

Perspectives

Managing Coaching for Results and ROI

How a Systemized Approach to Coaching Can Help Organizations Get a Better Return on Their Investment When Coaching Is No Longer an “If” but a “How?”

The Ken Blanchard Companies® defines coaching as a deliberate process that utilizes focused conversations to create an environment for individual growth, purposeful action, and sustained improvement.

Coaching makes a difference in organizations because it addresses key business issues and lets people know what they should do more of or less of to achieve personal and organization goals. It is a process of self-leadership that enables people to gain clarity about who they are, what they are doing, why they are doing it, and where they want to go.

Most leading organizations have recognized the benefits of integrating coaching with their training and change initiatives. But large-scale deployments of coaching can be challenging. Blanchard® spent more than half a decade exploring what all the stakeholders involved in coaching initiatives need to make it work. We then developed a systematic approach to coaching that allows organizations to achieve a better return on investment as they gain the benefits of infusing coaching at multiple levels.

This paper highlights the business issues that coaching addresses, the benefits of coaching, and the improvements in effectiveness and efficiency that can be realized through the Web-based Blanchard Coaching Management System.

Since 2000, Blanchard has successfully implemented coaching services in hundreds of organizations with thousands of individuals.

Aggregate reports tell that:

- 92 percent of the participants were highly satisfied with their coaching experience.
- 90 percent of the participants agreed that coaching was a good investment of personal time and organizational resources.
- 86 percent of the participants agreed that the individuals and the organization were benefiting significantly from the coaching.

What are the business issues that coaching addresses?

Employee Retention

Organizations say: *“Retaining high-quality people is an ongoing issue in our company, and each person we lose is costing us thousands of dollars. How can we reduce our turnover?”*

Coaching helps to lay the foundation for improving the relationship between managers and the people they support and depend on. It recognizes the importance of clear agreements in all interactions and provides a context and a safe environment for a manager to discuss the specific challenges and opportunities that working with each employee presents.



Leadership Bench Strength

Organizations ask: ***“How do I develop strong, self-reliant leadership bench strength for the future?”***

Coaching provides a process for helping leaders deliver on their best intentions. Coaching creates an environment in which leaders can discuss and practice new skills and behaviors. Coaching assists leaders in understanding how to leverage their unique gifts and gives them a forum in which to practice. Coaching causes leaders to mature, moving past problem solving to increasing their ability to manage paradoxical situations. Human Resources professionals learn to apply coaching concepts to short-term problem solving and long-term professional development.

Productivity

Organizations express concerns: ***“How do we instill a sense of passion and accountability, and have our people generate consistent and outstanding results?”***

Coaching breeds passion and accountability: passion because the more people are recognized for their true talents, the more confident, committed, and competent they become; accountability because coaching asks people what stake they hold in the success or failure of any given project or task that requires their contribution.

Organizational Alignment

Organizations seek answers: ***“How do we get everyone working toward the same corporate goal when they often have diverse personal styles and goals?”***

Coaching helps people understand how personal success is linked to organizational success. Coaching compels people to focus on purposeful action, because they understand who they are, where they are going, and how their contribution impacts the company.

Learning Retention and ROI

Organizations seek solutions: ***“How can retention and implementation be maximized so a return on investment is realized—sooner rather than later?”***

When learning anything new, time and practice are required in order to achieve proficiency. People and organizations need a systematic approach to learning that promotes sustainability and facilitates change. Coaching helps retain and reinforce learning in ways that can be measured as well as observed. Pre- and post-coaching assessments allow for detailed analysis of learning, achievements, and resulting change. Quantitative and qualitative information relative to organizational strengths, gaps, and trends helps gauge the return on investments and links those returns to specific business strategies.

Communication

Organizations want to know: ***“How do we get people communicating effectively and productively about goals and expectations?”***

A coach provides support to managers on communication and productivity issues that arise. Coaching is a means of gaining clarity, focusing on organizational objectives as they relate to the manager being coached, and taking action.

Coaching supports and encourages healthy communication in all relationships. The specific communication skills that are addressed are listening to learn, asking questions to gain clarity and resolve ambiguity, testing for truth rather than making assumptions, and endorsing others for a job well done.

Morale

Organizations ask: ***“How does coaching affect morale?”***

Coaching provides a safe place where individuals can talk about their challenges in a confidential environment, openly sharing their concerns and gaining a different, objective perspective to take back into the workplace. Often just having a safe, objective person to listen to concerns helps people feel better and thus raises morale, particularly in times of change.

What Are the Benefits of Coaching?

The personal benefits of coaching are as wide ranging as the individuals involved.

For example, it enhances people's behavioral knowledge and provides hands-on practice for new skills and approaches within a safe environment.

Numerous clients report that coaching positively impacted their careers as well as their lives by helping them to:

- Establish and take action toward achieving goals
- Become more self-reliant
- Contribute more effectively to the team and the organization
- Enhance learning retention and reinforce and integrate new skills
- Take greater responsibility and accountability for actions and commitments
- Work more easily and productively with others (boss, direct reports, peers)
- Communicate more effectively
- Gain more job and life satisfaction

The Five Most Common Benefits by Blanchard Coaching Client Organizations:



How Can Organizations Manage Coaching to Achieve Greater Effectiveness and Efficiency?

Coaching typically takes place through a one-to-one relationship between an individual and a coach, usually via telephone. However, when properly implemented, the coaching process involves stakeholders throughout an organization.

These stakeholders include the “Corporate Sponsor,” the individual who is responsible for overseeing coaching on the organizational level; “Clients,” those receiving coaching; and “Coaches,” the certified professionals who provide the focus and path to achieving goals. Blanchard’s new management system addresses the needs of all these stakeholders.

The Blanchard Coaching Management System (CMS) is a proprietary Web application that Blanchard Coaching uses to make coaching initiatives in organizations more effective and efficient. It provides benefits for all stakeholders in a coaching engagement.

The Corporate Sponsor

The CMS provides crucial information for the Corporate Sponsor who needs to keep a finger on the pulse of all the coaching, providing peace of mind that all coaches are using a consistent approach, methodology, and language. The CMS makes it quick and easy to communicate with all coaches, track announcements, and get immediate feedback from the coaches.

With the CMS, the corporate sponsor can easily track and report on

- Active coaches
- Active clients
- Coaching sessions (occurrence by date)
- Trends and themes as reported by coaches (while maintaining confidentiality)
- Focus areas (anonymous listing of what participants are working on)
- The extent to which corporate objectives are being met
- Goal and task completion of participants

The Client

The CMS provides the client with one-stop shopping: a place to take notes—record and track goals, action steps, and milestones—as well as, schedule sessions with the coaches.

Prior to engaging with his or her coach, the client can work through a built-in self-assessment tool to help identify focus areas. Additionally, the system provides hundreds of tips and tools to increase effectiveness in management and leadership competencies.

The Coaches

Each coach is provided a comprehensive toolbox that enhances efficiency. The CMS provides coaches with

- An at-a-glance client list, session activity, notes, and all session records—a paperless coaching practice
- Automated, client-driven scheduling
- Hundreds of tools for JIT (just-in-time) learning with clients
- Immediate and easy storage of all coaching-related information

Without sacrificing confidentiality, the CMS provides a synopsis of what goes on in the coaching sessions—often providing valuable information that the organization needs to create better working environments for its people.

The fact that all this information is readily available is what sets the Blanchard CMS apart from others—most other coaching companies are still using a limited data base program.

Perhaps the best benefit of all is that the CMS helps leaders and managers stay attuned to employees’ unique coaching needs. No matter how large scale a coaching initiative becomes, each client is motivated by a unique set of values, attitudes, skills, and goals. Great coaching must be based on a clear understanding of what those factors are. The CMS helps decision makers and coaches develop and deliver coaching at a personal, customized level.

Blanchard Coaching

The vision of Blanchard Coaching is to make coaching available to all organizations. This means that we are passionate about making coaching easy and affordable for corporate sponsors to provide to the people who want it and need it. We have been guided by this vision since we started providing coaching services in 2000.

To be the best, we emphasize the following:

- **Business results.** We focus solely on business coaching to achieve results for the organization that hires us. Our clients have conducted impact evaluations that demonstrate the results they have delivered with our support. (We do not provide either life coaching or career coaching following outplacement.)
- **Organizational trend reporting.** After each coaching session, the Blanchard coach is required to note the focus areas that were addressed, progress made, and any organizational issues or trends they may have heard in a threaded discussion that only the Blanchard coach team can see. This valuable tool is called the Pass Along. The Senior Coach monitors the Pass Along and reports notable findings to the Client Sponsor on a regular, agreed-upon basis. This information includes organizational barriers that may be getting in the way of many individuals achieving results. This process occurs while preserving individual confidentiality, which is the bedrock of our coaching philosophy. Thus far, we are the only coaching firm that provides this useful service.

- **Experience and expertise.** We are pioneers in the coaching industry and have been providing worldwide large-scale coaching services for nearly a decade. Our coaching experts have written several books on the subject, including *Coaching in Organizations: Best Business Practices* from The Ken Blanchard Companies; *Coaching Essentials for Leader*; and *Leverage Your Best, Ditch the Rest*. They have also authored a number of articles that have appeared in reputable publications such as *Harvard Management Update* and *T & D* magazine. Additionally, they are frequently featured as headline speakers at coaching conferences around the world.
- **Our infrastructure.** The processes and technology we employ are proven to support large-scale coaching engagements (e.g., Senior Coach partnership with client Sponsor; and our proprietary Coaching Management System).
- **Our intellectual property.** Our coaches utilize Blanchard's proprietary leadership models and tools, such as *Situational Leadership® II (SLII®)*, when appropriate during the coaching process. This material is some of the most research-driven and rich leadership material available.
- **Our coaches are held to a higher standard.** Coach Certification from the International Coach Federation is a must, but not enough. Our coaches must demonstrate their coaching skills as they progress through a rigorous interview process that includes live telephone coaching sessions with the interviewer. In addition, our coaches are provided ongoing development of their skills and are regularly evaluated using key metrics to ensure effectiveness.
- **Impact analysis.** Initial assessments, impact mapping, and a thorough orientation process prepare organizations, individuals, and coaches for coaching initiatives, and enhance our ability to meet unique needs. Later, we follow up with detailed reports of the learning, achievements, and changes that result.

For more information about Blanchard® Coaching and our Coaching Management System, log onto www.coaching.com or call 800 993-1600 (within the U.S.), +1 760 739-6967 (from other nations).

About The Ken Blanchard Companies®

The Ken Blanchard Companies® is one of the world's leading training and development experts. We create lasting behavioral change that has measurable impact on the organizations we work with. We provide training that makes a difference.

Our programs are based on behavioral models that add a situational context to the training experience, so individuals learn to be more productive in real-world scenarios and make the shift from learning to doing more quickly and effectively.

As the innovator of the most widely used leadership development system in the world, Situational Leadership® II, we provide groundbreaking thinking and a memorable learner experience. We begin with a collaborative diagnostic process identifying your unique needs and business issues, then develop an appropriate leadership strategy.

To learn more, visit www.kenblanchard.com.

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