

September 2010

Coaching For High Performance Law Firms

If I were to visit your Law Firm, what would I see, hear and experience?

For just a minute think of your law firm, picture yourself walking around noticing people at work, interacting, dealing with clients - what do you notice? Now think of your recent discussions with staff - is there a common theme or topic? In doing this quick exercise I am inviting you to take a bleacher seat with me, a neutral third party perspective. I have only your future success in my sights. What we may discover together could be a sign or symptom that once identified could prove to be a vital key to shifting the way your firm operates and generating the results you desire.

Symptom Identified, Now What?

I recently conducted an informal version of the above exercise from a busy law firm reception area. The reception desk was a hub of activity for the firm and obviously a habitual centre of communication. I learned a lot from observing the interactions between the staff, lawyers and the receptionist. In approximately fifteen minutes I picked up on a common energy being expressed by partners and staff. "Frustration" was displayed by all, frustrated partners leaving detailed instructions with a very junior receptionist, legal secretaries on "Do Not Disturb" and displaying tension as they are called to the reception area to handle a "quick question" from a client unable to reach a live body by phone. The receptionist was doing her best to pacify "frustrated?" clients as they called in looking for answers. This law firm had one thing going for it... it was BUSY! With the symptom identified I began looking at the causes.

My preferred method of solution is to ask the loaded questions and then let my clients discover and come up with their own answers but in this case, the symptom was so obvious I reached for a highly effective tool called "Managing Complex Change". I was able to determine that the culprit was a lack of resources. The firm had recently undergone senior support staff changes due to cost cutting measures; however they had grossly underestimated the role those senior staff members had played.



"It is my belief that in work environments that demand high performance there is a need for deep respect and trust in people. The sustainability and longevity of an organization depends on management shifting from controlling workers and solving day-to-day problems to being facilitators and coaches. Management creates and carries the company vision and then insures that the team has the resources, training, information and support they need to carry out the job. In doing so, people feel both valued and acknowledged – two key ingredients to ensuring success."

Tracey Pitts

Current Offerings:

In September I will have the following openings:

- 2 corporate coaching spots
- 3 individual coaching spots

1-2-3 Act Now:

- Contact me at (250) 812-4433 to set up an interview
- After initial interview, coaching can be conducted in person or on the phone

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Symptom Identified, Now What continued...

The impact was most obvious in the firm's sudden inability to service their clients efficiently. Partners were frustrated by backlog and inefficiency and there was an overall lack of respect and trust in the junior staff's ability to complete tasks. In turn, staff members were frustrated and exhausted by the ever increasing workload and lack of satisfaction from the partners.

Solutions Aboard

When an organization experiences change it is in everyone's best interest to communicate. Sounds simple enough and yet it is often side stepped for a variety of reasons. Communicating through change allows a company to reassure, realign and refocus the existing staff. It is important to discover and dissolve potential obstacles before they disrupt momentum. In this law firm's case, missing communication was key, and after some coaching to identify other obstacles we were able to design some actions to take to overcome these obstacles. This included a staff meeting in which all support staff and partners were invited to provide their feedback. After addressing the feedback, corrective action was taken and as a result, there was a positive realignment and the office began operating cohesively again. Junior lawyers assumed more responsibility and made themselves more available for questions and instruction; continuing legal education was made available to support staff to enhance their knowledge and instill confidence. Existing talent was recognized and capitalized by reassigning support staff to different roles depending on their experience and skill set. From an outside perspective, the solutions were relatively simple once the symptom was identified.

Defining Tracey

Like coaching itself, I am multi faceted and have always been future focused. When I discovered I could take my natural gifts and turn them into a passion and profession I fell in love. A fascination for human behavior coupled with the thrill I get watching others succeed translates into an extremely exciting career. Yes, I'm one of those people that wake up every day and say... "I get paid to do this?!" Being a coach provides me the privilege of providing unbiased feedback and an objective perspective while holding the client responsible for taking the steps to produce the results he or she desires. It is deeply rooted in my belief that we are amazing human beings that are capable of whatever it is we say we want in life. One word of caution... if you choose to hire me be prepared to experience results with velocity!

I'm not known for sitting still too long so when I'm not coaching, I can be found competing in Triathlons, playing squash or keeping current on how to stay hip over forty by hanging with my amazing adult children. I've travelled through over 23 countries and lived in 3 all the while "people watching" and looking for ways to make a difference in people's lives.



My first year in triathlon has been immeasurable in terms of life lessons – this was taken at the Shawnigan Lake Triathlon, home of my first ever FREEZING COLD open water swim. Look at me lovin' the run... geez.



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