There are plenty of programs to help build and develop human resource capital within the organization; things like personal balanced scorecards, emotional intelligence, and 360 Degree Evaluations. However, trying to implement these solutions is not easy. Additionally, many of these initiatives involve considerable effort with somewhat mixed results. What we need are very informal, straightforward approaches to managing people for higher levels of performance. The answer may reside in coaching. Coaching has been very evident in sports – we've all seen how great coaches can turn a team of players into champions. And now coaching has emerged as the hottest thing for managing people.

Coaching is a form of supportive relationship that elevates the employee to a level of maximum performance. Coaching is about interacting with people, teaching them to produce exceptional results for business. Coaching is for anyone who must manage someone else.

“The business community is finally realizing what sports experts have known and practiced for years: individual attention from managers is the surest way to unlock an employee’s potential. The payoffs for becoming a manager-coach are clear: productivity, efficiency, reliability, and profitability.” - The Coaching Revolution: How Visionary Managers are Using Coaching to Empower People and Unlock Their Full Potential by David Logan and John King

Coaching runs contrary to the traditional manager, things like control, rules, and heavy-handed mandates. Coaching is much less formal and more collaborative. Just like in sports, veteran (more experienced workers) are mixed with the new recruits to make sure people have a chance at success. Contrast this to the current sink or swim environment that many are thrown into, only to burn out under the intense demanding workload.

With increasing pressure to do more, not to mention the high levels of change, employees now more than ever before need high quality coaching environments. For example, in sports the coach immediately intervenes when he detects a player not performing to his or her potential. Coaches transfer their knowledge of the game, showing the player how to execute. Coaching exemplifies some of the best characteristics in leadership – a personal relationship between manager and employee, tapping into the emotions of the worker to drive high levels of performance, and effectively communicating and transferring the knowledge so the worker can apply it on the playing field.

“Organizations are the ongoing creations of people who work in them. Treating organizations as if they were huge machines, as is done with command and control, badly misunderstands the nature of the phenomenon. To sum up and simplify what I'm saying, coaching is a way of working with people that leaves them more competent and more fulfilled so that they are more able to contribute to their
Coaches often motivate and compel people to exceptionally high performance levels through great communication. There is great power in the spoken word and coaches use this technique all the time. Some of the best coaches use extremely powerful words to reach players in a language that makes sense. And they say it with passion.

“To be successful, you’ve got to be honest with yourself. Success rests not on ability, but upon commitment, loyalty, and pride. Success in anything in this world is 75 percent mental. In our league, most times the teams are evenly matched in ability and physically. And it is usually the team that is best mentally prepared on that particular day which wins the ballgame. Success is paying the price. You have to pay the price to win – to get there and to stay there. Success is not a sometime thing; it is an all-time thing. You don’t do what is right once in awhile, but all of the time – success is habit, winning is habit.”

- Coach Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers (from the book: The Essential Vince Lombardi by Vince Lombardi, Jr.)

Coaches are very engaged with their players, teaching them to think smarter and do things better. Coaches are very good listeners; they also learn and love to teach others what they know. Coaches dig deep into the emotions of others, creating a bond between the coach and the player. Coaches are extremely deliberate and forceful when it comes to:

1. Seeking out the most talented people
2. Defining results and holding people accountable for their results
3. Providing immediate feedback on how people can produce the desired results
4. Rewarding and recognizing people for their successes

“We must see people in terms of their future potential, not their past performance. Coaching delivers results in large measure because of the supportive relationship between the coach and the coachee, and the means and style of communication used. The coachee does acquire the facts, not from the coach but from within himself, stimulated by the coach. Of course, the objective of improving performance is paramount, but how that is best achieved is what is in question.”

- Coaching for Performance: Growing People, Performance and Purpose by John Whitmore

One of the most significant dilemma's facing almost every organization is a lack of leadership. People desperately need leadership in order to perform. And coaching represents the essence of leadership. As author Ferdinand F. Fournies points out in his book Coaching for Improved Work Performance, Managers are not paid to get results, they are paid to get results out of other people.

Coaching is one of the most potent management techniques for improving performance. This approach to managing (coaching) is what drives performance in sports; so why not use it in the workplace? Coaching is what people are looking for from management and as a result, coaching fulfills the basic
People Need Coaching – Part 1 of 2

performance needs of employees. Coaching is truly one of the best ways to manage people. Part 2 of this article will outline some specific characteristics for transforming managers into coaches.

“Coaching lies at the heart of management, not at the edges. Coaching is everything you do to produce extraordinary results in your business with colleagues amid change, complexity, and competition. Coaching is everything you do to improve your strategic thinking about the business future you want to create. Coaching is everything you do to ignite personal and team learning in solving business problems while building the organization capability you need to succeed. It is everything you do to give you and your entire organization an edge and advantage.” - Masterful Coaching Fieldbook by Robert Hargrove