

Coaching to the rescue



Kelvin Lim,
Founder and Principal Coach,
Executive Coach International Pte Ltd

While HR professionals face many of the same challenges as other managers, they also have to deal with HR-specific ones.

Everyone has different goals, interests and ideas about where the company should be headed, how it should achieve its goals and what skills and knowledge are required for this to happen, explains Kelvin Lim, Founder and Principal Coach of Executive Coach International Pte Ltd.

“A HR professional is a little like an orchestra conductor who guides the musicians to play in together tune, or in this case, to make all employees contribute to the bottom line of the company. We all know how challenging this can be.”

Improving retention

As different generations co-exist within professional organisations, it is no longer possible to offer a one-size-fits-all programme. People are also much more mobile than before and fewer stay with the company for 10, 15 or 20 years.

As a result, HR professionals do not have the luxury of time when it comes to developing and retaining talents. Yet they devise a talent-training-retention strategy to support the organisation’s goals. This is no small feat, Lim stresses, and it is only natural for HR professionals to turn to coaching.

Through executive coaching, organisations such as IBM Corp, the US Department of Defense, and Singapore’s Economic Development Board have been able to improve employee performance, increase motivation and reduce staff attrition, among other challenges.

According to Lim, his company has seen a growing number of queries from organisations eager to learn how coaching plays a role in ironing out human capital resource issues, some of which have a direct impact on their bottom line.

Leadership role

Many organisations also realise that for their business to prosper, they need their HR department to take on a leadership role. One strategy is for senior HR managers and directors to provide mentoring to their younger colleagues.

But the reality is that however good a HR manager might be, he or she is not necessarily equipped with the right skills or knowledge to fulfill this task.

“This is why we have also been seeing an increase in the number of companies sending their managers for training programmes so that they are able to coach others within the organisation,” explains Lim.

He believes that HR managers need to possess coaching skills to face varied challenges such as conflict resolution, understanding real motivation and leading a team effectively.

Finding the right programme

This is not easy, as it needs to meet the following criteria:

- It has to be internationally accredited, preferably by the International Coach Federation (ICF);
- It needs to show its commitment to being a professionally run organisation with high quality systems and proper accreditation;
- The trainers need to have diversified and international experience to deliver effective programmes.

As the role of HR evolves, HR managers often find themselves unprepared for the varied and changing demands of being responsible for the development and growth of their people, in addition to their core responsibilities.

In these situations, an effective coach can offer an individual or a team the right kind of support and guidance to achieve their greater goals. **HC**