Advancing Executive Coaching

Setting the Course for Successful Leadership Coaching

A Publication of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology
Advancing Executive Coaching
The Professional Practice Series

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Foreword

A recent cover story in *Business Week* (Brady, 2010) makes a telling comment about the current state of coaching. It reports that CEO Jeffrey Immelt of GE, a company with an outstanding reputation for developing leaders, has just recently “launched a pilot program to bring in personal coaches for high potential talent, a practice that GE once reserved mainly for those in need of remedial work.”

It is clear to most people in modern organizations that coaching has become a mainstream human resource management practice. It was not always so. In a recent conversation with the well-known coaching consultant Marshall Goldsmith, he noted that only twenty-five years ago, the need for coaching was a sign of trouble (personal communication, April 2010). In one large and well-regarded organization he worked with on management development, the very top performance rating for executives was labeled “Does the job in an outstanding fashion without any need for coaching.”

The field of leadership coaching has matured and grown greatly during the last two decades. As befits any maturing and growing field, today there are many debates on crucial issues about coaching. These controversies, along with “established truths,” are the subject matter of this book. For anyone interested in coaching, this book brings great wisdom, experience, and suggestions for superior coaching.

My own sense is that coaching is a relatively new phenomenon within the practice of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. A brief if unsystematic look at some popular textbooks confirms this impression. One well-used text, published in 1992, does not even have an index reference to coaching (Miner, 1992).

A more popular concept at that time was the notion of mentoring. As noted by Noe (1988), mentoring had two major