

## Action Learning Workshop for Max: Coaching Skills for Managers

The Royal Civil Service Commission is conducting a series of Action Learning Workshop that will give Division Heads /Principals in managerial roles “coaching skills”. The purpose of the “Coaching Skills “is to enhance engagement in the workplace and enable the managers to help the subordinates enhance their performance. The workshop will give this new “skill-set” to all Civil Servants in managerial positions, mainly P1 and above.



Why “coaching skills”? In most organizations, people at the Division Head level, who are responsible for dealing with the largest number of direct reports, have little knowledge about how to go about supervising and conversing with their employees for better performance. We tend to focus on the results but do very little about helping employees, who ultimately are responsible for the results!

We found that “coaching skills” –essentially a skill-set that helps you engage your subordinates and enhance their performance - was missing or at least not developed in a systematic manner.



Yet, this is the skill-set that will help you make the most of the people working with you, make most of the Max system and thereby, help serve the tsa-wa sum better.

So, RCSC designed this training, in-house, specifically and purposefully for people heading Divisions so that they will have the skill-set necessary to address issues faced by colleagues that are getting

in the way of good results. It will include skills you need to hold periodic conversations with all people reporting to you so that you can keep them engaged and performing well. It will also make it much easier for you to implement the Max system with its IWP and Moderation, and get the benefit of higher performance and better results.



So what is this “Coaching” skill-set? In a nutshell, the coaching skill is based on the “Coaching Algebra<sup>1</sup>” where X (how or skill-set) +Y (why or mindset) = Z (results). What it means is that performance gap is a function of either a mindset gap, a skill-set gap or both. The idea is that through coaching, you can identify what gap it is and then address it. For skill-set gap, a simpler issue, what we need to ensure is skill-set transfer. This happens when you Tell,

Show, Do and Review ie. you tell someone what to do, show them how to do it, watch them do it until they are able to do it to satisfaction. In comparison, most “training” that civil servants attend stops at “tell” or at most “show”. No wonder then that after a month or two, we can hardly remember anything. Mindset gap is ofcourse more complicated to address but it can be done. The main framework for this is the Thought Model, which says that results are the outcome of actions and that if one wants to change the result, one must change the action leading up to it. To do so, one must go back to the underlying thought that preceded it. The model recognizes that circumstance or reality cannot be changed but ones thought, which is largely based on ones outlook or belief, can be changed. The idea is that if one is to change ones behaviour, one must start with the underlying thought that leads to feelings and ultimately actions. Results are the ensuing consequences of such actions.

So how is the skill-set developed? This is done through a two days Action Learning Workshop. The first day focuses on the theory, a series of videos followed by discussions - time for thoughts, reflections and q&a. The materials cover everything to do with the “coaching skills”

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<sup>1</sup> Coaching for Managers, University of California – Davies Extension, Coursera.org

such as the “Coaching Algeria”. The second day is all about “practice” whereby participants are asked to “role play” various scenarios that they are likely to face in the workplace, such as how to engage subordinates who are always late to work, or miss deadlines, or are frustrated etc. They can then compare this against some videos which show such scenarios with professionals. Through the combination of both theory and practice including experiential learning provided by the role play, they are expected to develop the necessary skill-set. After that, participants will be urged to put this into practice, which will also help them hone these useful skills.



The RCSC is confident that if each and every one starts practising this as part of their managerial responsibility, they will create a positive workplace charged by engaged employees and good results will be inevitable for their organizations.

The materials are all common sense but the benefit is that it is structured well. As a result, it becomes easier to remember and apply. Therefore, there are no trainers in this effort, only facilitators to help participants learn in an Action Learning environment where they “learn by doing” and “teaching themselves”. 32 facilitators, made up mainly of teachers and civil servants from various organizations, are



conducting this effort.

Following the training, participants have been reminded to do the following during implementation:

1. Always start positive and in fact, when they schedule the first one-on-one session with their subordinates, they have been asked to use it to simply acknowledge the good things they

do, contributions they make and to offer support to help keep them engaged and performing.

2. To always schedule one-on-one sessions well ahead of time and to make the schedule known to all. The frequency has been left up to them.
3. To include all subordinates in the one-on-one sessions. This is important since if they leave some out, for instance because they think they are doing well and thus don't need coaching, then one-on-one sessions will be viewed negatively. They have been reminded that since the purpose of this effort is to enhance engagement and performance, everyone needs to have one-on-one sessions.



Going forward, this will be rolled out to the rest of the civil servants in managerial positions. Furthermore, every civil servant will be provided this training twice. Also, it will be included in the Leadership Feedback System.

All civil servants who are in managerial positions are urged to attend the workshop and for those who have missed the scheduled workshop, to contact RCSC so that they can participate in another one.