



COACHING OURSELVES

By Henry Mintzberg and Phil LeNir

CoachingOurselves Provides Immediate Results



McGill

by Johanne Houle
Director of OD
at McGill university

McGill OD team began using CoachingOurselves in 2012 to support rebuilding a sense of community and to offer collaborative learning opportunities to 1700 managers and supervisors. This is their story.

Challenge

Like many universities, we face a combination of organizational challenges: budgetary constraints, complex labour relations, and continual changes in higher education. We need tools to strengthen and maintain a vital sense of community among our managers and employees. With decreasing time and resources, we look for affordable and strategic opportunities for employees to learn, develop, and collaborate together. We strive to keep our talent engaged and to encourage our employees to share best practices.

Solution

In 2013, we launched a series of CoachingOurselves Reflection Cafes (90-minute workshops) with managers and professionals from cross-sections of McGill University. These sessions were easy to administer: we could choose from the CoachingOurselves catalogue of over 75 management and leadership topics and facilitate them ourselves. The C.O. team was extremely helpful in recommending topics that were appropriate to readiness, participant profiles, and emergent needs in the face of important culture change.

The workshops provided immediate results. Feedback from the sessions was overwhelmingly positive and participants kept returning and encouraging their friends to attend. The 90-minute learning format allowed people to engage in shared learning without missing a day, or even a half-day, of work. There was rapid alignment among managers, and the networking and collaborative learning provided benefits beyond the material itself. Clearly, the topics and guided conversation format gave us "permission" to talk about concerns that were critical to us. We had a context for surfacing important issues, without blame, and realizing that

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Within a couple of months, various units and departments began requesting CoachingOurselves sessions for their management teams and some managers in turn adopted the approach with their small, intact teams. Managers who had volunteered to support and facilitate groups during the reflection cafes were now acting as champions, volunteering to support new management teams throughout the university. The results have been excellent, with continued success and growth of the concept throughout our internal population of almost 1700 managers and team leaders.

Results

The CoachingOurselves approach allows us to have a very broad and deep impact—with low overhead. Departments are free to select topic discussion guides that suit their needs, internal manager champions support them, as needed, and we can set and guide the overall context to meet broader organizational needs.

CoachingOurselves is priced and structured in a way that allows large-scale deployment. One ‘unlimited use subscription license’ allows us to impact hundreds of managers. This is less expensive than sending one manager to a typical executive MBA program!

I highly recommend that other organizations try CoachingOurselves as it has proven to be an invaluable tool for learning and organizational development at McGill University. In turn, we look forward to learning more about the creative ways in which it is rolled out in our sister institutions.

About CoachingOurselves

CoachingOurselves is the world leader in peer-group coaching. The company, founded in 2007 by Henry Mintzberg and Phil LeNir, is based on Mintzberg’s reflective learning pedagogy. The CoachingOurselves leadership development method builds community, stimulates the exchange of perspectives, and encourages team cohesion. Managers learn from and coach each other using 90-minute self-directed, reflective discussion modules authored by some of the world’s leading business thinkers. This creates self-developing organizations while building a culture of learning and collaboration. CoachingOurselves has a library of over 80 peer-group coaching modules and is used by over 20,000 managers in 8 languages around the world.

www.coachingourselves.com