

COACHING FOR THE BOTTOM LINE



Russell Webb, Sales Manager, Synplicity describes how his coaching has had a direct impact on the bottom line for the company.

Although many might associate coaching as a means of helping individuals deal with issues, overcome obstacles or achieve specific goals, the work that Coaching for Success is doing with Russell Webb, Sales Manager of Synplicity, can be clearly and emphatically measured by its impact on the bottom line. After working with Mike for a number of sessions, Russell and his team reported sales 16% over budget in 2004, the best results to have been achieved during the course of his five years with the company by a considerable margin. He commented: "Although 2004 was a tough year, based on the work that I had done with Mike and the way in which I had introduced this to my team, we successfully developed new business whilst growing our existing accounts. The results we achieved in the year were the result of focussed hard work - without benefit of any 'windfall' sales which might have skewed the figures."

Identifying the problem

Russell Webb runs the UK sales operation for a US-based company which develops highly specialised software for the design of silicon chips. Although he had attended a number of sales training courses, he found these unsatisfactory. "I'm sure that in common with many others on such courses, you only take in about 50% of the information. Because of the general nature of the courses, many of the ideas are impractical to implement within your own business and you end up doing nothing. The result: a waste of time and a waste of money."

Despite his frustration with training courses, Russell knew that he needed some help. Having had a very poor year in 2003 with missed targets, he was keen to introduce much more planning into the

everyday life of the business, to motivate and manage his team of five sales people better and to gain a better understanding of how to consistently build the company rather than constantly being in 'firefighting' or reactive mode.

The coaching route

Russell was attracted by the personal nature of coaching and its focus on making the individual find the solution for himself, rather than simply receiving advice. He started working with Mike, with initial sessions concentrating on helping Russell to define his personal goals and then those of the company. Russell: "After three sessions, I had a clearly defined list of what I wanted to achieve by the end of 2004. Together we identified those times when as a company we'd been successful and Mike helped me to visualise how it felt to be in that situation. In effect, he taught me how to relive these successes."

The next stage was for Russell to introduce the concepts that he'd worked through with Mike, including team goals, to his staff. Although he found this challenging as it was the first time that he'd adopted such a consultative approach with the sales team, it worked very well. "We started work on identifying the 'background' reasons why everyone came to work - which varied from commission and being successful, to getting job satisfaction. From these we then went on to draw up a list of goals which would help everyone achieve their own objectives in terms of enjoying work. We went through each goal carefully, defined what it meant in terms of the business and how we could achieve it. We ended up with a clear schedule of what we wanted to achieve, from which customer and by when."

Inside this issue:

World's best restaurant	2
A tour of the real world part II	3
This working life	4
That Mind Body connection	6
Golf is not a game of perfect	7

COACHING FOR THE BOTTOM LINE

Assessing the results

The schedule of goals is reviewed by Russell and his team on a regular basis. At the weekly sales meetings actions are checked off and follow-up activity is agreed. Russell commented that having a plan and being able to see – on a quarter-by-quarter basis – that progress is being made has come as a fantastic relief to him.

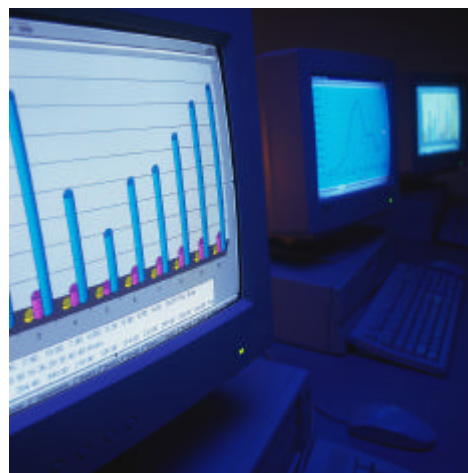
He has also been pleasantly surprised by the reaction that the new planned, goal-orientated approach has prompted from a number of technical staff, who have in the past been quite difficult to manage. “Although I was quite nervous about trying to get them to see the value of this new way of working, they were delighted to see such a proactive stance and with our early achievements they could clearly appreciate the benefits.

“From my own point of view, I can see that all the successes which I had to visualise with Mike in my first sessions with him, are now really happening on a regular basis – and hence our award-winning financial results.”

Further work is now being planned. Mike Duckett is scheduled for a half-day goal-setting session with the whole team to help plan for the year ahead.

Russell concluded: “In my opinion, sales training courses

are very expensive and can often be a waste of time. Rather than being told what to do, I'd prefer to learn how to draw upon my own qualities and resources, and bring a much more personal approach to the management and motivation of my sales team. I have found that coaching is the ideal way to achieve this. The results we have achieved with Coaching for Success are indisputable: they are there in black and white for all to see.”



STOP PRESS - HESTON'S LATEST SUCCESS



The Best Restaurant - in the world that is!

In a previous issue Heston discussed his approach to success following the award of 3 Michelin stars to The Fat Duck.

Now, at a ceremony in London, Heston has been revealed as the winner when The Fat Duck was voted The Best Restaurant In The World by a panel of 600 chefs and critics. This follows a weekend when The Sunday Times ran a review by A.A. Gill who concluded that “All of you should eat here once to find out what is really going on in your mouth”

Here's what the Independent had to say about the award:

“As if Heston Blumenthal's mantelpiece was not already groaning from the weight of awardsreaffirming Britain's well-established position in the culinary world, the eatery of the self-taught master of molecular gastronomy has topped a definitive list of the world's 50 best restaurants.”

In case you're wondering, the top 5 are:

1. The Fat Duck (best in Europe) Bray, Berkshire,
2. El Bulli (awarded chef's choice) Montjoi, Spain
3. The French Laundry (best in Americas) Yountville, California
4. Tetsuya's (best in Australasia) Sydney.
5. Gordon Ramsay, London



FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD TO A TOUR OF THE REAL WORLD

PART TWO - TAKING TO THE ROAD



Nathalie Plumet started working with Coaching for Success when she was a Senior Business Analyst in the market research department of pharmaceuticals giant, AstraZeneca. Having gone through redundancy

from that company, she changed her life completely, travelling to amongst other places, Mongolia, Vietnam, India and Australia.

This is part two of Nathalie's journey of discovery with Coaching for Success.

In the last issue of Coachlines, we described how Nathalie Plumet, having been made redundant from her job as a Senior Business Analyst at AstraZeneca, worked with Coaching for Success to help her broaden her horizons beyond the confines of corporate life.

Q: In the last issue, we learnt how coaching helped you to build up the confidence to overcome your fear of the

"I am no longer afraid to do something different and completely change my career."

unknown and begin to plan for a year travelling alone across Asia and Australia. In fact, you ended up travelling through Russia, Mongolia, China, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, India and Nepal, as well as Australia and New Zealand. What effect has the travelling had on you?

A: I have just got so many benefits from the experience. It has changed my views on a lot of things, and it has helped me to refocus and reprioritise. My self-esteem has grown and I have become much more aware of my own achievements, of my strengths and my weaknesses. My communication style – which has caused many of my difficulties in the past – has changed, and I now react much less passionately to events and people. I am much more in control of my behaviour, my feelings and attitude towards others.

Although I am still broadly the same person that I was a year ago before I started my journey, I have grown hugely on a personal basis.

Q: How have you been feeling since you came back?

A: I am still analysing what happened to me over the last twelve months and the more I think about it, the more I feel that it was absolutely the right thing to do. I have experienced so many different things. I have lived and confronted events outside my comfort zone – and I am still alive! I discovered that my comfort zone was not really comfortable – it was just a way for me not to have to deal with the real issues in the real world. Having decided to take the plunge and stop thinking about all the bad things that could happen and everything I was leaving behind, I could be less emotional and just go with the flow. I came to realise that my scary thoughts were holding me back – and having tackled and overcome these has helped me to see and experience the world. I believe that I am a better person for doing this. I feel much lighter, less worried, far more positive and constructive now that the comfort zone is no longer an issue.

Q: Has the combination of coaching and travelling helped you to decide what to do next?

A: Both have definitely helped me to appreciate what I'd like to do next. I am planning on retraining and working very closely with children with special needs. Although this may sound rather clichéd after visiting so many under-developed countries, I am not only very aware of my own limitations but am no longer afraid to do something different and completely change my career. In fact I remember discussing some of my beliefs with my coach at Coaching for Success and compassion was an important one for me. Travelling and my sessions with the coach helped me to refocus, prioritise and most importantly to better understand and appreciate what compassion is all about."



"The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of wellbeing" 14th Dalai Lama

THIS WORKING LIFE

DECISIONS DECISIONS—THE HEAD OR THE HEART?

Of course strategic decisions, based on well researched data that is well thought through are the norm in successful businesses—or are they?



Whilst there is no denying the value of good information and the rational thought process that assesses this, our experience of coaching strategic thinkers is that, in the end the actual decision point comes down to that

‘gut feel’

Two recent articles also highlight the value of intuition or unconscious decision making.

Writing in Director magazine Southon & West make it clear that in their experience ‘lucky businesspeople’ use intuition to make good choices about colleagues, suppliers and customers.

“There can be as much value in the blink of an eye as in months of rational analysis.”

Our own work, involving modelling ‘strategic thinkers’ in organisations and then using this model to coach others to think this way, certainly supports this notion. The thinking style usually involves a process of visualisation plus internal logical discussion (that inner voice) but invariably ends with deciding between options by a final reference to how it ‘feels’.

If you needed any convincing about the speed of your unconscious processes then take a look at Malcolm Gladwell’s latest book ‘Blink: the power of thinking without thinking’. (Available for purchase through our website).

He cites research showing that we start to behave according to unconscious judgements well before we are aware of it and can rationalise it. The important point is the conclusion that “...on the whole our rapid & unconscious judgments are astonishingly accurate!” “There can be as much value in the blink of an eye as in months of rational analysis”.

So, having listened to all the facts you may do well to trust your unconscious and listen to that inner voice - it already knows the answer!

UNHAPPY WITH YOUR LOT?

Falling job satisfaction is more to with lack of freedom than job insecurity - according to the analysis done in the U.K. by Professor Francis Green of the University of Kent.

Studying various surveys that took place between 1992 and 2001 he found that whilst job satisfaction fell significantly during the period, so did unemployment. Therefore a more convincing explanation for our general unhappiness with work is that we are working harder than we want without opportunities to exercise initiative.



WOMEN AND AMBITION

Anna Fels, writing in the Harvard Business Review (April 2005), suggest there are two aspects to ambition: mastery and recognition. It seems that whilst both sexes share similar patterns of learning and developing skills, women are more prone to deflect attention from themselves viewing it as attention seeking

THIS WORKING LIFE

10 PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS FOR DIRECTORS

Here's the list compiled by Jack Canfield, author of 'Chicken Soup for The Soul': *(Plus our comments)*

1. Take 100% responsibility for your life and the results you produce

(Most of us tend to look outside ourselves for something or someone to blame. Responsibility is not blame and it's worth remembering that stimulus + response = outcome so if you don't like the outcome change your response!)

2. Decide what you really want

(As our clients will testify (!) exploring and clarifying your desired situation before dwelling on the current one is a key principle of ours)

3. Unleash the power of goal setting

(What more can we say - apart from encouraging you to work with your coach to get real clarity about these goals and write them down)

4. Visualise the outcomes you want to achieve, every day, to help you get what you want in life

(Really an extension of 3 above but here we emphasise the visualisation plus focusing on your performance rather than the result you want.)

5. Commit to constant improvement

(This is about learning from every experience, successful and unsuccessful)

6. Take action

(All coaching sessions should begin with a goal discussion and end with a commitment to some action)

7. Take risks and respond to feedback

(Feedback is most useful when it is controlled by the performer so ask for feedback rather than wait for it)

8. Practice perseverance

(Your coach is there to keep encouraging and challenging)

9. Learn more to earn more

(Canfield talks about taking time out to meditate, read or exercise)



10. Redefine time

(Finally he recommends dividing the week into 3 types of day: rest & recuperation days, preparation days & results days)

BE THE LAST CANDIDATE

Based on research by Wandu Bruin de Bruin at the University of Technology in Holland (Acta Psychologica (2005) it might be a good idea to be the last candidate interviewed.

It seems that from analysing the scoring at figure skating and Eurovision contests between 1957 and 2003, the later the performer appeared the higher the score they tended to receive!

This held true even though different scoring systems were introduced and after factors such as national bias were controlled for.

The possible explanation is "watching a sequence of performances, each new one may become more salient...positive features may receive more attention than shared ones, and make candidates seem better than earlier ones."

THAT MIND / BODY CONNECTION AGAIN

ARE YOU FIT TO THINK?

As a number of our clients know, we often focus on elements of diet and exercise (Pete Moore is our resident expert) to ensure that the body is ready for peak performance thinking.



Recently **The Independent** newspaper reported that when Bobby Fischer took on Boris Spassky in the famous chess championships, they were operating not just at the extremes of their mental abilities, but it was also their physical endurance that was being tested. Indeed top players report that it's as bad as a few rounds in a boxing ring!

The players' heart-lung rates and blood pressure were comparable to those of competing boxers and footballers. In fact Fischer said "I've got to stay in shape or it's all over". Apparently the ancient Greeks even included "intellectual sports" such as poetry reading in the original Olympics.

How often do you have your powers of

"top players report that it's as bad as a few rounds in a boxing ring!"

concentration, creativity and problem solving tested at work? Is it important that you think clearly?

Well, if top class chess players pay strict attention to their exercise regimes how much attention do you pay to what you're eating, when you're eating it and how much exercise your cardiovascular system has had recently?

Research from the Harvard School of Public

Health also looked at the relationship between physical activity and cognitive decline with age.

Having followed more than 18,000 women since 1986 they found that those who engaged in more leisure activity showed higher levels of cognitive function. The authors conclude that "physical activity may directly affect the brain".

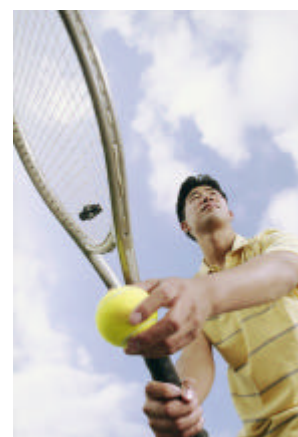
Finally, we know that top sports people have periods of great tension, perhaps when they face the ultimate test in a match or race. However they also have regular down times - even during the few moments walking back from the net in a tennis match heart rate drops back.

So what's your equivalent of the walk back from the net?

Most people in business have no down time and just keep forcing performance from the brain. This may not be the smartest thing to do.

Could simple attention to nutrition and exercise make the difference between a clear commercial strategy and that embarrassing board room error?

Give us a ring if you'd like to get fit to think.



BOOK REVIEW

GOLF IS NOT A GAME OF PERFECT **Dr. Bob Rotella**

Is Life? - asks Mike Duckett

Whilst attending a family party on the farm in Galway, one of my in-laws showed me this book, as everyone in Ireland seems to be golf crazy except me.

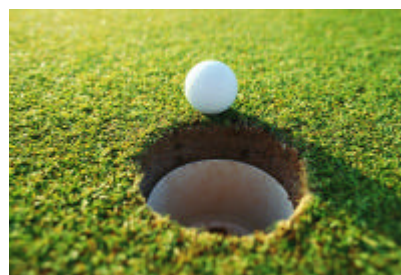
As he read out the title to me another relative whispered in a beautiful Galway brogue, "ah 'tis his whole life", meaning golf.

That got me thinking - if golf were a metaphor for life, could this expert book tell us anything?

Bob Rotella is a golf coach who has worked with America's best golfers and shares some of his thoughts and tips for playing at your best - but try reading them as though the title were 'Life is not a game of perfect':

- ? *Golfers must learn to love the challenge when they hit the ball into the rough. The alternatives of anger, fear, whining do no good*
- ? *You have to decide before the round starts how you're going to think, and do it on every shot. You have to choose to think well*

- ? *A golfer must train his swing then trust it - you cannot hit a golf ball consistently well if you think about the mechanics of your swing as you play*
- ? *Before taking any shot a golfer must focus on the smallest possible target*
- ? *No matter what happens with any shot you hit, accept it. Acceptance is the last step in a sound routine*
- ? *The best way to prepare a plan is ... backwards. Standing on the green and*



looking back to the tee reveals much more than standing on the tee looking at the green

- ? *The correlation between thinking well and successful shots is not 100%. But the correlation between thinking badly and unsuccessful shots is a lot higher*

PS: You can buy the book direct from our website - or ring us for more 'lessons'!



Releasing your potential

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About us

Coaching for Success provides executive and personal coaching that helps individuals perform to their maximum potential.

Our corporate client list covers a range of industry sectors, including pharmaceutical, retail, finance and construction, and high profile names such as Laing, AstraZeneca, KPMG, Abbott and Marks & Spencer.

Our coaches work with clients, on a one-to-one or group basis, enabling them to recognise the choices and opportunities available to them, to make decisions about career and personnel development and then to create and implement a plan of action designed to achieve success.

We deliver a comprehensive and confidential coaching service committed to your success—in whatever area you choose!