

## What Is Coaching?

### ***Coaching from the coach's perspective: An interview with Marilyn Nyman***

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A new manager was discussing two coaching clients with me recently. The first client had interpersonal skills problems and her manager said she could continue. But he couldn't cost justify coaching the "rising star" who was, "good enough without more coaching." Two months later, the "problem client" was making progress... but the "rising star" had left for the competition. In trying to quantify coaching costs, the manager had missed the mark.

There's a role for the problem/solution mentioned above. There is also a more important role – for coaching highly talented people and helping them get to their peak performance. We have been coaching businesspeople for over 15 years, and while it is centered in "soft skills", there are solid systems for its success. Here are just a few.

**What is coaching?** Coaching is a process where you have an outside person, who knows your organization, understands your business and can provide you with feedback. A coach is a good sounding board, has good intuition, good communications skills, and most importantly, a sense of trust. Our team believes the biggest impact we make is in an organization that trusts us and empowers us with confidentiality.

**Who should have a coach?** Coaching is for talented people at any level of the organization; for a college grad who you want to accelerate; for the top level exec who wants to go for peak. A little bit of coaching for someone in their early 30's is immeasurable to develop what we call executive presence.

**How do you maintain accountability?** The model that works best is where Nyman Group has a relationship with a senior executive/sponsor who gives us the autonomy to coach clients within their department. We meet with the client, then see the client and sponsor together to set goals at the outset. We regularly meet with the sponsor to update them.

**What is the role of a coach?** Coaching is a fluid process. Our coaches are ready to put aside their agenda and work on the client's immediate need, whether it's script writing, videotaped feedback, conflict -- to communications strategy-- what are your messages? Audiences? Best venues--face to face, email, voice mail? We also provide a sanity check by asking, "who cares?" That's one of our favorite questions. Clients can get so close to the issue that they forget to make the audience care.

**Is coaching a luxury?** Absolutely, positively not. Our coaches improve weak performers and help companies keep talented people. Our team improves communications efficiencies and pre-empt major problems arising from abuse, psychological issues or harassment by referring clients to specialists. Of all the things we do, coaching is the most valuable. The trick is in finding the right coach.