

SO YOU'VE GOT THE SKILLS, BUT DO YOU HAVE THE TALKS?

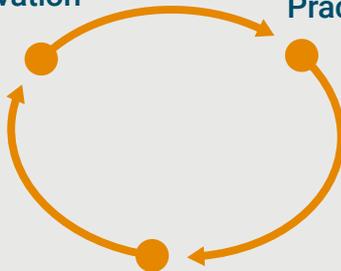
HOW VALUES BASED LEADERSHIP BUILDS A COACHING CULTURE

HR professionals and coaching champions who want to invest in creating the foundation for a shift to a coaching style and approach in their organisation begin by training leaders and managers in coaching skills. Six months, nine months, or a year later, they can find themselves frustrated or disappointed because although people have completed the courses and now have the desired skills, not enough of them use coaching in their day-to-day conversations and approach to fully realise the potential benefits from the investment.

Quite often, they report that coaching is seen by some managers as something that can only happen in very specific circumstances, in the context of a career discussion or an annual development review for example. Or it is seen as something that can only be used if there is the luxury of time, when there are urgent issues or managers feel under time pressure it simply doesn't happen. A number of leaders and managers seem to lack confidence in the impact their coaching will have and motivation to use their coaching skills effectively in the creation of high performing teams. Which is frustrating for our coaching champion given the weight of evidence that managerial coaching style supports team performance!

Increased Skills AND Motivation

Practice



Positive Outcomes and Learning

Some leaders and managers will naturally use coaching, they have a high motivation to learn and help others learn, and the development of individuals and their team is a real focus for them. But for many others their key motivation is not so much the learning process and the development of the individuals - it is the achievement of success outcomes. The missing piece for them is a framework or understanding of their role that makes coaching 'how I get things done'. When they have that framework and see that the practise of coaching is linked to achievement and success then they will have the motivation to give time and energy to having coaching conversations. And it's a virtuous circle - when they have an authentic motivation to coach coaching is likely to lead to positive outcomes, which in turn drives further motivation.

Values Based leadership is a purposeful leadership model which supports high performance in today's fast moving, ambiguous and often virtual organisations. It recognises that in a world where managing through direction or process is unsustainable success is driven by the capability and motivation of each individual in the team and that the leader's role is to create an environment in which sustainable high performance flourishes.

It is a fundamental truth that to sustain high performance we need to be getting something back – if we aren't getting rewards and satisfaction from our effort we will eventually disengage or burn out. A purposeful or Values Based leader focuses on creating sustainable high performance, developing both contribution to organisational purpose and to the contribution your working life makes to your own purpose and values. (This is based on models such as the Blessing White X shown hereⁱⁱ).



Habits of a Purposeful, Values Based Leader:

- Works with their team to create and sustain clarity of the why, what and how they will create success
- Seeks, encourages and offers feedback to allow every member of the team to see and navigate gaps between expected contribution and reality – recognising that changing circumstances require us to continually adapt what we focus on and how we contribute.
- Is self-aware, and works consciously on their own alignment and commitment to purpose
- Communicates their own values and how they are inspired by and committed to organisational purpose, to team success and goals.
- Consciously seeks to act consistently with their own and organisational values
- Uses a coaching style that allows others to find their own engagement – you can't 'drive' alignment and commitment, you can only create the environment in which others are supported to find and maintain it for themselves.

This last is really key. Understanding their role in this way gives leaders purpose and impetus in their use of coaching.

Introducing the Values Based Leadership model:

We have found that the most effective way of introducing this approach is to start by helping leaders and managers experience the power of coaching in driving 'engagement with purpose' for themselves. And that it is most easily learnt initially in the context of a change or shift that the organisation is seeking to make. We coach leaders individually and as a team to help them:

- Clarify their individual values, beliefs and purpose
- Share those 'values stories' in the team, which builds intimacy and trust in preparation for a discussion of the changes needed.
- Clarify the shift, understanding both why it is important and what it would mean for them, including how they contribute in their role individually and a team.
- Explore what it is in their own particular values that gives them motivation about delivering on this shift – it will be different for everyone but that authentic connection will help drive how each team member commits to contribute to the change.

The Values Based Leadership model in action:

We have found that once a leader has experienced it for themselves they are keen to use a similar approach with their team. It can be really useful to offer coaching support (internal or external) as they do so – this is a new way of working and like any 'new' habit it needs sustaining and practice. Support from their Line Manager and from their peers is also key.

Working in the team and possibly with individual coaches each leader develops a way of communicating to their own team what changes are needed and the shift their team needs to make which is authentic and couched in their own values, but also coherent and consistent across the team so that different teams aren't getting conflicting messages. Each leader then engages with their team both as individuals and as a team in coaching conversations following the same process of clarifying, connecting and committing to the change that they have experienced.

Here's an OCM client talking about how adopting this model has changed their understanding:

We have also enabled this shift in leadership culture and style by investing in the coaching capability of ... leaders and managers A leader can't 'make' someone engage and be motivated. If your aim is to create sustainable engagement in change you need to invite others to find their own connections to the purpose and direction of the team, business unit or organisation. Helping others to know and manage themselves better becomes a key part of the values-based leader's role

i. Nyfoudi, M., Shipton, H., Theodorakopoulos, N., & Budhwar, P. (2022). Managerial coaching skill and team performance: How does the relationship work and under what conditions?. *Human Resource Management Journal*.

ii. BlessingWhite. 2015. *The X Model of Employee Engagement - BlessingWhite - Leadership Development and Employee Engagement*.

We partner with our clients to bring the potential of coaching and mentoring into effective action, delivering success for individuals, teams and the organisation. Contact Diane Newell diane.newell@theoem.co.uk to start a conversation and find out more.