

# WHEN COACH MEETS COACH

I was having lunch recently with Jean-Francois Cousin, a fellow executive coach working in Thailand under the brand 1-2win ([www.1-2win.net](http://www.1-2win.net)). We exchange information and learn from each other at informal lunches every three or four months. "What have you been doing recently?" I ask.

"I just finished a project on leadership and change management in the downturn. I and another coach held 10 sessions for 15 executives from various organisations," Jean-Francois tells me. "Half were Thais and the rest foreigners. They were facing similar challenges — and one thing they had in common was people development."

"Why?" I ask.

"What do you think, Khun Kriengsak?" Jean-Francois plays a coach's role.

"It may be because they had not been developed before," I reply. "Most of them probably were promoted because they were high achievers who had been responsible, proactive and self-developed. But when they were at the top, they realised they did not understand why people need to be developed."

"I agree," he acknowledges.

I share my view. "Last week, I coached a small group of new general managers. They also were facing similar situations as your participants. We spent time discussing leadership and managing people. One of their concerns was that they could not change their people."

"I told them that not to try to change people — unless you want to be disappointed. It's normal that people will not change because you want them to change. I gave an example to them. Most of us cannot do a lot of things that we want to do even for our benefit. For example, lots of people wants to exercise three times a week. I guess probably only 20% achieve that goal."

"Maybe fewer," he chuckles.

"A lot of people perceive work is not fun. They go to work in exchange of money, status or fringe benefits. Not many people associate work with happiness. So we are talking about instructing people to do things they don't enjoy doing. You can imagine how much people do as most managers expected."

"What should managers do?" he asks.

"Managers cannot change people. What we can do is create environments that support or encourage people to perform well. Those environments are: work instructions, processes, policies, organisational structures, systems, resources, training, coaching, reward and recognition, and so on."

"But what if some people do not

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perform regardless of the environment?"

"It's managers' duty to enforce disciplinary action. That's why organisations have rules for those who do not comply with policies. But I think most managers are not comfortable with taking disciplinary actions."

"I also stressed to the GMs the importance of recruitment. I recommended that whenever they had a chance to recruit new person, go for the best. Do not compromise on quality because you are short of people."

"Why?"

"Because when you hire a person who has lower skills than the role, you have immediately affect the organisation's performance. The higher the position, the greater of damage will be. In *The First 90 Days*, Michael Watkins says that the number of people whose performance was significantly compromised by the arrival of a new mid-level manager was 12.4."

"From my experience, it's better to have a vacancy compared to having a poor performer in place. Because when you are short, you need a little more effort from everyone to complete extra tasks. On the other hand, if you had a poor performer, that person could create more mistakes which consequently generate much extra work."

"So, if you have a chance to hire, go for the best. It takes longer. Sometimes it costs you more compared to other candidates who might want to get the job at less compensation."

Jean-Francois adds. "And lots of managers are not good at recruitment."

"Then, they have to learn how to be good recruiters first," I conclude, and recommend a course called Targeted Selection by Development Dimension International, a talent management consultancy. It also offers web-based training at: [www.ddiworld.com/products\\_services/ts-webbasedtraining.asp](http://www.ddiworld.com/products_services/ts-webbasedtraining.asp)

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