf, RCC

Seeds of Success:

"Know what you want to do, hold the thought firmly, and do every day what should be done."
--Elbert Hubbard

"Setting a goal is not the main thing. It is deciding how you will go about achieving it and staying with the plan."
-Tom Landry

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