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## THE COMPLETE ACTUARY

# Coaching is key to employee buy-in

by Shumei Kuo

**M**anagers are operating in an increasingly competitive business environment with stretched resources. So when a book comes along with the subtitle, “How performance coaching can enhance commitment and improve productivity,” it’s bound to be of interest.

In *Stop Managing, Start Coaching!*, authors Jerry W. Gilley and Nathaniel W. Boughton say most organizations use only 20% of the intellectual capital to be found among their employees. If you’re a manager who believes in the potential of human capital and are willing to make some investment, you may find this book helpful.

The authors start by analyzing the failures of today’s organizations and a concept they call “managerial malpractice.” They say many organizations lack a focus in responding to the ever- and fast-changing marketplace. The most important ingredient in the formula for success — buy-in from

employees — is missing. Furthermore, managerial malpractice, including being indifferent to employees’ concerns or poor listening skills, is accepted by many organizations, resulting in unproductive work relationships and environments.

Performance coaching is the solution offered by the authors. Their performance coaching process is based on establishing a good working relationship between a manager and an employee. With this relationship, the manager enhances the employee’s performance by taking roles of trainer, career coach, confronter (i.e., confronting performance issues and then problem-solving with employees), and mentor.

In this process, manager and employee develop a collegial relationship, which ultimately increases the self-esteem of the employee and his or her commitment to the job and the organization. When combined with appropriate rewards, the outcome of

this process is improved employee and organizational performance. (The table below compares common management practices today with the performance coaching approach described by the authors.)

It is safe to say that today, most managers fall somewhere between the “manager from hell” (who treats his or her employees like dirt; see chapter two) and a performance coach. I believe that developing open and trusting working relationships with employees could be beneficial. This sharing and partnership approach will increase employees’ buy-in and commitment, and with coaching from a manager, productivity improvement can certainly be expected.

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	<b>Management Practice Today</b>	<b>Performance Coaching Approach</b>
<b>Foundation of the Management Process</b>	Hierarchy of the business organization	Good working relationships between manager and employees
<b>Manager-Employee Relationships</b>	Top down with one-way communication	Partnership with two-way and open communication
<b>Role of the Manager</b>	Managing	Coaching
<b>Critical Success Factors</b>	Authority and control by the manager	High self-esteem and commitment of employees
<b>Short-term Cost/Benefit</b>	Employees deliver under management	Time and effort of manager and employees in building positive relationships
<b>Long-term Cost/Benefit</b>	Employees may become dissatisfied with lack of professional development or not feeling valued; organizational performance would suffer	Committed employees deliver enhanced performance that improves organizational performance