



STRATEGIC OPINION AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Coaching for change

Working through change without losing employees trust.

John Kotter, the US leadership writer, suggests that managers manage complexity and leaders lead change. The Gershon and other reviews are now beginning to take a grip on the public sector. These reviews bring plenty of complexity that need to be managed, but the effectiveness of these changes will depend upon a manager's ability to lead people through disruption, uncertainty and pressure.

Failing to do this can result in an organisation turning in on itself, ultimately incurring substantial loss of direction and performance, from which it can take years to recover.

Many organisations have become reasonably effective at the top-down communication of change and it is easy to believe that these messages are being taken on board at ground level. However, positive messages become discredited when their source is not trusted – and one of the first casualties in significant change is trust.

Trust is not created by visionary speeches and reassurance from the top; it is based on the relationships between an individual and their line manager. Trust is personal.

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Coaching – a growth area

Coaching has grown significantly for many reasons. The world is rapidly changing and coaching is a useful tool to deal with the effects change brings. There is more job transition, more self-employment and small business growth. Some of the real life factors include:

Rapid changes in the external business environment

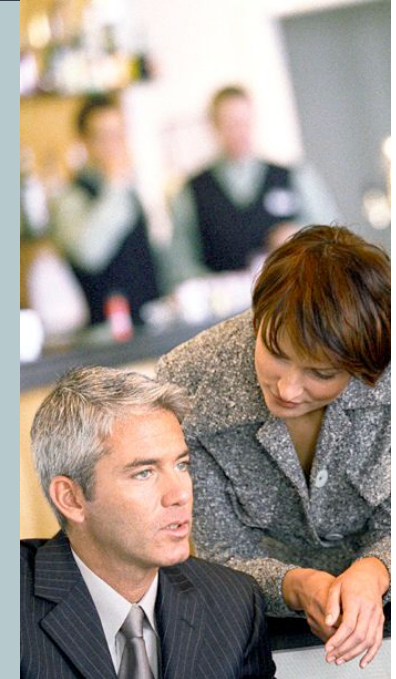
Downsizing, restructuring, mergers and other organizational changes have radically altered the “psychological contract” - companies can no longer achieve results using traditional management approaches

There is a growing shortage of talent - to attract and retain top talent, companies must commit to investing in individuals' development

There is a widening disparity between what managers were trained to do and what their jobs now require them to do, in order to meet increasingly competitive demands

People are wrestling with fears around job insecurity and increased workplace pressures to perform at ever higher levels

Companies must develop inclusive, collaborative work environments, in order to achieve strategic business goals, and to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction



How can managers and leaders support change through coaching?

Coaching and mentoring are widely recognised as powerful development tools. By enabling managers to coach team members and colleagues through the issues of disruptive change, organisations can avoid the inertia and loss of trust that undermine so many change initiatives

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Developing managers as coaches – how to make it real

David Clutterbuck recommends that managers can benefit greatly from developing their coaching and mentoring capacity. A powerful tool in helping this process be real is to ensure that managers feel that what they are learning is pragmatic and appropriate to their own real life situations.



By working with real change issues, and being supported by a range of interventions such as high impact workshops and regular facilitated meetings with their peer group, and by working with a mentor, can only aid this process.

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