
Coaching Leaders to Lead As Coaches

*“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more,
and become more, you are a leader.” — John Quincy Adams*



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With all the books, seminars, executive coaches, and HR managers focused on leadership, you might think great leadership is the norm in our society. Yet studies and polls reveal the quality of leadership continues to fall. Citizen polls find that over two-thirds of the public lacks confidence in government leaders. Employee surveys find that two-thirds of employees consider their bosses to be below average. Studies on leadership in homes, churches, and academia are no better.

In regard to the impact of leadership on business performance, after adjusting for economic conditions, average company financial results are generating historically low returns on assets and investments. Executive and employee turnover is at an all-time high, with two of every three employees seriously considering leaving their organizations. Over two-thirds of company projects fail to meet expectations. Employees are less engaged. Morale is down. Job stress is up. It wasn't very long ago that *adrenal fatigue* and *fibromyalgia* weren't in the business lexicon. By many measures, business performance continues to get worse.

Many managers give lip service to the qualities and behaviors of great leadership. Managers claim to focus on long-term results, yet they make decisions as if next year doesn't matter. They say innovation is critical to their organization's success while humiliating people for making mistakes. They state that employees are their top priority but don't focus on employee development. It is easy for managers to say what people want to hear but not so easy to put it into practice and produce the results that are truly possible. For too many managers, the reality is that they are not the caliber of leader they think they are. Neither are they the leaders their people wish they would be.

Recent company surveys find employee's number one desire is to have a manager who competently coaches them in their professional development. Likewise, management surveys report the top enabler to organizational success is human capital – a highly skilled and engaged workforce. It seems like the perfect match – employees want managers to give more attention to their professional development and managers need more highly skilled employees. Yet managers and employees alike spend their days running on the *treadmill of busyness as usual* giving little attention to ongoing professional development.

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Is it just me, or are these realities truly alarming? Have people become so conditioned to mediocre leadership and average employee performance that these are the new norm? Don't people realize that economic recessions, company layoffs, and other societal issues are rooted in mediocre leadership and underperforming employees? Don't leaders understand the high costs of employee disengagement, underperformance, and turnover they are causing?

There are many bureaucrats, bosses, and managers in the world but few leaders and even fewer great leaders who lead as coaches and take ownership for developing their employees.

Managers often possess the domain expertise required to execute the technical requirements of their role but they lack the soft skills. They lack the ability to coach, enable, and inspire their employees. They have little knowledge of how to foster teamwork and assimilate people. As a result, they lead as super contributors if not command-and-control taskmasters. They leave their employees demotivated, underdeveloped, and disengaged. Over time, their employees learn to turn their brains off instead of learn to do their jobs on their own. Fear and apathy replace enthusiasm and discretionary effort.

Most organizational successes, as well as failures, have their roots in a single common denominator. While on the surface many problems seem due to product deficiencies, poor service levels, inefficient processes, outdated systems, or failed projects, these issues stem from a more fundamental issue—people. A company’s success ultimately rests on the decisions, attitudes, skills, and actions of its people. Organizational shortcomings as well as capabilities have people to blame or credit.

The most successful organizations are those that have leaders at all levels of the organization who focus on their people. The leaders give significant attention to developing their employees. They are leaders as coaches who possess the essential soft skills required to improve employee performance throughout the year rather than wait for the perfunctory annual appraisal meeting. They actively work with their employees on their ongoing professional development. They competently take advantage of ad-hoc coachable moments as well as more strategic and structured career development conversations. They augment training programs and on-the-job learning with individualized coaching roadmaps, sessions, and scorecards.

To be coaches, motivators, enablers, and assimilators of high-performing teams, leaders as coaches have capabilities in five areas that spell out the acronym SCOPE—Self, Communications, Others, Partnerships, and Execution. These represent the five levels of the *SCOPE of Leadership*TM competency model in the pyramid graphic to the right.

This model defines the categories and competencies within them that are consistently found in great leaders who lead as coaches. These competencies enable the attitudes and aptitudes practiced by successful leaders around the globe in all industries, in all roles, and at all levels. They are capabilities that consistently produce exceptional results through the efforts of people who follow by choice and perform at their highest level.





The five competency areas exhibited by leaders as coaches are:

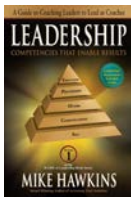
- **Self: Setting the Example** – At the core of great leadership is *intrapersonal* competence. This is a set of qualities leaders as coaches manifest as well as expect from their employees. These are values, principles, and behaviors that great leaders demonstrate rather than dictate. In return, employees give their highest respect and discretionary effort. Qualities such as passion, continuous learning, self-awareness, integrity, courage, and confidence form this foundation level of great leadership and the ability to gain other people's trust.
- **Communications: Inspiring Performance** – Second only to leaders' ability to set a positive example for others to follow is their *interpersonal* competence and ability to communicate. Communications is the vehicle through which leaders as coaches perform their work. Great leadership requires competencies such as articulating the "why", developing compelling content, engaging audiences, and listening attentively. Managers can be competent in their knowledge, but if they can't communicate effectively or inspire others to follow, they can't coach and their knowledge is of little value.
- **Others: Developing People** – Great leaders as coaches attract and develop top talent. They hire well and develop their people continuously. They have the competencies of attracting, selecting, coaching, enabling, encouraging, managing, and imparting ownership. They don't simply hire people and set objectives. They don't merely expect people to perform and then fire them when they don't. Great leaders coach their people as great athletic coaches coach their athletes. They help people leverage their capabilities and overcome their shortcomings.
- **Partnerships: Leveraging Teamwork** – Having a team of top-performing individuals is insufficient to reaching the highest levels of performance. Great leaders as coaches assimilate people into teams that offset each other's weaknesses and leverage each other's capabilities. They have the competencies of alignment, collaboration, building community, and managing conflict. They work cross-functionally as well as with outside organizations to build teams of diverse people who work together toward common goals.
- **Execution: Delivering Excellence** – Leadership is a means, not an end goal itself. The end goal of great leadership is delivering results. Great leaders as coaches execute and sustain top-performance quarter after quarter, year after year. They have the competencies of focusing on value, enabling speed, fostering innovation, and making great decisions. They don't rely on organizational restructuring or other actions that merely cover-up inherent operational issues. They build an organic capability that produces great results consistently.

Utilizing a coaching approach to leadership is multi-faceted. There are many competencies to develop, yet following a framework as outlined in the SCOPE of Leadership makes the journey straightforward.

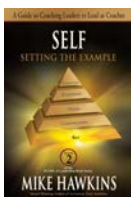
In summary, great leaders as coaches lead themselves and set the example for others to follow. They communicate effectively and inspire people to be their best. They are great coaches who attract top talent, teach, facilitate, encourage, and hold people accountable. They foster collaboration and assimilate people into high-performing teams. They execute and deliver excellent results.

For more information on developing leaders as coaches, visit www.scopeofleadership.com or your favorite book retailer for the *SCOPE of Leadership* six-book series. Books are available in hardcover as well eBook format – both individually and in a copper-embossed black executive Kevlar case.

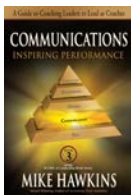
Here are brief summaries of each book:



Leadership Competencies that Enable Results (book 1) explores the essentials of great leadership and establishes the principles that underpin the ability to coach, lead, and achieve high levels of organizational performance. Laying the groundwork for the competencies introduced over the course of the series, this book guides you in building a leadership roadmap for yourself and others to follow on the journey to enabling great results.



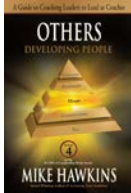
Self: Setting the Example (book 2) sets the foundation for the ability to lead others by developing the competencies of great self-leadership. Effective leaders possess intrinsic passion, character, courage, and confidence that others respect and want to follow. When you lead yourself well, operate productively, and think strategically, others notice and are motivated to attain the higher standards you demonstrate.



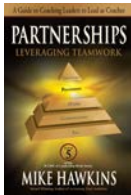
Communications: Inspiring Performance (book 3) describes how to influence people through positive and trustworthy interpersonal communications. Great leaders speak, write, and listen in a manner that connects with people and moves them to action. By learning the competencies of creating compelling content, engaging the audience, and maintaining communication flow, you are able to capture people's minds and hearts as well as foster the healthy exchange of ideas and information.



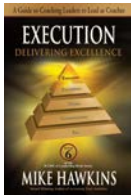
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Others: Developing People (book 4) guides you in building the skills of others and developing top performers. Great leaders build teams of competent people who are able and willing to take ownership for the work that needs to be performed. By learning the competencies of coaching, enabling, and holding people accountable, you multiply your abilities, transfer your knowledge, and leave an enduring legacy.



Partnerships: Leveraging Teamwork (book 5) illustrates how to build high-performing teams and work effectively with others across organizational boundaries. Great leaders do not lead a collection of individuals but rather a unified team of people who work for the good of the organization. By learning the competencies of internal and external partnering, you will gain synergy, establish a spirit of community, and leverage the value of collaboration.



Execution: Delivering Excellence (book 6) describes the capabilities that leaders need to create competitive differentiation and deliver extraordinary value. Great leaders build a culture that achieves operational excellence as well as adapts to change and seizes new opportunities. By learning the competencies of making smart decisions, fostering innovation, enabling speed, and taking action, you are able to equip your team to sustain great performance for years to come.



The SCOPE of Leadership™ Six Book Series (in an embossed-copper black Kevlar executive case) contains all six books described above.

For more information on Alpine Link's coaching services, assessments, training programs, and consulting services, contact Alpine Link at info@alpinelink.com.