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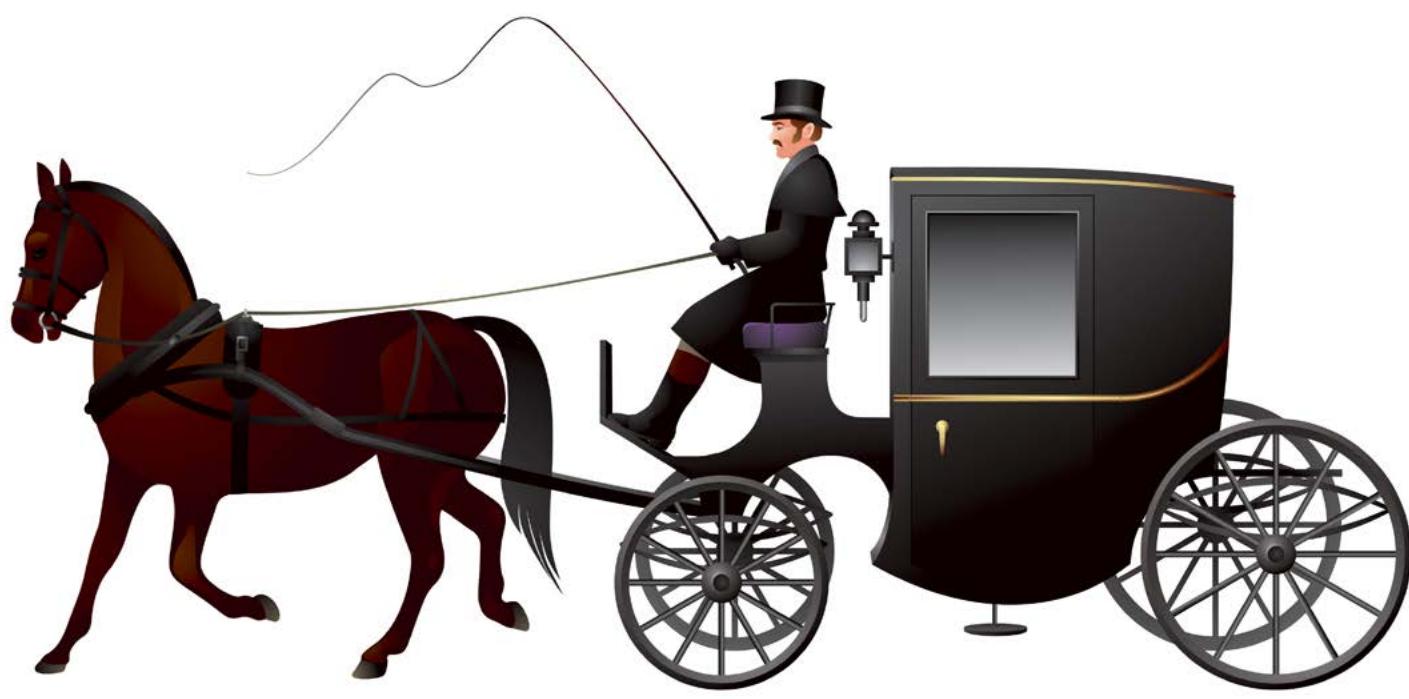


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THE  AGENDA®

MISSION

To facilitate the exchange of up-to-date and relevant knowledge, information and resources affecting and influencing human resources (HR) professionals in Japan, and to become a bridge between Japanese and non-Japanese HR management systems so that we can facilitate the exchange of information and HR best practices, standards, and HR body of knowledge.

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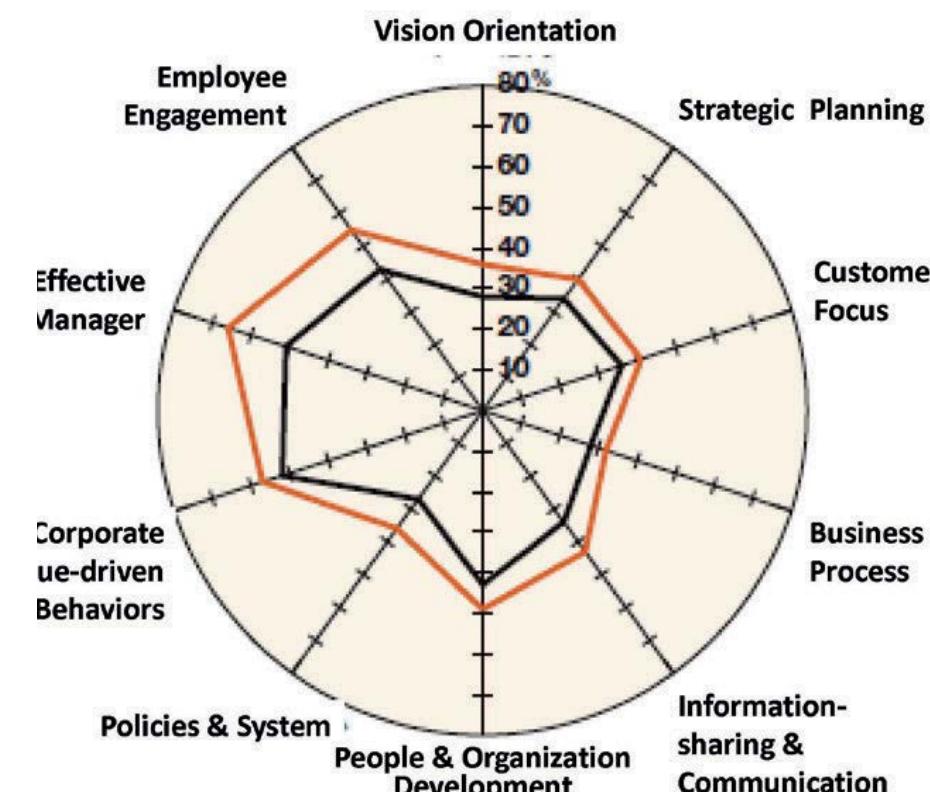
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Growing up, our family would go skiing pretty much every winter, and I learned to ski when I was still very young. I'm told by my parents that I was three when they first strapped a pair of skis to my legs, so by the time I got to the double-digit ages, I was pretty confident on the slopes, and felt that there wasn't too much that I couldn't do well by that point.

So one season, I was not just a little shocked and dismayed when my father told that he wanted to enroll me in ski school (again, like I had in years past). But at that rebellious age, I was getting to the point where I knew everything, and certainly more than the old man, so I told him as much.

"Ski school? What do I need ski school for? I know how to ski. I can ski better than you now."

To which he replied, "Look. No one argues that you know how to ski. Of course you do. But you can always learn more. You can always improve your skills, and you can always learn new things. Just think about Olympic skiers. When you watch them on TV, the difference between gold medal and fourth place is often a few hundredths of a second. Every single professional skier has a coach. In fact, they usually have several. And that coach's job is NOT to teach those guys how to ski. It's to help them tweak their performance. It's to analyze their techniques and make them faster and better. In fact, I would say that it's really the best athletes that need coaching. Not the beginners."

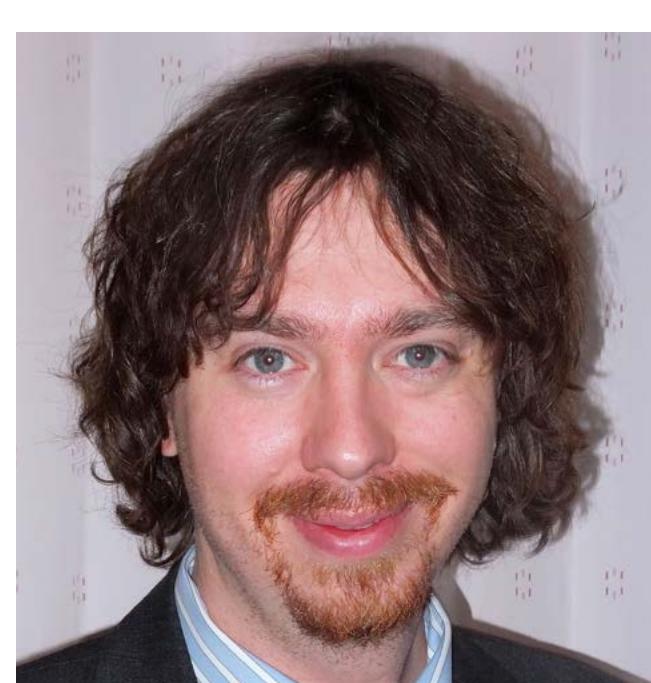
That made a lot of sense to me at the time, and it still does. While coaches often *do* engage in **teaching**, that's not their primary role. The coach takes those qualities and skills that are already there and makes them that much better. Consider this: coaching is so important to some sports, that in the U.S., the highest paid public employee in just about each of the 50 states, is either a football coach, or a basketball coach. (Only in a few states, are the top-paid jobs taken by a college president or medical school dean). The reason for that is clear! A good coach leads a team to victory, and does so consistently. The coach is the one who helps transform just another excellent performer into a world-class champion.

Somewhere, unfortunately, it seems that there has been a loss in translation. It has entered into some people's vernacular that coaching is somehow for companies or departments that are weak or broken. They've somehow come to the odd conclusion that employee coaching is meant for those who are disengaged, don't enjoy their jobs, risk leaving the company to go elsewhere, or whose departments are somehow otherwise dysfunctional.

And while coaching can certainly help with all of those things, as Brent Conkle so astutely points out in his [OpEd piece](#) later on in this issue, the real lesson comes from professional athletes. It's not those who are just learning how to do something who need coaches. That's more the job of instructors, teachers, trainers or facilitators. Coaching is taking the skills that are already there, and showing people how to transform them from being merely serviceable into something incredibly amazing. It's the strong performers, the high achievers, the ambitious ones who benefit the most from coaching!

When we announced that the topic for the upcoming issue of *The HR Agenda* was employee [coaching and mentoring](#), we really didn't expect the overwhelming response that we did, from a wide variety of experts in the field. Coaches, consulting companies, HR professionals... It's clear that there is a high level of interest in this domain, especially in Japan. There is an intense need for talented coaches. Whether it's rebuilding or repairing something that a company is having difficulties with, or bringing them to the next level of excellence, any organization that takes pride in having a strong [triple bottom line](#) will have some kind of coaching or mentoring program in place to make that happen.

In this issue, look forward to some amazing insights into the world of coaching and mentoring, as presented by some of the leaders in the profession. The articles have been written by a wide array of experts, many of whom have built very successful coaching models and have gone on to work with some of the world's most recognizable and well-known companies and brands. Many of these coaches, along with the companies they represent, are members of the [International Coach Federation](#) (ICF), a professional association and accreditation body, whose goal is to lead the advancement of the coaching profession and "to see humanity flourish through coaching." The Japanese chapter of the organization, ICF Japan, is also an active promoter and sponsor of the *The HR Agenda* and [The Japan HR Society](#) (JHRS). 



Atley Jonas joined The HR Agenda staff as editor in chief, in 2014. He has a Master's in business administration, and spent 11 years living and working in Japan. He actively writes and edits for a number of U.S. and global business publications, while also pursuing several entrepreneurial ventures.



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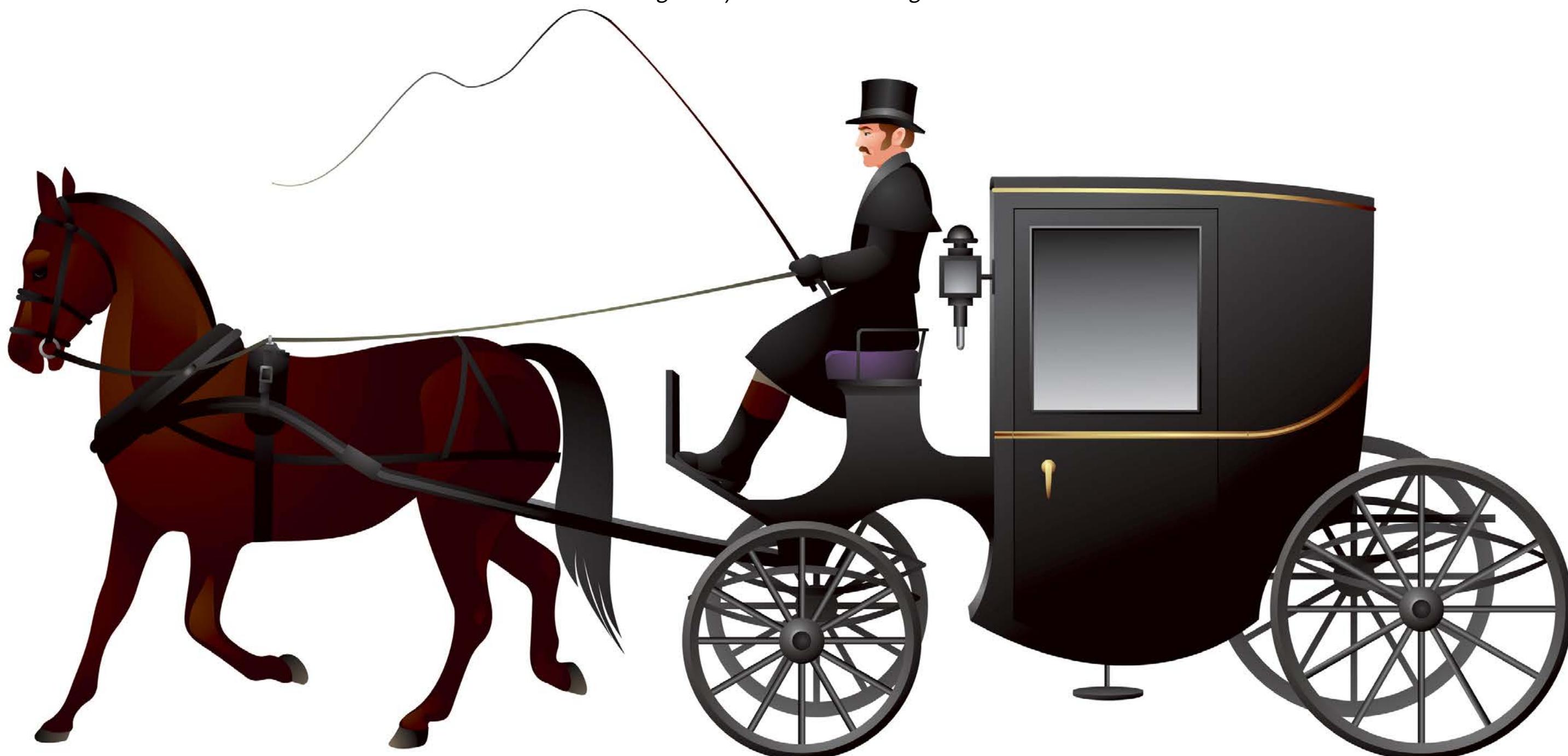



Email us at askHR@jhrs.org and bring Andrew and Yoshi to your organization!

Coaching And Coaches In Good Times and Bad Times

Jun Kabigting, MBA/MS/HRMP
Chief Community Officer, The Japan HR Society (JHRS)

Originally written in English



Continuing economic challenges make this the right time to engage in self-assessment and to get help with personal and professional goals.

First, the Bad News...

In spite of all the fanfare surrounding Abenomics and the "Three Arrows" of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in bringing Japan out of the economic doldrums, truth be told, I believe the jury is still out.

Big, export-oriented companies such as Toyota, Nissan, Toshiba, NEC, and even the tourism industry, (which saw its biggest tourist numbers reaching almost 13.5 million in 2014, according to [Japan Tourism Marking Co.](#)) have been enjoying the positive effects of Abenomics. But the vast majority of Japanese industries and companies, particularly the [small and medium businesses](#) (SMEs) which comprise 99.7 percent of all registered companies in Japan as of 2013, have yet to experience the trickle-down effects of Abe's bold economic policies.

In addition, the recent economic figures indicating Japan has finally come out of its recession in the last quarter of 2014 met a lot of cold shoulders, if not doubt or outright disbelief.

As a result, companies still continue to lay off people, freeze wage increases and new hires, or even worse, close their businesses as they struggle to survive Japan's economic woes.

...and then the Good News.

From an ordinary person's point of view, or more appropriately, to a typical *salaryman*, times like these can still offer tremendous opportunities for those who are bold enough to go outside of their comfort zones. The continuing economic challenges of Japan may be the right time to

engage in self-assessment, and to take a moment's pause to rethink personal and professional goals. HR professionals have a novel term for this process of self-rediscovery: coaching.

When an employee is laid off for instance, a talk with a career counselor or a professional coach would help a great deal in mapping out available options in terms of new career opportunities. It would also provide an honest assessment of individual strengths, character traits, behaviors and responses. Coaching also serves as an ingenious way to inculcate upon the recently displaced employee that the unfortunate predicament is not just due to the uncertainties of market forces but, among other things, personal limitations as an individual and as a professional.

The Coach and the Coaching Process

Coaching may sound like a new-age concept and it is common to find a lot of people engaged in some sort of personal coaching in areas ranging from anger management to spiritual enlightenment. There are actually many definitions of coaching but for me coaching should be seen as a process of helping a person, team or organization go from its present position to where it wants to be.

The purpose of coaching is actually very close to the word's etymology. Before the age of automobiles, people who wanted to go from one place to another would take a carriage called a coach, tie it to a horse and travel wherever they wanted to go (think of the horse and carriage logo of the Coach brand, the famous American luxury goods maker).

A coach normally helps define the right focus which may be necessary so that an individual or an organization will be able to overcome a difficult situation or reach breakthrough performance (as coaches for top athletes do). [Recommended reading: [Using Coaching as a Route to Reach Potential & Achieve Goals](#) by Yukimo Shito, *The HR Agenda Magazine*, July-Sep 2014 issue].

In many large organizations, an HR professional typically assumes the role of a coach, performing everything from active listening to conducting [psychometric tests](#) to gauge strengths and weaknesses. This sort of intervention is necessary because sometimes people get blinded by their own talents to the point that they isolate themselves from the responsibility when something goes wrong.

Talking to a coach can be an exercise in both sincerity and humility. The coach asks hard questions and gives advice on actions that could have been taken or which could have been more effective than what the individual chose. Hostility may arise because people react differently to feedback. Moreover, even the most carefully chosen words can produce the most unexpected of reactions.

Coaching as Opposed to Training

Coaching is not training. While coaching is also a way to acquire learning, a coach should be seen as a facilitator rather than as an instructor, since a coach helps clients answer their own questions instead of telling them the answers. Actually, it is no different from the very learning process adults go through, for it involves self-discovery, introspection and guided self-assessments.

Coaching is not meant to be a substitute for training. Training has always been a significant component of organizational development and studies show that organizations that keep up on training have greater chances of weathering a crisis or maximizing any opportunities out there in the market. [Recommended reading: ["Organizational Development & Learning," The HR Agenda Magazine, July-Sep 2014](#)]

Coaching in Good and in Bad Times

Like all other human resource development interventions, coaching programs entail cost. In good times, cost may not be such a big issue. The focus is more developmental, or to achieve the next breakthroughs in performance and thus support the organization's future successes and business results. For large or progressive organizations, they even have external coaching programs, which would involve further investments in both time and resources.

However in difficult times, companies would often rather cut on expenses and, inevitably, coaching may not sound so appealing anymore. But this does not mean that people can no longer take advantage of coaching *per se*. Those wanting to have a third-person perspective can always ask a trusted colleague, professor, *senpai*, previous employer, a pastor or spiritual leader, or even a friend, to coach them. Be forewarned though that sometimes, the most costly advice is free advice.

Pragmatically speaking, those who can afford to pay a professional coach tend to benefit the most. The correct way of viewing this, in my opinion, is to look at it not as an added expenditure but as a long-term investment for both the organization and the individual.

No job is recession-proof. But it helps to keep a positive attitude and to be a little optimistic. It is always better to maintain one's composure no matter what happens and even amidst the negative, console ourselves with the fact that this too will pass.

As employees, however, we must also take responsibility for our careers, bearing in mind that the good and bad choices we make today will have consequences in the future. We also have to be more proactive in managing our careers rather than entrusting everything to the HR department, our bosses, or our companies.

Now that lifetime employment is fast becoming a thing of the past even in Japan, we should strive instead to become lifetime employable [Recommended reading: ["From Lifetime Employment to Lifetime Employability: How L&D Can Help You Make That Change," Publisher's Message, The HR Agenda Magazine, Jul-Sep 2014](#)]. We can only do this if we overcome our fears to learn new things, to meet with people, and to accept the fact that change is really the only thing constant in this world.

Needless to say, having a coach by your side is an added help not only to survive but more importantly to thrive both in good and bad times. 



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Another FIRST SHRM's Strategic HR Workshop Held in Japan



Yoshiharu Matsui, Ed.D., HRMP
President, HPO Creation, Inc.

Translated from the Japanese original

HR professionals explore the essential components of both HR and organizational strategies and learn how they should align.

“[Strategic Human Resources: Delivering Business Results](#)” a workshop developed by [The Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#), was held in Japan for the first time this February.

The objectives of this workshop were for human resource development staff members to learn about overall strategic organizational development, how to draft an effective HR division strategy, and how to prepare an action plan to implement changes.

The program focused on the following key contents:

1. Understanding organizational strategy: Strategy types, value propositions, the strategy drafting and development process, key indicators, and case studies.
2. HR strategy development: The strategic drafting process, which connects overall organizational goals with HR strategy, the functions and roles of HR within this framework, success indicators, and case studies.
3. HR action plan creation and introduction: HR management techniques, change management and communication, risk management, success indicators, and case studies.

During the workshop, participants deepened their understanding using case studies and reviewed the state of their own HR divisions. Their goal was to integrate what they learned in the workplace while reinforcing and revising new strategies.

One workshop participant noted: “While I think I understood in my head how to build an HR strategy and how to implement it, I didn’t think and take action in my daily work. But when I analyzed my own organization’s situation in the workshop and worked through the case studies, I realized that I hadn’t actually been aware of what parts related to me. And I was able to hear things that the instructors and the other participants pointed out, which increased my motivation. It was a fruitful workshop. Thank you.”

This seminar-workshop is highly recommended if your company or organization is in a transition or reinforcement phase and has the following kinds of needs:

- You want to revise your company’s or organization’s vision and strategy using strategic planning best practices.
- As an HR business partner (HRBP), you want to learn strategy facilitation to enhance organizational results and lead organizations in a positive direction.
- As an HR manager, you want to create or revise an HR strategy and organizational enhancement strategy that definitively supports execution and achievement of the company’s goals from an HR and organizational standpoint.
- You want to verify whether the five core HR functions (talent acquisition, performance management, total rewards, training & development and talent engagement) have been structured in a well-balanced manner.
- You want to create an introductory plan to ensure the success of a new HR strategy.

The first workshop gave the participants an opportunity to carefully consider and review the state of their respective, organizations and HR divisions, evaluate their HR division’s strategies in regards to the five core functions and HR programs, while providing ample discussion time and opportunity for engaging with other HR professionals. 



Yoshiharu Matsui Yoshi specializes in leadership and organization development leveraging his more than 12 years of marketing experience and 12 years of HR/OD experience. He provides executive coaching, leadership development, organizational change and marketing and sales development to help clients strengthen their business performance, organizational health and employee engagement. He has a BA in intercultural communication from Kita-Kyushu University and an MBA from Northwest Missouri State University. He is currently working on his doctoral degree in organization change at Pepperdine University.



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This two-day seminar focuses on the primary skills that HR professionals need to become successful business partners in their organizations.

Program Objectives

This program is designed to provide you with the knowledge and skills necessary to:

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- Understanding business acumen and the financial drivers of company performance.
- Develop a business case and implementation plan for your organization.

Intended Audience: Mid-Level

Competencies: Business Acumen, Communication, Consultation, Critical Evaluation, Leadership and Navigation, Relationship Management



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Program Modules

This program includes the following modules:

- **Module 1:** Performance Expectations for HR Business Partners
- **Module 2:** Internal Consulting Skills
- **Module 3:** Business Acumen
- **Module 4:** Align Projects with Strategic Direction
- **Module 5:** Leadership Skills for HR Business Partners

Schedule

Day 1:

Time: 9:30-18:00

Day 2:

Time: 9:30-18:00

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Let Each Voice Be Heard

Creating a Culture of Coaching

Michael Shell, MBA

Partner, Global Leadership Partners Asia and
the Global Leadership Community

Originally written in English

A culture of coaching can empower organizations with more innovation, agility and creativity needed to navigate today's challenges.

An ideal coaching method is one that permeates all interactions. People would be energized and empowered to do the work they love. It would be a supportive environment that brings out the best in everyone. Each person's voice would be heard as a contribution and learning and development would be ingrained in everybody's job.

A culture of coaching isn't a one-time project; it is cultivated and nurtured as an ongoing commitment. This article attempts to communicate the important lessons of cultivating an ideal coaching culture in an organization.

What is coaching?

Coaching is both a profession and a way of relating with others. [The International Coaching Federation \(ICF\)](#) defines the profession as: "partnering with individuals in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." Coaching as a way of relating can be defined as a set of behaviors that increases one's ability to maximize the potential of both parties and of the organization in which they are a part of.

What does a culture of coaching require?

A coaching culture provides an intentional and disciplined structure for how an organization's members interact anchored in clear principles, heightened self-awareness and skillful communication.

Creating a coaching culture requires care for and a heightened focus on the dynamics between people. There needs to be an openness and willingness to think and lead in new ways. The organization needs to understand its true purpose, beyond and including making a profit.

Perhaps most importantly, the culture needs to be built on a foundation of trust and shared commitments. The organization needs to demonstrate it has the people's best interests at heart. When people know that they can share

themselves authentically without fear of judgment or ridicule, unprecedented amounts of resourcefulness and creativity emerge.

The environment inspires people to work to their highest potential. Individuals create self-directed leadership challenges to provoke a transformative shift in their leadership. The culture enables learning and development to take place at an accelerated pace.

In a coaching culture the decision-making process considers the perspectives of all stakeholders, providing people with the experience of being fully heard. There is a quality of listening that tends to generate innovation and possibilities. In this environment, business interactions become a source of energy instead of energy drains.

People realize that who they are is how they show up in conversations with others. Therefore skilled communication is highly valued. People can voice their concerns without fear of hurting another's feelings. In a coaching culture, conflict is viewed as an invitation to deepen relationships and can be a source of creativity.

People also understand that complaining, telling secrets, labeling people, judging, being right, and other forms of separation speech acts tend to build resentment and bitterness in an organizational culture. Highly aware, they notice it and return to their shared commitments. Mastery doesn't mean a lack of conflict. Mastery is the speed in which one can return to one's commitments.

Take the case of a successful senior managing director at a multinational financial firm. He had risen to his position because of advanced critical thinking skills and consistently exceeding performance objectives. However, he didn't know how to motivate his team without using fear and because of this was on the verge of losing his job.

His fear-based leadership style meant that team motivation was low and people were disengaged. He was able to connect

his fear to his intrinsic drive for mastery. Whenever he felt the fear coming on, he would remove himself from the situation, connect with his commitment to mastery, and re-engage more empathically. In the end, he not only kept his job but his team performance rose to be in the top 10 percent.

Why is a coaching culture needed?

Society is in transition, moving from the Newtonian worldview that perceived organizations as machines with interchangeable and separate parts, to a worldview that perceives organizations as dynamic living ecosystems made up of a web of relationships. Organizations are whole when they hear every voice.

The Newtonian worldview bodes well for a culture that values harmony, calm and predictability. However, it doesn't lend itself to innovative, agile and empowering organizations that the challenges of today are requiring of us. The future requires that we look upon leadership as a way to create conditions for others to flourish.

What are the benefits?

A coaching culture is essential to harness the full range of ideas and knowledge at all levels of an organization. Other benefits include:

- Increased job satisfaction, morale and productivity;
- Enhanced collaboration, teamwork and employee engagement;
- Development of meta skills: the attitudes, quality of listening and mindset that leaders bring into a conversation;
- Ability to sense what wants to emerge and respond accordingly;
- Ability to hold several seemingly contradictory views of an issue and gleam new insights for action;
- Enhanced business results.

The role of the human resource department

The human resource department plays a pivotal role in nurturing a coaching culture. First, HR needs to build a solid business case for the shift and ensure there is buy-in from the C-suite. Next, they need to align the competency map to the company purpose and design the leadership program accordingly. Integrating a coaching program into the leadership development program, with an emphasis on action learning and collaboration, helps to ensure that the learning sticks.

HR leaders can also model coaching behaviors through specific feedback and reflection on an ongoing basis. In addition, HR can provide leaders with:

- An integrated picture of where they are now, and a clear and inspiring roadmap for their leadership journey;
- Powerful developmental goals that connect with the leader's purpose beyond performance targets;
- Assessments that measure behavior changes and include shifts in mindset needed to sustain transformative change;

- The use of metaphors and imagination to facilitate self direction;
- A communication plan to ensure purpose, values, vision is well understood by all.

The shift to a coaching culture doesn't happen overnight and it is not always a clean process. It starts with a clear organizational purpose and support from the CEO's office. HR has an important role in facilitating the shift.

A coaching culture is not nirvana. Conflict, misunderstandings and other challenges won't disappear. Instead conflict is embraced as an opportunity for deeper connection and to harness new insights. In a coaching culture there is a shared understanding that everyone is working together towards common objectives and that every person's voice has value.

How can a coaching culture create a competitive advantage for your organization? 

Disciplines of a coaching culture include:

For the individual

- Paying attention to and utilizing information from multiple communication channels, including spoken, visual, emotions, intuition, non-verbal, nuances, audio, etc.;
- Managing, clarifying and changing contexts;
- Expanded thinking – shifting focus from the task at hand to the bigger picture when the situation calls for it;
- Seeing the interconnectedness of the parts in the organization.

For teams

- Ongoing, honest and empowering feedback and reflection;
- Awareness and nurturing of relationship dynamics;
- Working together to enhance individual and collective learning;
- Viewing concerns and conflict as opportunities for growth and innovation.

For the organization

- Principles before policy;
- Brand aligned with culture;
- Organizational systems and processes in support of formal and informal learning and development.



Michael Shell, MBA, is a partner at Global Leadership Partners Asia and the Global Leadership Community. He helps global organizations create empowering corporate cultures based on an integrative leadership coaching approach.



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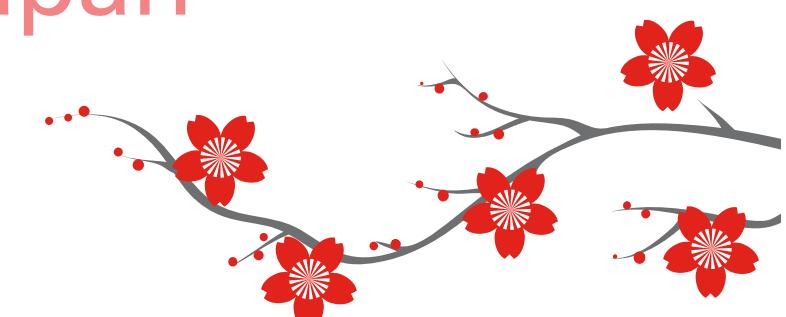


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Beyond Traditional Mentoring

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TRADITIONAL

The *Senpai-Kohai* (senior-junior) relationship is part of the very social fabric of Japan. But Japanese companies could benefit from taking a more strategic approach to mentoring.

Interpersonal relationships play a prominent role in all aspects of Japanese life. It should be no surprise then that interpersonal relationships, particularly mentoring, greatly influences the development of employees in Japan. In Japan mentoring can be observed across the social spectrum, from the schoolyard to the boardroom, in the *Senpai* (先輩, senior) *Kohai* (後輩, junior) relational system. Similar to Japan, in the West mentoring has long been viewed as a relationship between a senior mentor and junior mentee; however, modern approaches to mentoring in the West have developed beyond the senior-junior dyad and may hold lessons for the advancement of mentoring in Japanese companies where to date mentoring has been underutilized as a means of strategic employee and organizational development.

Broadly speaking, mentoring is a reciprocal, yet asymmetrical, interpersonal relationship between a mentee and at least one mentor. Mentoring relationships enable the professional and/or personal growth of mentees through developmental guidance and/or sponsorship offered by a mentor who possesses relevant domain-specific skills, knowledge, experience or influence. There are many notable benefits of mentoring for mentees (attainment of career/personal goals and increased influence), mentors (increased self-esteem and recognition), and their organizations (increased employee capability and knowledge transfer to the next generation).

The Influence of Culture

In order to capitalize on the numerous benefits of mentoring relationships, many organizations in the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, and Australia have sought to implement formal mentoring programs as part of their staff development regime. A recent survey found that more than 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies were operating at least one formal mentoring program. Mentoring initiatives within Western countries have typically been exclusive

and strategic in nature, focusing on the development and advancement of high achieving (e.g., future leaders) or underrepresented (e.g., women or racial minorities) target groups.

In contrast to Western mentoring initiatives, mentoring within Japanese organizations has typically been more organic in nature, with far fewer organizations electing to implement mentoring programs as a strategic development tool. Rather, mentoring (the *Senpai-Kohai* relationship) is part of the social fabric of Japan, and as a result, mentoring "just happens." While this is positive for individuals involved who may reap the rewards of mentoring relationships, Japanese companies would stand to gain from taking a more strategic approach to mentoring.

To gain the most benefits from a strategic approach to mentoring, it is necessary to investigate the factors which contribute to organic mentoring in Japan. When examining the *Senpai-Kohai* relationship, it is clear that there are several psycho-social factors unique to Japan which create the conditions under which mentoring bonds are likely to form, including:

- 1. Obligation and long-term commitment:** Traditionally in Japan employees have had a long-term commitment to their organization and their colleagues as a result of attractive employment benefits (lifetime employment, insurance and pensions), and outside-of-work socialization (company sports teams and after work drinking parties).
- 2. Respect for seniors:** Mass recruitment of university graduates has encouraged veneration of seniors. Following recruitment seniors utilize their extensive technical and company specific experience to train juniors, and guide them to adhere to company norms and values. Additionally, there is a cultural expectation that seniors shield juniors from the fallout of failures.
- 3. Similarity:** A high degree of homogeneity within the as a result of the lack of racial, socio-economic and gender

Alistair Kerr
Psychologist | Senior Associate, PsyCare Group

Originally written in English

Formal Mentoring Program Styles

diversity encourages strong relationships between those who are similar (largely male, ethnically Japanese employees).

Although the *Sempai-Kohai* relationship has been the bedrock of mentoring in Japan to date, the psycho-social foundations which give rise to these types of bonds forming organically are gradually showing signs of loosening. Firstly, economic pressures have weakened loyalty on the part of both employers and employees, and put the prospect of lifetime employment, once taken for granted by many Japanese employees, into jeopardy. Secondly, global competition has forced many companies to outsource some functions of entry-level positions to offshore partners resulting in a downward trend in graduate recruitment. Finally, the declining birthrate has put pressure on the Japanese labor market, once dominated by predominantly ethnically Japanese male employees, to open to women and foreign employees.

As a result, the once homogenous Japanese workforce is diversifying. While it may take time for the outcome of these changes to become evident, if these trends continue, the weakening of conditions for the formation of traditional *Sempai-Kohai* relationships is likely.

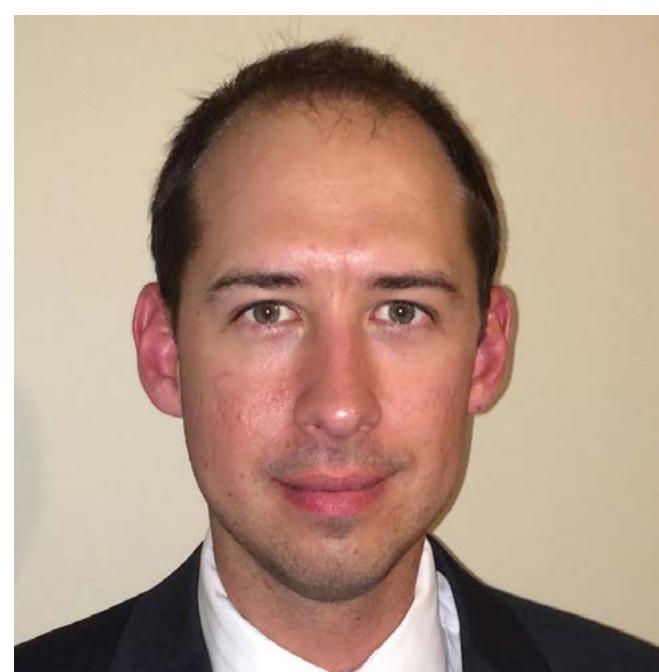
In the mean time there is an opportunity for HR professionals in Japan to look to the West and take a more active role in developing employees through strategically focused and structured mentoring initiatives.

Factors Leading to Success

While most people still imagine the traditional senior-junior dyad when they hear the word mentoring, mentoring in modern Western companies has evolved to include new concepts such as reverse mentoring, multi-mentoring, group mentoring, peer mentoring, and e-mentoring with each new type of mentoring offering context-dependent advantages (Please see sidebar).

Regardless of which type of mentoring a company chooses to implement, research and experience from Western companies indicate that there are five hallmarks of successful mentoring programs:

1) Support/sponsorship from organizational leaders, 2) Clarity of purpose, expectations and roles, 3) Choice of involvement, 4) Criterion-based matching and 5) Structural support including monitoring and evaluation. Looking back at the psycho-social conditions for forming a *Sempai-Kohai* relationship, HR professionals within Japanese companies should be mindful of two additional factors when planning and implementing a formal mentoring program: 6) An overt commitment to long-term development of the individual employee and the company and 7) Recognition of the senior party within the relationship. 



Alistair Kerr (MAPS), is a registered psychologist and organizational development consultant. He has extensive experience consulting in the government, media, higher education, FIFO (Fly-in fly-out work) and not-for-profit sectors.

| Mentoring Style | Unique Advantages |
|--|---|
| Traditional Mentoring (Junior mentee – senior mentor) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intrinsic value is widely recognized Individual focused relationship |
| Reverse Mentoring (Senior mentee – junior mentor) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May encourage new ideas to develop within an organization Junior mentors will feel valued and increase their organizational commitment Just-in-time knowledge transfer to senior managers Can positively influence organizational culture (e.g., equity issues) |
| Multi Mentoring (One mentee – many mentors) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the issue of an insufficient mentor pool (cost effective) Mentee can access a smorgasbord of experience to best suit their developmental/sponsorship needs Increases the likelihood that mentees will be able to access support Mentees may prefer to gain psychological / career support from different mentors |
| Group Mentoring (One mentor – mentee group) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentees can develop an alliance with both mentor and group members, enhancing their overall developmental network Some mentees may be more comfortable approaching a mentor in a group situation rather than one-to-one Learning may be accelerated due to group input |
| Peer Mentoring (Peers mentor each other) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses power imbalance found in traditional mentoring relationships Peers may be able to offer greater psychological support due to concurrent shared experiences Peers may be more comfortable disclosing personal information |
| e-Mentoring (Mentoring over e-mail, videoconferencing, social networks etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship can be flexible (not bound by time or geographic location) Mentoring conversations may be more focused and goal directed As a record of conversations can be tracked, progress can be tracked |



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Obligations in Handling Personal Information

**QUESTION:**

How strict are Japanese privacy laws? As a business, what are our legal obligations on establishing a company privacy policy?

- HR Manager, Japanese company

ANSWER:

Originally written in English

Under the Civil Code of Japan, any individual has a right to privacy that includes a right enforceable against others not to have the individual's personal information made public. Additionally, Japan's Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) of 2005 imposes standards for handling personal information.

The PIPL technically applies only to persons (including legal persons, i.e. companies) holding the personal information of 5,000 or more individuals. Most companies will have that much information in its computers or on its premises coming from present and past employees, customers, job applicants and other individuals that the company collects information from in the normal course of business. Thus, it is wise to understand and meet the requirements of the law.

Definitions

Business entities holding the information are defined by law as "Information Handlers." The PIPL defines "Personal Information" as any information which, on its own or in combination with other information, allows an individual, known as the "Data Subject," to be identified.

**Personal Information collection and utilization:
Important points to consider**

Purpose of utilization. The primary mandate of the PIPL is that Information Handlers should notify Data Subjects of the uses to which they put the Personal Information collected. The law imposes a best efforts obligation to publish this information in a Privacy Policy. It is illegal to use Personal Information for

anything except the uses that have been disclosed to the Data Subject. If an Information Handler proposes to change its use of the Personal Information, it must notify the Data Subjects or make a suitable public announcement. Data Subjects also have a right, at any time, to ask what information about him/her the Information Handler is holding and to correct or update that information if it is inaccurate.

Public announcement. If an Information Handler is collecting Personal Information by means of having the Data Subject complete a form of some sort, a privacy statement should be included on that form. A company privacy policy, published on a company's website and in other company materials, can ensure that a company, as an Information Handler, is fully compliant with its legal obligations. This will be handy in situations where there is no opportunity to formally notify the Data Subject of how the information will be used (such as when exchanging business cards).

Specific privacy policies. Companies use the information of job candidates, employees, customers and business counterparts differently, thus they should create separate privacy policies for the specific sectors they collect information from. For job applicants, case precedents show that interviews of candidates should be limited to matters which are related to the capability or skill necessary for the business or the qualifications as an employee or for the job. Otherwise, depending on the contents or manner of interview, the interview may result in tort liability on the part of the employer for infringement of the human rights or privacy of the candidates.

In the case of employees, the labor ministry has created recommended language for inclusion in a company's Rules of Employment regarding the various kinds of information the company will collect about the employee and how that information may be used. Often this includes all of the employee's e-mail correspondence using the company's e-mail system.

Information on global database outside Japan. Many multinational companies maintain employee data on a single global database that is not located in Japan or controlled by the Japanese office. In order for this to be permitted, the privacy policy needs to specify that an employee's Personal Information may be disclosed to affiliates and vendors who are contractually bound to adhere to the company's information handling standards. This way, the Personal Information can be processed in accordance with the disclosed purposes.

Employee training. Companies must also ensure that its employees are properly trained on how to properly handle whatever Personal Information they encounter in performing their duties. This includes

password protecting files and locking up business cards and other documents containing personal information.

Data leaks and breaches. In the event there is any data leak or other improper handling of data, Data Subjects must be promptly notified and suitable measures taken to minimize the damage that may result from the leak. Anyone who is subject to the PIPL and breaches it may be subject to imprisonment for up to six months or a fine of not more than JPY300,000. 



Atty. Yoshikazu Sugino is a partner of Nagashima Ohno & Tsunematsu. He graduated from the Law Faculty of Tokyo University, and obtained an LL.M. at Columbia Law School in 1994. He worked at Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam & Roberts (currently, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP) in New York from 1994 to 1995 and Allen & Overy (London) from 1995 to 1996. He is also a member of the Daiichi Tokyo Bar Association.



Atty. Vicki Beyer is an in-house lawyer and former legal academic with more than 20 years of experience in Japanese employment law and over five years' experience across eight other Asian jurisdictions. She holds a J.D. from the University of Washington and a LL.M. in Corporate and Commercial Law from Bond University.



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If you have legal questions relating to HR practices, or would like to become a member of our panel of legal experts, please contact us at hrclinic@jhrs.org.



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General corporate area, including asset liquidation transactions, advice on general labor issues and financing transactions.



Vicki Beyer

Recruiting & hiring; benefits programs; termination; retirement; employee relations; discrimination & diversity; non-competition; investigations & disciplinary matters.



Toby Mallen

Doing business in the U.S.A.; labor and employment; real estate laws.



Jiro Oyama

Corporation laws; intellectual property laws.



Grant Stillman

Law of international organizations and trade.



Hideki Thurgood Kano

Labour and employment



Sam Everett

International HR Law, Pensions, Restructuring, Occupational Health and Safety, Global Mobility, Employee Compensation and Benefits, Individual Employee Rights, Discrimination and Data Privacy.

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What are the Essentials of a Successful In-House Mentoring Program?

What are some best practices in establishing an in-house coaching or mentoring program to improve employee satisfaction and achieve desired business results?

ANDREW SAYS...

Originally written in English

It's helpful to remember that there are many ways to improve employee satisfaction and achieve desired business results; it may not be wise to focus on motivating people if the issues are lack of direction and lack of line management capability. I would recommend a rigorous diagnosis of the type of challenges you really face in order to build the right solution.

The next step is to determine the desired outcomes which is key to identifying the possible solutions. Look for a coaching or mentoring model that matches your organization's values and culture. Coaching and mentoring are two separate solutions, so getting expert help, either from your own organization or through an external resource, can give you clarity during thinking, planning and implementation.

The following are some of the most crucial action steps to take when building an effective program:

1. Get stakeholder engagement. Develop a stakeholder engagement plan to communicate key messages to relevant individuals (e.g. a senior executive who can champion the proposal), at the right time and in the right way. If decision-makers see the program as valuable, then it can get the push it needs.

2. Find some people who can help you.

a. Identify people in your company who can help you. A diverse group from different parts of the business is best. They can help you develop your solution and communicate with their business area. Look for people who have passion for coaching and mentoring and some skills in the area.
 b. Ask people in your business who the good coaches and mentors are now. Find out what these good coaches/mentors do. This can help you understand the attitude, skills and knowledge needed to be a good mentor in your business.

c. You could ask the people you identify (in a and b above) to become part of a "super user group" who lead the change with you.

3. Develop your coaching and mentoring model and process.

a. Clarify the following: the tasks and responsibilities of a mentor or coach; how an individual can be chosen as a mentor; potential mentors (in-house or external); and the specific situations that require mentorship.
 b. Design the coaching model. Write down a detailed description of each step and include the questions you can use at each stage. Show how coaching supports and fits with other processes you have, such as performance reviews.

4. Implement your plan.

a. Train all of your people. Give everyone the opportunity to practice and learn. Train your leaders and then have your leaders train the group. Train in teams, as it gives participants the chance to practice with the people they will probably coach with the most. Focus the training on both the required process and the behaviors.
 b. Use pulse surveys regularly to assess progress. Ask simple questions and try to link them on your outcomes.
 c. Communicate regularly through consistent messages. Use examples of success stories and create opportunities for feedback.

5. Develop your culture to enable coaching and mentoring as ways of working.

a. Create a feedback framework that provides beyond yes-or-no answers. For example: What are the two things I am doing well and what one thing would you like me to do more?
 b. Integrate coaching/mentoring in your workflow. Present it as part of the process and is not additional work.

c. Focus on leveraging strengths first. Weaknesses should be addressed if they stop you from being your best or they stop someone else from being their best.

Coaching and mentoring can make a big difference for your company and your people. Approach the change with focus on your outcome and in line with the culture you want to develop. Be the role model for the change you want to see.

Andrew Manterfield

*Executive Coach and Senior Consultant,
SudaManterfield*

Andrew has an innate belief in people and their desire and ability to achieve more. His purpose is to find the greatness in every person he meets and to ensure that greatness lives and breathes every day and is fulfilled.

He has worked in the global FMCG industry for over 27 years for Diageo Plc, the world's biggest adult drinks company. Andrew has over a decade of director-level experience in both human resources and sales. He has lived and worked in Japan, Australia, and the U.K., and he has worked with organisations across Asia, Latin America and Africa.

YOSHI SAYS...

Translated from the Japanese original

Who is the best person to help raise employees' performance and level of satisfaction at work? It goes without saying that it is the immediate boss. Poor employee performance and work satisfaction in an organization indicate low quality up the management chain. In a previous [AskHR question](#), I discussed the role of HR in creating systems to raise employee capacities and motivation and build an ideal organizational culture. My answer here is an extension of this.

To raise the performance and level of satisfaction of the people under you, you need to create systems that develop and reward managers who conduct HR development, including coaching, mentoring, training and all the rest. This does not mean creating a program, it means creating systems and a culture.

The first key step in creating a culture of HR development is to make clear what the ideal manager is, meaning the managerial roles and leadership model, as well as accountability, meaning the responsibility to produce results, and then ensure that this is implemented. For instance, at P&G, the company's management philosophy touches on human resources, clearly stating, "[developing new leaders is the responsibility of every leader throughout P&G](#)".

In fact, annual manager performance evaluations give equal weight to business results and the results of developing subordinates. The quality management principle of "What can be measured is what is accomplished" applies here. If a company truly seeks long-term business

growth, it must appoint people with the capacity to develop HR to managerial positions and evaluate them in such a way as to continue enhancing this capacity accordingly.

The second important step is having the management team and division general managers serve as role models and be managers who develop human resources, have them train their own teams, offer feedback and coaching, and set an example for human resource development.

As the Japanese saying "Children learn from watching their parents" goes, bosses must lead by example in their daily activities. Perfection is in no way required from the outset, but practicing HR development in the workplace is a must. I also recommend that the management team and division general managers serve as presenters and facilitators in in-house training programs. At P&G, members of the management team were instructors in the P&G College program. This kind of experience is invaluable in further enhancing leaders' ability to ask questions, give feedback and offer coaching.

The third step is having managers acquire the capacity to develop human resources. There are many development styles and methods, and I urge you to not only acquire coaching skills but also relationship building, messaging capacity as a leader, and the ability to impart skills. After taking a training program, it is important to have a follow-up session about a month later where the outcomes of activities, remaining issues, and the like can be reviewed and skills further enhanced. There is no need for this follow-up to be unduly lengthy, but these skills cannot be mastered in one training alone, so please introduce opportunities or systems to review the progress of the training outcomes on behavior. One way to do this is to have the person above the manager be accountable for this follow-up.

How are these three areas of accountability, managerial role models, and enhancing managers' HR development capacity implemented at your company? If your organization does not have a development culture, I recommend making this a priority initiative in fiscal 2015. If you have a culture of development and growth, there is no need for human resources to play the role of police, doctors or teachers.



Yoshiharu Matsui

President, HPO Creation, Inc.

Yoshi specializes in leadership and organization development leveraging his more than 12 years of marketing experience and 12 years of HR/OD experience. He provides executive coaching, leadership development, organizational change and marketing and sales development to help clients strengthen their business performance, organizational health and employee engagement.

He has a BA in intercultural communication from Kita-Kyushu University and an MBA from Northwest Missouri State University. He is currently working on his doctoral degree in organization change at Pepperdine University.

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How to Hire Your Next Consigliere

Atley Jonas
Editor in Chief, *The HR Agenda*
Originally written in English



An executive's guide to finding the right coach

Many years ago, after having watched "The Godfather," I thought to myself that it would be really neat to have a consigliere. In Italian, the word means "counselor" but within the circles of the Sicilian and American mafia, it refers to the top dog's right-hand man. He is the trusted adviser, confidant, and in some ways, a coach to the boss. I always thought it would be pretty cool to walk into a meeting and say,

"I'd like you to meet my consigliere, Vito. He'll be taking care of the details of our business transaction on my behalf. I trust his advice implicitly and when you talk to him, it's like you're talking to me."

I know I'm not alone here, because having an adviser and assistant is not a new concept, and yet, somehow the term coach has sometimes taken on a negative view. In spite of that, the face of coaching has changed a lot in the past 20 years. Business professionals have gone from saying, "What's that? Why would I need such a thing?" to "Great! When can we start?" In fact, the numbers from Stanford University's School of Business are revealing. In 2013, of over 200 CEOs, board directors, and senior executives [surveyed](#), 100 percent indicated they were open to feedback and making changes based on outside advice. Eighty percent of company board directors said their CEO would be open to coaching, and yet, 66 percent of CEOs were not getting coaching of any kind. Why is that? Clearly, there's amazing untapped potential out there and C-level executives just aren't taking advantage.

As I think more about this, it occurred to me that the fact that CEOs are incredibly busy people is a big part of the problem, and hiring a coach just doesn't fit onto their radars. Hiring anyone can be a time-consuming process, and the common perception is probably that it's better not to go down that path because it will take a lot of time and energy to find the right person. Understandably, it will indeed require more than this brief article, but having a good starting point is important for heading in the right direction. Here then, are five tips on finding your new Tom Hagen.* Now, you too can feel like Marlon Brando playing Don Vito Corleone.

1. Know what you want your coach to do for you. This advice comes straight from the [International Coach Federation \(ICF\)](#) hiring guide. Be specific. What are your expectations? In which areas are you looking for the most guidance? The 2013 Stanford study found that 43 percent of CEOs were interested in developing their conflict management skills, for instance. Other important areas where CEOs wanted coaching included: delegation of tasks and leadership, team building and mentoring.

2. Ensure the coach's expertise matches your goals. Once you've determined what kinds of things you'd like to work on with your coach, the next step is to get someone who is well skilled in that particular area. While the ICF or the [International Association of Coaching \(IAC\)](#) certainly provide a certain level

of credentialing and quality assurance for would-be coaches, it does not mean that this person's area of expertise matches what you are after. For instance, if you were looking for someone to help in the area of conflict management, it may be helpful to also find someone with CINERGY® conflict resolution knowledge, or perhaps a member of the [International Association for Conflict Management \(IACM\)](#).

“I’d like you to meet my consigliere, Vito. He’ll be taking care of the details of our business transaction on my behalf. I trust his advice implicitly and when you talk to him, it’s like you’re talking to me. ”

3. Find a personality and style that suits you. Several years ago, when I was on the hunt for a coach myself, I vetted a number of potential candidates. The most compelling was a very well experienced, senior coach, with impressive qualifications and tons of drive and determination. Unfortunately, he just didn't mesh with me. Every e-mail I read from him put me on edge, and even though he may have been perfect for the task I wanted, it would not have been a successful relationship since our personalities were just so ill matched. The key is, before signing any contract and making a commitment, have as many quality interactions as you can with your would-be coach. Find out what they're like. Who are they? What are their values? How do they relate to you? Do they put you at ease when you talk to them? Chemistry is something you'll be able to recognize right away. It's pass or fail. Don't make the mistake of thinking that someone will "grow on you" as time goes on. Make sure you hit it off right from the beginning.

4. Don’t hire a sycophant. The last thing you need in a coach is a "yes man." In Japanese, this term is particularly descriptive. It is *gomasuri* ごますり. It means: sesame seed grinder. (Why? Well, the act of grinding sesame seeds emits a pleasing odor). And if all you have is a cheerleader rather than a coach, then you will never gain a new perspective or see things another way. Make sure your coach is capable of not only providing an alternative outlook, but also willing to back up their opinion, and stand up to you without fear. That doesn't mean they should be obstinate or disrespectful, but a good coach has a strong backbone, even if you don't agree on something.

5. Find someone who is balanced. Life is always about having the right balance. A good coach will know when to speak and when to listen. (Hint: they should listen more than they speak, especially during your initial meetings. If they spend most of their time selling you on who they are and what they can do for you, it's time to look elsewhere). Find out what approach your prospective coach uses, and what tools and processes they have. Look for balance. While it's nice to have an organized, procedural approach, you don't want to spend all your time filling out pages of assessments, questionnaires or quizzes as part of a cookie-cutter approach. Again, it comes back to having the ability to listen well. 

*Tom Hagen was *consigliere* to the Corleone family in The Godfather novel and film.



Atley Jonas joined The HR Agenda Team as editor in chief, in 2014. He has a Master's in business administration, and spent 11 years living and working in Japan. He actively writes and edits for a number of U.S. and global business publications, while also pursuing several entrepreneurial ventures.



Originally established in the United States, the International Coach Federation (ICF) is one of the largest non-profit organizations in the coaching industry.

With more than 20,000 members around the globe, the ICF plays a pivotal role in the industry that includes establishment of a credentialing system recognized worldwide, formulation of the coaching core competencies and code of ethics, and development of the coaching community.

Coaching is one of the essential elements for HR development within an organization.

ICF Japan, the only chapter in Japan officially certified by ICF headquarters, provides the following and other activities to enhance the platform for professional coaches in Japan;

- Hosting various workshops and events (HR people within an organization are welcome!)
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The Right Tools Can Shine a Light

HR Coaching to Drive Company Development

Tomoko Tanaka

Director | Japan Chapter of the International Coach Federation

Translated from the Japanese original

Use coaching and assessment tools to gain insight and better develop your company's talent.

Coaching was introduced to Japan a decade ago, but only recently there has been a growing interest in "real" or "genuine" coaching. Methods resembling coaching in a variety of settings have been highly touted. For instance, coaching is an effective route to [reaching potential and achieving goals](#). While there should be a diverse range of methods available, what is needed in the corporate world is coaches who can use the right tools to deliver professional coaching that meets global standards.

Executive coaching needs are growing for those employees who are in positions to directly influence corporate management. This is the case not only at global companies but also at SMEs. At the same time, more attention is also being focused on the importance of coaching other employees, who are the drivers of company development.

Executive coaching is usually done one on one, but for middle management, group coaching that encompasses team building and all-around relationship building is also highly effective in addition, to draw out individual potential. Specifically, group coaching often involves themes such as how to draw out the capacities of subordinates, how to cooperate effectively with co-workers and counterparts, and how to engage in assertive communication with bosses.

In one-on-one coaching, assessment tools are essential in opening a door to dialogue with the person and gaining insight into the person's relationships with others. The right assessment tool provides a uniform basis for everyone receiving coaching and makes it easier for companies by serving as an objective platform to assess results.

Using Assessment Tools

Choose tools with the ability to adjust data in the software program while talking with the person to get closer to the truth. A good online testing tool shouldn't take more than 15 minutes to complete. The aim is to collect a wide range of data that can be compiled in a variety of ways. The following three real-world cases are some of the typical ways in which assessment tools are used.

Creating Individual Profiles

There are now software programs that allow users to create a personal profile that uncovers the personality characteristics of the individual and different types of behavioral drivers. In a feedback session, the coach talks with the individual. While they review the results together, the coach carefully watches the signals that the individual gives, and delve into them. The process of updating the data in the software program while discussing the results also enhances the individual's awareness.

Team Building

The results of individual assessments can be used as an excellent resource for building a team profile as long as it is given to all team members. It can provide a clear foundation from which to develop the team's resources.

[Case 1: Team profiling]

A leading tech company used an assessment designed to graph inter-group dynamics after a major organizational reform. The general managers were brought together for this project, but they were all suspicious and did not trust each other. No wonder

their individual profiles were so different. However, when they saw the results of the group profile, everyone agreed that as a team they were quite balanced. They instantly recognized how they were a diverse group of personalities, but that someone made up for one person's particular weaknesses and another person helped enhance someone else's strengths.

After individually showing all group members the results of both their own and then the group's results, followed by a group coaching session, the following week they reported that they had voluntarily started holding weekly lunch meetings that intentionally brought together people with different personality types. This was the start of cross-functional, horizontal communication.

“ In one-on-one coaching, assessment tools are essential in opening a door to dialogue with the person and gaining insight into the person’s relationships with others. ”

Hiring and HR Placement

A personality profiling tool can also be used to uncover top sales and high-performing leader management styles as well as particular work styles to deal with problems. For instance, if you can find someone from among your sales team whose qualities are consistent with those of high-performing salespeople, you can use statistical data as a guide in determining whether that person should also record similar, outstanding performance.

[Case 2: Hiring and HR placement]

Starting with its 2015 hiring program, a mid-ranking furniture company used a profiling system to appoint store managers throughout their nationwide network. The data used to make such appointments can also be used in team building and other exercises at a later date.

[Case 3: Hiring and evaluations]

Personality assessment tools are also highly effective for identifying the right person for the right job. A leading financial company spent extensive time and money to hire a manager who revealed his true character after two months. The cost was immense. It's been demonstrated that the chance of this kind of mismatch is much lower if an assessment is given before hiring.

A good personality assessment can map out the ideal qualities expected for a top leader in the position in question, and cross-compare it with a candidate's true nature. At a glance you can see to what extent the qualities, risk affinity, confidence, psychological strength and physical energy expected of the leader are similar or different than what would be ideally expected.

This type of assessment tool can also be used in individual evaluations and HR placements. Some of the qualities that are measured in such assessments are mapped out on a graph, overlaid as a matching pattern of the individual's qualities with the job requirements, and may include abilities like: System Flexibility, Comprehensiveness, Abstract Thinking, Risk, Self Control, Empathy, Social Contact, Social Flexibility, Need for Support, Competitiveness, Influence, Self-Confidence, Independence, Psychological Strength, and Physical Energy. Moreover, the person's evaluation as well as any potential issues can be easily compared with the expected abilities required for the position by presenting both on the same graph.

Investing in the right assessment tools can allow a company to organically build up an in-house database and serve as a coaching platform that is highly useful in building an HR strategy. 



Tomoko Tanaka is director of the Japan Chapter of the [International Coach Federation](#). Her coaching career spans more than 10 years, encompassing wide-ranging career coaching and executive coaching. She is a GRI Japan consultant and representative director of Oppochu Corporation.

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Singapore's Key Ingredient for Business Success

Stephenie Overman
Author, *Next-Generation Wellness at Work*

Originally written in English

Companies from many countries, including Japan, find "work-hard and work-smart" culture attractive.

The Republic of Singapore offers a wide range of opportunities for business development and consistently ranks number one in the World Bank's "ease of doing business index."

"Its advanced social and technological infrastructure, stable and internationally integrated economy and highly skilled workforce make Singapore an ideal location for many overseas corporations, including those from Japan," according to Professor Sattar Bawany, CEO & C-suite master executive coach of the [Centre for Executive Education](#). CEE is a network of human resource development and consulting firms around the globe.

"Singapore has built an attractive, world-class and productive workforce – a key ingredient for the success of any business," Bawany says. "Since the country is primarily a knowledge-based economy, its manpower force is educated and professionally qualified."

The island country, with a population of about 5.47 million, has four official languages – English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil – but English is the common language of the nation and the language of business.

Singapore boasts a "work-hard and work-smart culture," Bawany says, with a workforce that "is both cosmopolitan and international, attracting professionals from all over the world, who bring with them their extensive knowledge and business expertise."

According to the [Ministry of Manpower's](#) report "Labour Force In Singapore, 2014," the training participation rate for the resident labor force aged 15 to 64 rose for the third successive year to a new high of 36 percent in 2014, "amid continued outreach efforts and focus in promoting lifelong learning. The increase was generally broad-based across most demographic groups."

Given the large pool of skilled labor, it is generally easy to hire unless the company is looking for people with very specialized skills, he notes. Further, the country "maintains an open-door policy for foreign talent."

Employment Law

Singapore's legal system is based on English common law. The primary employment law that Japanese HR managers should be familiar with is [the Employment Act](#), which covers every employee who is under a contract of service, except for any person in a managerial or executive position. It covers the rights of employees in areas such as rest days and hours of work, annual leave and holidays, salary, layoffs, and retirement, Bawany says. The Employment Act also stipulates the minimum notice to be given prior to the termination of an employment contract.

Singapore has no statutory minimum wage; the government-appointed National Wage Council does provide recommend guidelines for annual wage adjustments. Collective bargaining is covered under the Industrial Relations Act and can be applied to all employees in a firm, Bawany explains. However, the employer may object, based on specific grounds, to the trade union's representation of an employee who is employed in a managerial or an executive position.

Generally, "there are virtually no labor disputes as the trade unions work closely with the government and business sectors to ensure that the collective interests of business and employees are met," he says.

On the topic of expatriate labor, applications for foreign workers should be directed to the Foreign Manpower Employment Division of the Ministry of Manpower.

The Central Provident Fund (CPF) is a statutory saving scheme in Singapore to provide retirement and medical benefits for employees who are citizens or permanent residents, according to Bawany. CPF contributions are payable for part-time/casual employees but are not allowed for foreigners holding an Employment Pass, S-Pass, Miscellaneous Work Pass or Work Permit.

Anti-discrimination Efforts

[The Association of Women for Action and Research \(AWARE\)](#) says it regularly receives calls on its helpline regarding workplace gender discrimination. Many such calls tend to involve discrimination against pregnant women.

"The Employment Act offers some protection, but its coverage is limited. For instance, women have no recourse if, despite satisfactory performance, they receive notice of termination immediately after their maternity leave," the association states. "It may be timely to consider enacting a comprehensive anti-discrimination law to guide employers' conduct in hiring, promotion and other employment matters."

Older workers also face "an element of age discrimination," Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam acknowledged, in March 2013.

The Retirement and Re-employment Act (RRA) replaces the original Retirement Act, which set a mandatory retirement age of 62. The newer act requires employers to rehire employees older than 62 but younger than 65 who are still able and willing to continue working. It also sets out the conditions of re-employment.

Tarun Gulrajani, director of sales & dealer development in Asia Pacific, Middle East, Africa and Latin America for office furniture manufacturer [Haworth](#) notes there has been a push to hire older workers by offering incentives for companies to hire beyond the retirement age. There's also government sponsorship for maternity leave to create a more conducive environment for women to have children, he says.

"Singapore has formed a tripartite to focus on discrimination that used to occur against mature workers and females. Stringent laws have been passed that impose heavy penalties if companies discriminate," according to Gulrajani.

Cultural Differences

Japanese companies doing business in Singapore should be aware of cultural differences as well as legal ones, says Bawany, who has consulted with clients in Asia Pacific for the past 25 years.

"For Japanese workers, priority is on work life. It is a given that work is the center," Bawany says, noting that a common after-work event is *nomikai* 飲み会 (drinking party) that is seen as an opportunity for co-workers to communicate with each other.

On the other hand, family and personal time is a priority for Singaporean workers. Work-life balance is a must. There is some socializing outside of work but not as a group, he says.

At work, Japanese employees "recognize the importance of individual contribution to the success of the whole group, otherwise the individual's contribution has no meaning. Singaporean workers can be viewed as quite individualized. Contribution of the individual is very important as linked to company goals and many organizations have reward systems that reflect that."

Managers in Japanese companies will make decisions in stages along their corporate hierarchy, he says. "Their decisions are very cautious and conservative and

sometimes slower than their Singaporean counterparts who generally give some great leeway to subordinates so that they can decide and make decisions quickly."

The decision-making process by Japanese managers is "backed by plenty of meetings and documentation. This minimizes error and brings consistency at all levels." Meetings are common in large Japanese companies where the workers value the process to agree with everyone who is related to their project, so they have many meetings and spend a lot of time in meetings.

Singapore workers, Bawany says, "aim to do meetings efficiently as much as they can. The meetings are fewer and [take] less time. If meetings are too plentiful the people seem to resist them."

Face-to-face meetings are important to Japanese workers, while Singaporean workers tend to contact their clients by email or on the phone "which seems to be more natural to them in conducting business relationships," he says.

The biggest difference between the two cultures, in Gulrajani's estimation, is that Singaporean companies "believe in a pay-for-performance culture" in which the companies "evaluate employees during the yearly performance appraisal cycle, and rarely are employees allowed to stay in the company just based on tenure."

This performance-based culture offers Japanese companies a strong contrast to what Gulrajani calls the "cradle-to-grave mentality of workers in Japan." 



Stephenie Overman is a contributing editor to The HR Agenda. She is based in the Washington, D.C. area and is the author of "Next-Generation Wellness at Work."

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The Grass is Getting Greener



If your employees aren't growing, soon they'll be going.

Brent A. Conkle, HRBP
President & CEO, Business Across Cultures Co., Ltd. and BAC Recruitment Co. Ltd.

Originally written in English

When quitting seems like a bright option, how can companies motivate employees to stay and deliver their best?
Career development coaching may be able to help.

Exports are up, and [Japan](#) appears to be finally emerging from its economic doldrums. At last there are glimmers of new-found optimism for growth in 2015 and the thrill of sharper products, new markets, more plans, higher targets and more ambitions. Demand for talent is also at its highest level in two decades. A seller's market is emerging for talent, [according to data from the Japanese government](#). In-demand people, for their part, are starting to realize that the grass is getting greener and they can choose.

Pressure is building for companies not only to have in-demand products, a viable market, solid operations, marketing, sales and a brand presence that inspires investor confidence, but also to forge the last link in the chain of a successful company. That link is good people who have been shaped into high performers and who are properly motivated. The question is: how to motivate? "Let's do our best" pep-talks, just like paying more money, motivate extrinsically in the short-term but not in a lasting way. What do employees really want to not only stay, but stay motivated to give their best?



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Successful companies know that employees have choices: which company to work for, and how hard to work. There is a third choice: leave and go work for the competition, taking their skills, latent industry knowledge and sometimes their clients with them.

These aren't the odd bad apples in the barrel. In this country, they are potentially 66 percent of the workforce with half of them being actively disengaged, according to Aon Hewitt's [2013 Trends in Global Employee Engagement Report](#). Only 25 percent of employees are moderately engaged, and just 9 percent are truly fired up with their jobs and companies. In summary, only one-third of employees are somewhat engaged in their organization, and the bad news is that two-thirds are not.

What makes them stay

Successful companies know that employees' choices are not by chance, but are the results of systematic choices by organizations. On one side is the cascade of the organizational work, rewards environment and job design that brings out the best in people, and on the other is the employee growing into his/her current role.

[The Kelly Global Workforce Index](#) points to some interesting statistics: 51 percent of employees are interested in new skills, but only 49 percent prefer advancement. Fifty-eight percent would sacrifice salary for new skills. Fifty-seven percent agree that career development discussions are useful, but only 38 percent have had them. Only 29 percent are satisfied with the career development resources offered by their employer, only 35 percent believe that they can advance their careers with their current employer and, therefore, some 64 percent intend to look for a new job within the next year, according to the index.

Skills development, delivering the knowledge and capacity to perform well in their current jobs, and also the adaptability to handle future roles are what most employees wish for. Skills for job security and skills progression are the key. To put it simply, if your employees aren't growing, then they're going elsewhere and those that do stay are complacently showing up for work to collect a pay check. In the final analysis, it's about them as working individuals, the anticipation of growth and potential

in their careers and a trust in the management and leadership of the organization.

A successful company employs a strategic human resource approach with one-on-one career development coaching to facilitate bridging the gap between the individual and the organization: clarifying the individual's aspirations, personal drivers, values and what makes him/her tick. By mapping out skills, talents, professional interests, strengths and goals, it can point to new and enhanced skills to deepen employees' satisfaction of being a fit to their jobs and performing well, which is a reward in itself. What's there, what's important, what's missing, and what is to be done are the first steps. Then the how of an organization's training and development and other lifelong learning opportunities, such as continuing education, are the next steps. How these are managed adds up to the totality of a company's employee value proposition, which is how an organization is perceived by the talent market.

Theodore Roosevelt said: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Deep down, a solid psychological contract between the company and the individual that is based on interest, opportunities and investment in their potential is what truly motivates employees to stay and perform. It far outlasts the basic visible contract. This is the value for the individual employee in a company that values them.

The role of managers

Managers are pivotal to making the psychological contract and employee value proposition work. Just as a bad manager can be a reason why people quit, a good manager can be a reason to stay and give 200 percent because the manager knows the skills and working personalities of his/her people and what engages them most. The good manager takes an active systematic approach in helping people continue to grow so they can perform at their best.

Career development coaching works exceptionally well for managers as well as employees. For managers it can work both ways: when they themselves are personally confident of their place, skills and career path in their role as manager, they can have a more trusting clarity of mind.

Having experienced it themselves, they will also be able to see deeper into their professional minds and motivations of their people and in turn coach their people to achieve higher performance and how to grow and develop. A common outcome is the ability to give more meaningful performance evaluations, set goals that maximize the strengths and talents of their people, and set the stage for meaningful career aspiration and development discussions, which in turn create a clear path to catalyze professional growth and engagement.

Toward a cycle of engagement

For the organization, the result is intangible but distinctive: it can create a cadre of intrinsically motivated talent that is happy in their places in a company that they know cares about them. The company can also map out what employees can do well and their future in the company. This is the positive virtuous cycle of engagement, growth and succession planning that is at the cornerstone of a company culture that identifies, values, develops, rewards and continuously attracts the best people.

Investment in career development coaching and training such as leadership development creates belief in the organization and a better kind of psychological contract that has payoffs long after costs and returns on their investment are forgotten. Successful companies ready to ride the wave of new optimism take this seriously and develop an employee value proposition based on continued career growth, caring and trusting with focused leadership. By doing this, your employees, your managers and your customers will all thank you for getting it right. 



Brent Conkle has more than 19 years of experience in Japan and is a certified HRBP. His work focuses on executive coaching, career coaching, leadership development, organizational development, talent management consulting and executive search.

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Essentials of INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Managing People Globally

David C. Thomas
Mila B. Lazarova

SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014. 376pp.
\$90.00, Paperback.
ISBN 9781412995917



An essential read for coaches seeking insight into the big picture.

Annette Karseras
Executive Coach

Originally written in English

This book is a good starting point for coaches and HR managers seeking deeper understanding of the cultural and geo-political aspects of HR management in a globally mobile workplace.

For *The HR Agenda*'s special edition on Employee Coaching & Mentoring, I read Thomas and Lazarova's 300+ page text through the lens of coaching. I was curious to see that the word "coaching" appeared precisely once in the index of this 2014 publication. Why is coaching still not on the human resource management map? Perhaps one of the biggest challenges for the coaching profession is how to integrate coaching into organization-wide strategy rather than tackling one person at a time. Achieving greater alignment between the personal and professional aspirations of individual coaches and the strategic business agendas of our clients' organizations might be the key. Aligning individual and organizational goals may give the coaching profession enough visibility and relevance to get into textbooks such as this and onto the radar of the next generation of HR professionals who will be reading them.

From a coach's perspective, it would be easy enough to point to an oversight on the part of the authors, or to the failure of academic research models and theories to take sufficient account of

the role of coaching. However, perhaps it's also true that coaches without a background in HR, organizational development or management also need to step up.

This book is not going to join any of the dots between coaching and HR management practices for you. But, if you are prepared to read actively, "[Essentials of International Human Resource Management](#)" will give you the background to help you make this leap yourself.

For coaches less experienced with internationally mobile clients, this book also includes eight extended cases and concise vignettes at the start of every chapter. Framed through the eyes of individual employees, these stories provide insight into the variety and complexity of challenges that managers from different parts of the world can face when working for a global firm.

The authors, Thomas and Lazarova, have done an excellent job at interpreting the international aspect of HR management from both global and cultural points of view. The starting and closing chapters provide poignant examples of

the globalizing impact of technology, economics, international politics and environmental issues on organizations that operate internationally. Thomas and Lazarova also deal intuitively with the issue of culture. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the field, including cultural dimensions with their respective cultural theorists and GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research) country scores.

More than simply addressing national culture *per se*, the authors discuss, in Chapters 3 and 4, how corporate culture and organizational structure can influence the way HR management is transferred across geographic boundaries including the recontextualization and hybridization of global and local practices. Integrating both cultural and geo-political perspectives, the authors also discuss dynamics between head office and subsidiaries located in different economic landscapes of developing, transitioning and established market economies.

I found myself reading Chapter 5 with the question at the back of my mind about how the M&A process could benefit from developing coaching competencies internally (see also Michael Shell's [article](#) in this issue on creating a coaching culture). Developing a coaching mind and skill set amongst managers and HR staff themselves could provide the organization with capacity to coordinate and collaborate rather than clash as the merged parties seek to integrate different corporate cultures – for example, in a merger between business-to-business and business-to-consumer firms. Being able to ask coaching-style questions can help employees better understand each others' very different branding, decision-making and pricing cultures.

This awareness combined with an ongoing coach-approach opens the possibility of the transition being enriching rather than full of conflict; a change that also inspires people to achieve their personal and professional potential.

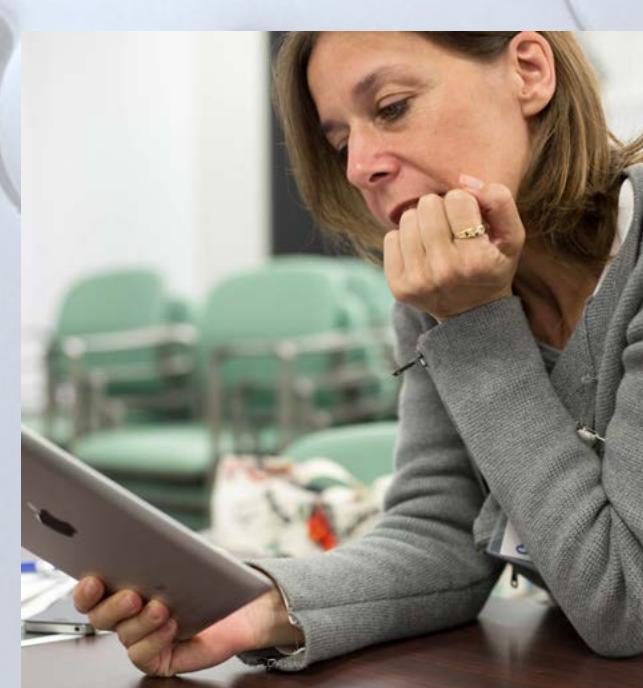
There are two places where I feel this text could be improved. The first is an issue common

to "Essentials" textbooks of this kind, namely the scarcity of illustrative examples to flesh out otherwise skeletal theoretical frameworks and dry, generic descriptions in the body of the book. The second is its dearth of success stories. The vignettes and case studies work well to set up scenarios for discussion but without examples threaded through to illustrate the theory, the individual reader can't develop an overall sense of the steps to successful HR management.

Of the 11 chapters, those of most direct relevance to coaches are likely to be Chapter 7: Global Human Resource Development and Chapter 9: International Mobility and Global Careers. Both cover the fundamentals for coaches wanting to support employees' in-bound and/or out-bound relocations. However, as mentioned earlier, to reap the benefits of this book coaches will need to be proactive in making connections to coaching themselves.

Without a doubt the strength of this book is its international flavor – from rifts between HR management norms in different global regions to country-specific eye-openers. For coaches, understanding more about international human resource management could mean more informed conversations with HR professionals, and more culturally-aware questions for their coaching clients. For HR professionals wanting to develop global savvy, Thomas & Lazarova's "[Essentials of International Human Resource Management](#)" is a good place to start. 

NOTE: A different version of this review appears in the Association for Coaching's Global Bulletin, April 2015.



Annette Karseras is a coach and trainer who develops leaders and teams at all levels of the organization. Annette has trained with the Coach Training Institute (CTI) and the Society of Organizational Learning's Systems Perspectives. She also delivers Global Mindset and Communication Intelligence courses at Japan's top universities. Her master's degree is from Leicester University, UK.

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who we are

We are a community of Japan-focused HR professionals worldwide and corporate leaders doing business in Japan.

what we do

We provide our members a venue to:

1. Share useful HR and management tips and best practices;
2. Participate in virtual and live networking or learning events; and,
3. Strengthen our HR body of knowledge, skills, and competencies to global standards.

our mission

To help advance the practice of the HR profession in Japan.

membership levels

1. Free/Basic Membership
2. Associate Membership
3. Professional Membership
4. Honorary Membership
5. Corporate Membership

benefits

Get to know them at

<http://www.jhrs.org/about/join/benefits>

community Officers

Jun Kabigting MBA, MS, HRMP
Chief Community Officer

Dana M. Gallagher MPH, PA
HR Education and Certification System
Advocate Leader

Elizabeth Handover
Women in HR Advocate Leader

Chad Stewart
Green HR Advocate Leader

HR Central K.K.
The JHRS Secretariat

Yokohama Partner Law Offices
Legal Counsel

board of advisers

Mitsuhide Shiraki, Ph.D.
Professor, Faculty of Political Science and
Economics, Waseda University
President, Institute for Transnational
Human Resource Management

Shinya Yamamoto
Principal, HR Fabula Co. Ltd.
Professor, Graduate School of Business Science,
University of Tsukuba

Haruyasu Enomoto
HR Director, Corning Japan K.K.

Norihide Munakata
Independent HR Consultant

major programs

- The JHRS Academy x TUJ
- The JHRS eAcademy X eCornell
- The HR Agenda* Magazine
- JHRS Job Board
- AskHR and AskHR, Live!
- HR Legal Clinic
- Japan-focused HR Certification

Join Us!

<http://www.jhrs.org/about/join>



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