COACHING/MENTORING

Following the publication in 1995 of Masterful Coaching, Robert Hargrove wrote its attendant Fieldbook in 2000. He states his bias in Chapter One's first paragraph: "If you are a leader, you are first and foremost a coach and a teacher." He goes on: "It is only through coaching…that…reframe people's paradigms…to accomplish breakthroughs, solve complex problems, spark learning and build the capabilities needed to succeed". Citing examples, he claims that "the most admired CEOs all dovote a great eeal of time to coaching and teaching."

Hargrove elaborates on 10 nodes along a coaching road map:

1.Clarify your passion, goal and role in the company.
2.Select talented people and engage their passions.
3.Be a conversation partner
4.Define the business results.
5.Clarify performance expectations.
6.Provide fast feedback.
7.Build dynamic capability.
8.Recognize teachable moments.
9.Use multiple coaching media
10.Provide recotnition and rewards.

The implication to the above list is: do all ten well, starting by "see yourself as a coach" and "begin to act differently". While this is true of any organization in recent times, it is particularly true in the new economy, where so much "wealth is created by creating knowledge needed for innovative products and services that (are customer-driven)." In such a climate, masterful coaches have four key roles: a)leaders who develop other leaders; b)performance maximer; c)master architect of creative collaboration; and d)thinking partners in dealing with complexity.

Hargrove cites four myths that represent obstacles to coaching:

1.Coaching is soime else's job (HR, consultants)
2.Coaching occurs behind locked doors.
3.Coaching is about development, not performance.
4.Coaching is about identifying and filling gaps.

Rejecting the need for any of these four, he describes how to create a "New Cultural Clearing for Coaching", beginning with a personal Coaching Mission Statement and an explicit Coaching Contract between the coach and coachees. He then reviews dozens of tips, intended to operationalize the coaching road map, above . For example, challenge coachees to identify a breakthrough strategy, not just improvement techniques, by a)defining extraordinary results; b)practicing systematic abandonment; and c)doing something different. Another example is to create robust feedback loops in all areas of the business where performance matters.

Hargrove summarizes his insights and tips in a five-step model he calls Masterful Coaching – The Method.

Step One. Develop Your Coaching Mission and Teachable Point of View

-Define your personal coaching mission – your mandate.
-Develop a teachable point of view (a poignant insight on how to move from where we are to where we need to be) about how to succeed.
-Teach it through ideas, stories, metaphors and demonstrations.
-Seek coaching for yourself; take a reflective s tance.

Step Two. Invest in Relationships

-Decide which relationships to invest in.
-Engage others by discovering their passions, goals and aspirations.
-Enroll people by holding out positive possibilites.
-Look for openings to initiate coaching conversations.

Step Three. Plan Stretch Goals Collaboratively

-Do not tell others what to do; be a thinking partner.
-Together assess *where we are now* with respect to the mission.
-Set *stretch goals* that foster performance and development.
-Identify *what's missing* that will make a difference.

Step Four. Forward the Action

-Break what's missing into a few small projects or doable steps.
-Focus on doable steps that others will act on.
-Encourage people to use action language.
-Ask: What happened? What's missing? What's next?

Step Five. Provide Feedback and Learning

-Be a keen observer of intended and unintended results.
-Ponder how peole need to be different, think differently, act differently.
-Frame feedback so that it builds esteem, corrects, and stretches.
-Customize challenging experiences that foster accelerated learning and development.

Hargrove ends his book by asking seven leading coaches, from a variety of organizational arenas, to highlight a personal, unantipated coaching tip. Tony Jimenez, executive coach at Chevron contributes "The Art of Strategic Whispering", a telling (for me) metaphor in which each of the three main words is germane. In turn, Jimenez writes about Alan Lakein's book, Give Me a Moment and I'll Change Your Life. In a moment, Lakein notes:

-You can add a plus.
-You can add a purpose.
-You can add an action.
-You can add an activity.

-You can add an attitude.

To emphasize the need for speed and creativity, Lakein created a new word: *mome (*rhymes with home). A mome is a shortcut that shapes and enriches in a moment.

In addition, Jimenez writes about James March's book, The Technology of Foolishness, which points to the importance of playfulness (in a way that reinforces the need for creativity without being disruptive). March suggests five rules:

-Treat goals as hypotheses.
-Treat intuition as real.
-Treat hypocrisy as a transition.
-Treat memory as an enemy.
-Treat experience as a theory.

Jim May, marketing and design genius behind the Millennial VW Bug (who has moved to Ford), reminds us that products have functional and emotional attributes. To win customers emotionally requires a a visiual vocabulary that is instantly reconizble (May introduces an 'olde' word – marque – to emphasize the point). To win the customer's heart, the marque must paint a palette that is : a)simple; b)credible; and c)aspirational (meaning that it is done so extraordinarily well that the customer simply must have it).

To determine if his marque has hit the mark, May asks three questions: a)Are the visual values of the design true to the intended marque? b)Do those values differentiate us from our competitors' products? and c)Do the values have any meaning to the customer?

Tom Sudman, founder of Digital AV, writes on E-Coaching Teams in a Virtual Age, and stresses three new tools: a)e-coaching; b)communicating on-line; and c)Knowledge Rooms (an invention by Sudman of virtual spaces that allow far-flung collaborators to do mission-critical projects over the Internet). Sudman asks: "Imagine what would happen if you could create such a special Knowledge Room for every key customer, for every new product innovation or supply chain issue. Imagine if you had one place where everyone involved could come together synchronously or asynchronously and partricipate on a day-in-day-out basis on any key project. And imagine if you could expand people's capacity to think and interact while dramatically compressing the time it takes to get the job done." Sudman cites an example in which the traditional two years to solve a problem was reduced to three weeks.