

# FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR ORGANISATION: LESSONS FROM A SIX YEAR OLD

*Thoughts from the editor: Tim's energy and passion for driving a coaching culture is apparent in every interaction that we have. He's funny, engaging and has the tendency to say out loud what everyone else in the room is thinking. In this article, Tim discusses how creating a coaching culture is THE way to future-proof organisations, because he's learning a lot about how his daughter is being coached at school. If anything should inspire you to develop a coaching culture, for current and future generations, then this article is it...*

If I asked you the question "How do you future-proof an organisation?" what would you say? The chances are you'd offer at least one and possibly all of the following ideas:

- ✓ Introduce lean and agile ways of working
- ✓ Embrace digital transformation
- ✓ Create a new talent strategy
- ✓ Identify new investment partners

You'd not be alone in coming up with any of those suggestions. And that's fair enough because they are all viable options. When done correctly they can prove invaluable to the future success of your organisation. However, I'd argue there's one way of future-proofing that transcends all others as it's the only solution you can rely on to continually contribute to a sustainable and successful future. And that way is to create a coaching culture.

## THE POWER OF THE COACHING CULTURE

Evolution is happening at a faster pace than ever and organisations are rapidly becoming more populated and influenced by generations that have been conditioned very differently to previous ones. And before you sense this is about to become another article bemoaning/praising (delete as applicable) millennials let me reassure you that isn't where I'm heading. Labels are labels whereas people are people. That's what I'm interested in - and what I'm particularly interested in is the fact that increasing numbers of your people want a coaching culture for reasons that will soon be apparent...

## LESSONS FROM A SIX YEAR OLD AND HER TEACHER

Let me tell you a short story. It's about a recent parents' evening for my 6 year old daughter Lucie. Now when I was at primary school if I got something wrong - I got it wrong! It was black and white; my teachers would tell me I was wrong and what the right answer was. Sometimes they'd even add a condescending 'tut' or tell me how stupid I was just to reinforce the point.

How times have changed. During Lucie's parents' evening her Year 1 teacher told us about an instance when Lucie had shown a good attitude in response to getting something wrong on a spelling exercise. (Yes, teachers actually tell parents about this now.) Lucie had spelt the word 'when' without the 'h'. Instead of telling Lucie she was wrong or simply marking her down, the teacher had said to Lucie, "You've not quite got that one right. You're very close so have a little think and see if you can try again". Lucie had taken another look and spotted the 'h' was missing. She corrected her answer to complete the spelling exercise successfully.

That short story is a fantastic example of a coaching culture in practice. Lucie learnt from it and that learning came from a positive coaching experience. And of course, her confidence has increased and her determination to get it right next time has improved because by trying again, she worked it out and received positive feedback. Lucie is 6 years old remember!

# COACHING EXPECTATIONS ARE BEING SET RIGHT NOW

In just ten years' time, Lucie will enter the world of work. Like the rest of her generation, she'll expect to enter a coaching culture because that's what her education experience has been. The modern education system is conditioning every new generation to expect a coaching culture. And so it should!

How often does the example in Lucie's story happen in your organisation? Or are you still operating in a "you're wrong" command and control environment? Even worse: are you operating in an environment where you don't tell people that something's not right, and instead just correct it for them in the hope that one day they'll learn? The most important lesson that Lucie's story illustrates is the positive impact we have on people when we coach them to find the right answer for themselves. Inertia is rife in organisations because we avoid telling people when they aren't there yet and therefore never encourage them to find the right answer for themselves. If we stop avoiding that conversation, we start creating an environment of empowerment where people flourish and drive a successful future for an organisation.

**"PEOPLE NEVER LEARN ANYTHING BY BEING TOLD, THEY HAVE TO FIND OUT FOR THEMSELVES"**

PAULO COELHO

Now, of course, there are always base skills and capabilities to develop. Lucie had to learn the alphabet before she could know that an 'h' was missing. But once you have those base skills and capabilities (and remember a lot of people bring them into your organisation), a coaching culture can thrive by creating a positive environment where people think for themselves and become more confident.

Evolution will continue and before we know it, organisations will be full of people from Lucie's generation. And what happens when we don't meet their expectations of a coaching culture?

- ✓ They leave and recruitment costs go up.
- ✓ Engagement levels suffer which negatively impacts productivity.
- ✓ They simply 'do what we've always done'.
- ✓ Or worst of all, they stay in your organisation and contribute to more inertia!

The best way to motivate people is to give them what they want. And the generations that will lead your organisation into its successful future don't just want a coaching culture. They expect it..

## TOP TIPS

Embrace evolution. What will really determine your success is the mindset of your people and a coaching culture is the key to unlocking a positive and productive mindset. Here are a few ways you can start preparing your leaders for the future by creating a coaching culture.

- ✓ Raise awareness of the positive conditioning taking place in education right now to prepare your leaders and future leaders for the demands they can expect from new talent joining the business.
- ✓ Role model coaching skills by asking thought provoking questions and applying a coach mindset to everything you do.
- ✓ Create an environment for empowerment by encouraging people to 'have a go' and not be afraid to make mistakes.
- ✓ Develop your organisational ability to give and accept feedback and use this to drive people to find their own solutions when they don't get it right first time.



## TIM ROBERTS

Tim Roberts has 20 years' leadership experience gained across various sectors and has combined it with his L&D experience to create Enthuse Coaching and Training.

His passion is coaching and his purpose is to make you think. Tim truly believes that through emotional intelligence we can see 'the challenge is the opportunity'. Known for his no-nonsense approach, Tim has gained a reputation as a highly engaging and inspiring public speaker. His vision is to spend the rest of his life creating an environment where people develop to always be the best versions of themselves.