

***HR in the Gulf Region:*****IS IT MANAGING OR IS IT COACHING?**

Presented by Dave Millner

MR. MILLNER: Hi, I'm Dave Millner and I wanted to ask the question, is it managing or is it coaching? Last week I was asked a simple question, "What's the difference between a manager and a coach?" And it sort of made me think about what the answer is. I, like most people in the Gulf region, seem to watch a lot of football on television. And for years, the person in charge of the team has always been called the manager. Now if we look at other sports, such as basketball, baseball, athletics, tennis, just to name a few, the person running the team, or looking after a high-performing sports person, is usually referred to as the coach. However, over the past couple of years, the football manager is now starting to be called, more often than not, the coach. So it sort of made me think, what is the difference? And more importantly, how does it relate to individual's jobs as a manager in the world of business?

I get involved in a lot of projects when I have to analyze individuals' jobs to find out what it is that makes high performers different from average performers. As a result of that, I regularly have to ask people, "Tell me what you as a manager do, and what are your key responsibilities and duties?" The sort of responses I usually get are that I need to be good at planning, organizing, cost control, work allocation, analyzing data, solving problems, telling people what to do, dealing with customers, etc., you get the gist of it.

-

Then when I ask them, "What are your duties as a coach?", the range of answers then seem to include words such as leading, motivating, listening, encouraging, developing, building confidence, inspiring people to achieve. Now, it's funny that they don't associate those activities with being a manager. Now, they seem obvious to me, that's there's a crossover in terms of what makes a manager and what makes a coach. But one key question to consider is: which role is going to be the most important in achieving your business objectives, your goals, and more importantly, your outcomes? Is it as a manager or is it as a coach?

This is where the age-old dilemma comes into play, because a lot of organizations will focus upon you executing and delivering the management-related tasks that are perceived to drive performance. To some extent, that's absolutely correct. But you are a manager, a leader, or if you're a supervisor, you're more likely to be assessed, and probably more importantly, rewarded in terms of success on the ability of your employees and your team's collective capability to deliver what's required, rather than your ability to be task-completion orientated. The key issue is, do you focus on tasks or people?

My view is that if you're after an engaged workforce that doesn't take time off work or look elsewhere for another job, but consistently exceeds expectations and provides it to give an extra effort that makes a difference, there's only one answer—and that's that you've got to find time from somewhere to spend more time coaching and less time managing. Now that really is easy to say, but ultimately difficult to achieve.

There's no formula for perfect coaching. It calls as much for intuition as it does for technique. What works for one employee won't work with another. And what works in one situation may not work in the next. But there are several characteristics that seem to support what successful coaches have in common. These are people who provide clear, complete instructions, let employees know how they're doing, give credit when credit is due and take time to support other people so that they can be successful.

All of this is, of course, underpinned by a trusting, working relationship that makes other people want to follow you as a leader. Now, successful coaches always help their employees to understand and appreciate their own strengths and weaknesses. And this, of course, sometimes means that some awkward conversations need to

take place at certain times so that individuals can see both the good and the less effective aspects of their performance. Now by doing this, the coach is helping people to realize their potential, whether it be improving their performance in their current job or helping an individual to see how they can perform at another level or in another type of job. It all sounds so really simple when you say it written down or when it's spoken to about it. But the real challenge for any leader or manager is finding the quality time to focus on the people rather than get sucked into focusing on task completion, which may even seem easier. But, if you need to get the best out of your people, you have to spend less time managing and more time coaching. Ultimately, it should make your job easier.

*Copyright Kenexa<sup>®</sup>, 2009. All rights reserved.*

*No quotes from the materials contained herein may be used in any media without attribution to the author. This transcript may not be reproduced in whole or in part without prior written permission. For further information, please contact Andrea Watkins at [andrea.watkins@kenexa.com](mailto:andrea.watkins@kenexa.com).*