



Creating a Coaching Culture

A Playbook to Build Winning Business Teams Nathan Jamail

The next time you say (or think) “Today’s generation doesn’t care about anything. They’re lazy, and they really don’t even grow up until they are 30 years old, if they are lucky,” remember this: we made them that way as their parents and leaders.

Growing up, most of us had to learn how to defend ourselves and think for ourselves. And, if you were anything like me, you had to learn the hard way—paying the consequences for bad decisions (and, for me, there were many). As parents, we try to remove every struggle we endured growing up, so they don’t have to struggle the way we did, and yet those hard times and struggles are most likely *exactly* what made us who we are today. It is our responsibility to help see them through those struggles and help them learn and grow from them. The same can be said for business today.

And, in business, most of our employees are not as good as they could be—not because of our love for them or our desire to make their lives better than ours, but for the exact opposite reason. It is because most of the time we think they are not worth the effort to really coach them.

Think about this for a minute. If you have children, or even if you were a child at one time you can relate to this statement: if our child did some of the things that our employees did at work we would ground them (or worse), yet as an adult employee we just let it go. Why is this? The most likely answer is: because we love our kids, and we feel like the effort to coach our employees may not be worth it. Before you jump up and down and start shouting, “Not me, not me!,” ask yourself these questions:

1. Do you hire good people and just let them do their jobs?
2. Do you find yourself only getting involved with your employees when they need your help or are in trouble?
3. Why do we allow an employee that is not as good as the others or the one that has the not-so-good attitude keep their job?

You know who the person is for the third question, by the way. It is the person that, when you see them coming, you try to turn around and go the other way or act like you are too busy to talk.

A follow up to the third question is, Why do they still work for us? Not only do we allow them to keep working for us, we never tell them that they are not a good employee, that they have a bad attitude, or even just that they are not meeting our expectations. The answer to that follow up question usually is: we are selfish as leaders, and secondly, most of us were never taught to be coaches. Like our “managers,” we tell the leaders who report to us to be coaches, but we don’t show them how. So, managers and leaders do what their managers and leaders did to them: they manage, not coach, and that is what is fundamentally corrupt about today’s management culture. As for the answers to questions one and two... If you answered yes to either of them, then I am afraid to tell you that you are not treating your employees like they are worth coaching.

“Most of our employees are not as good as they could be—not because of our love for them or our desire to make their lives better than ours, but for the exact opposite reason. It is because most of the time we think they are not worth the effort to really coach them.”

Lets take a deeper look into a couple of the reasons we don't coach our employees.

Reason 1: COACHING REQUIRES CONFLICT. As stated earlier, we, as leaders, are selfish and think they are just not worth it. The selfish part is based on a couple of factors. It is very hard to have difficult conversations with our employees, and it requires conflict and consequences. How many times a day do we as leaders see our people doing something that we don't approve of or wish they would do better and just let it slide because we don't have time to deal with it at that moment? Here is a simple test: Do we hold our kids accountable? We have difficult conversations with them all the time, we give them consequences for their actions, and we ground them for misbehaving. Why? Because we love our kids and we know it is our job to make our kids the best people we can, so we sacrifice the easy way for the right way. This being said, **conflict and coaching requires love** (or caring at the very least), and it should be approached as such—not with a negative connotation. We must love (or care about) our employees so much that holding them accountable and making them better is worth the pain and the uncomfortable conflict. We must care about them so much that it's not even a question. I use a lot of analogies in comparing raising kids and sports analogies to leading teams, and not because I am a great parent or a superstar athlete. I do it because raising kids and coaching a great sports team have the same principles as building a great business team.

Reason 2: IT IS AN HR NIGHTMARE. It's not just about the difficult conversations or the amount of time and the numerous steps it will require us to go through the company's disciplinary process, (as if that was not enough), it is because we don't have a person to replace them, so we accept our employees' behaviors and feel that some work or some results is better than no work or no results, therefore a "bad body" is better than "nobody". How do you know this is the case? If we had a person ready to be hired that was as good as our best and favorite employee, would we be less willing to accept the bad results or bad attitude from our current not-too-good employee? The answer is "yes!"

We can use all the excuses we want, from "HR won't let us" to "the finance depart won't let us hire a new person," but at the end of the day it is our responsibility to the team, not HR's and not the finance department. We, as leaders, have to step up. If as a leader we have a person that is not performing at a level that is better than acceptable, then it is our fault—no one else's. As leaders and coaches we cannot blame the system, our bosses, competition, or the economy on the performance and development of our team. We can only blame ourselves and challenge ourselves to fix it. **Otherwise why would the organization or our team need us? Here is a secret, they wouldn't.**

What to do?

There is truly only one fix. **We must become coaches and stop being managers.**

This requires more than saying it and changing our words and titles. It's about changing our belief system, then our priorities, then our activities, and lastly our culture. Here is a fact: coaching is hard work and requires commitment and focus. Many organizations do not coach their teams, not because of a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of commitment and execution. Rightfully so, it is a lot easier to manage a team and allow them to do their thing and only get involved when needed. We don't have to do the pre-work of creating expectations and spend time teaching our team members the best plays or processes for success. And that is just the beginning. As coaches we must understand the great rewards of being a great coach and the benefits we will receive as the leader, or we will not be willing to sustain the long-term hard work of coaching our team.

“There is truly only one fix. We must become coaches and stop being managers. This requires more than saying it and changing our words and titles.”

Lets start with a couple things we can do right now to start changing our culture from a management culture to a coaching culture.

BELIEF SYSTEM: We must believe that our job as a leader, regardless of title, is to make our team members better, and we will not accept anything less than becoming better than what we have today—so much so that we are willing to sacrifice the short-term results and revenue to protect this belief. If the result of a behavior or activity contradicts the culture, then that problem must be removed or corrected immediately. Coaching is as much about setting logical goals and requiring a powerful belief system as it is about conflict and coaching. Remember those that made us better did not just hold us accountable growing up or in sports, but they also made us realize that we could be the best no matter how many people told us we were dreamers or that it was not possible. “Living the Dream” is not about our current status, but rather our mindset of where we are going.

PRIORITIES: We will never fit coaching into our already busy schedules. It must become the core of our business. Just like any job, the hard stuff is usually the most important stuff, and the same is said for coaching. As a coach we must identify our coaching priorities, and schedule them on our calendars. Focusing on our employees’ growth and improvement is the number one priority; fire drills and other tasks are secondary. How often as leaders do we find ourselves putting out fires or dealing with employee and customer problems (or just responding to mun-

dane emails and reports)? Most leaders will say “a lot,” and **one of the answers to resolve this comes when we coach our teams not to start so many fires in the first place.**

From using technology to face-time meetings, we all can come up with as many excuses as we need to justify why we don’t have time to coach and it is all real and true. The key is to keep the coaching activities always in front of all other priorities.

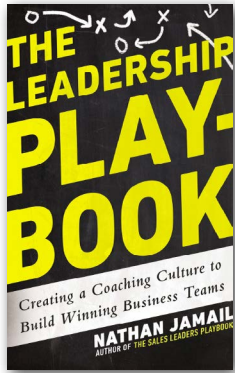
ACTIVITIES: What we do during the day determines if we are coaching or managing.

Coaching activities should make up the majority of our day and week. Weekly activities should look something like: one-on-one team sessions, practice meetings and field days with our team members. Coaching activities are activities where a leader is preparing or developing the team for upcoming events, or skill development for improving a specific team member to increase the person’s ability to achieve a higher desired results. As leaders we must look at our weeks and see how much time we spend developing our players. This does not mean spending time in staff meetings or giving constructive feedback. This is time set up where the goal is to make them a better professional. Before we say we don’t have time, or we have x number of direct reports, we must ask ourselves yet another question: If they are giving us 45 to 55 hours per week, don’t they deserve an hour of our time a week?

CULTURE: The word “culture” has become the new word or catch phrase for companies these days. However, having the word culture in a company’s mission statement is not enough to get there. Creating a coaching culture requires that all levels are required to coach and be coached—from the CEO to the receptionist. To truly understand the value of coaching someone, a leader must have received the benefit of being coached. There are many great cultures out there and many of them are not a “coaching culture,” so that proves that coaching is not required to be successful in business. however, there are also a lot great kids out there that don’t have the best parents. The point is, even **if you lead a good company with a ”management culture,” you can lead a great company with a “coaching culture.”**

Raising kids in today’s world is hard, and many of our parents are thankful they don’t have to do it because it was a lot easier “back in the day.” The same is true in business. We see fundamental changes in today’s business environment versus 20 years ago: the technology, world economy, global competitors, and the overall speed of business are some of the significant differences we see in business today. **The real competitive advantage and the key to sustainable success remains the same today as it was 20 years ago, and that is the great people that make up our teams. We owe it to them, and to our company’s success, to coach them.** 📌

Info



BUY THE BOOK | Get more details or buy a copy of [The Leadership Playbook](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR | For more than two decades, Nathan Jamail has either been setting sales records, building winning teams, or coaching others on how to do so. Previously, Nathan set record results in sales by producing top performing teams in capacities such as business sales, direct consumer sales, indirect sales, distribution and marketing for several Fortune 100 companies. Nathan has also owned and operated 4 successful small businesses along with being an author of three very successful books *The Sales Leaders Playbook*, *The Sales Professionals Playbook*, and *The Sales Leaders Gameplan*. His coaching and programs implement strong positive belief systems and create winning environments within organizations cultivating the highest levels of success.

→ **SEND THIS** | [Pass along a copy](#) of this manifesto to others.

→ **SUBSCRIBE** | [Sign up for e-news](#) to learn when our latest manifestos are available.

This document was created on August 20, 2014 and is based on the best information available at that time. The copyright of this work belongs to the author, who is solely responsible for the content. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License. To view a copy of this license, visit [Creative Commons](#) or send a letter to Creative Commons, 559 Nathan Abbott Way, Stanford, California 94305, USA. Cover image from [Veer](#). You are given the unlimited right to print this manifesto and to distribute it electronically (via email, your website, or any other means). You can print out pages and put them in your favorite coffee shop's windows or your doctor's waiting room. You can transcribe the author's words onto the sidewalk, or you can hand out copies to everyone you meet. You may not alter this manifesto in any way, though, and you may not charge for it.

About ChangeThis

[ChangeThis](#) is a vehicle, not a publisher. We make it easy for big ideas to spread. While the authors we work with are responsible for their own work, they don't necessarily agree with everything available in ChangeThis format. But you knew that already.

800ceoread

ChangeThis is supported by the love and tender care of 800-CEO-READ. Visit us at [800-CEO-READ](#) or at our daily [blog](#).