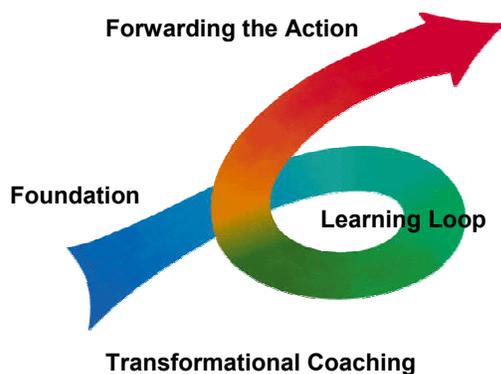


## Coaching – The Heart of a High Performance Culture at Pfizer R&D

PRD colleagues (La Jolla, CA) have been actively engaged in leading change to establish a high performance culture where we excel, grow and have fun. PRD is a department that gets things done and where people meet their commitments through creativity, focused effort, teamwork and coaching. In this article we want to introduce and share with you our approach to developing a coaching-culture and how this is impacting us.

In late 2003 we initiated a Jump Start program, with the Learning & Organizational Development. This is a process that allows us to visualize the future state – “how we want to be” and what needs to change and be put in place for us to achieve this. As a result of this we established a number of goal teams to create processes (from networking, to decision-making, to recognition, to cross-line training and more) and to reduce these to business as usual practices. The whole process was overseen by a cross-section of the department – The Design Team<sup>1</sup> - and every PRD colleague was a member of a goal team. This was a great opportunity for colleagues who did not normally interact on a day-to-day basis, to come together and work on a common purpose and we took a huge step forward as a department. We put in place a Supervisor Forum; a self-supporting group to develop and engage our future leaders. We also established a LTL Forum (meeting every 2 weeks) for shared learning and development with collective review and ownership of all projects in PRD.

This was just the beginning as we all realized that some key element was missing – we had focused on the what, not the how and the relationships – we needed to weave this all together, and the thread to do this is **Transformational Coaching**. Through adopting this approach and coaching tools PRD have found a way to leverage our talents and experiences to develop each other and to value and effectively use feedback as a learning tool to build high trust working relationships, high performance and colleague engagement.



### Coaching – The Next Step

A systematic approach to create a performance-focused feedback-rich environment. Coaching for performance and development.

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We already know that coaching assists individuals to grow and develop. I'm sure that we have all experienced coaching at some time in our lives e.g at school, on a sport's team etc. For most of us this was and still is a very positive experience. Having someone who challenged us to grow – who sees qualities and talent in us that we do not see in ourselves and is committed to our success. PRD imagined what would happen if the entire department were able to tap the power, ideas, and wisdom of its own colleagues (as coaches) ...through learning how to deliver and respond to feedback in powerful ways and took the step to create a coaching-culture in PRD, guided by an organizational coach Tom Crane (Crane Consulting<sup>2</sup>) and his 'Heart of Coaching' program.

### **Transformational Coaching in PRD – what have we done?**

Well first we had to dismiss the “myths” surrounding coaching. You know the sort of thing: “You only need coaching when there is a problem/something wrong”; “Coaching is something done unto you – boss to direct report”, “You can't possibly coach me – you're not a subject matter expert”. I'm sure that you can think of many more. Well we all know that myths are fables ....and there are no dragons!

In reality and in practice coaching is about developing and expanding awareness with a focus on both performance and development, open communication and feedback, and building relationships that enhance trust and rapport. It is the process of helping others enhance their effectiveness...in a way they feel helped.

We started with focus group interviews and from this it was clear that we all want to get better at asking for, giving and receiving feedback (direct report to supervisor, colleague-to-colleague, supervisor to direct report) and we all want to be coached to make us even better at what we do. **But where are all the coaches?** As PRD learned from **Transformational Coaching** we can all be coaches for each other. As a department we participated in a one-day Heart of Coaching workshop where we were provided with practical tools on three coaching models that we can all use in every day situations:

- Transformational Coaching: “How we will work together”, “How we each see things”, “What we will do differently”
- Problem-solving Coaching: Use of learning questions
- Shorthand Coaching: Delivering and receiving appreciative and constructive feedback.

In the workshop we worked on “real-life” feedback situations (conversations that we want to have) and everyone selected a PRD colleague as a personal coach who we meet with on a regular basis as a personal support system – each person supporting their partner in developing themselves as a leader and coach. At the end of the workshop we committed to rotating personal coaches on a quarterly basis, we established coaching contracts and coaching goals, and a monthly cycle of direct report-supervisor performance coaching meetings.

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Of course with all training it is still only theory until people are engaged differently, **so what do PRD colleagues have to say about creating and being in a coaching culture?**

*“Implementing the coaching atmosphere has resulted in more productive discussions of both technical and developmental topics. Colleagues expect candid and timely feedback and are more willing to hear ideas that may have been difficult to broach prior to the introduction of the model.” **Carol Stotz**, Senior Scientist ExP.*

*“The Transformational Coaching program is building camaraderie and open, honest communication between colleagues in PRD. The rotating personal coach program is breaking down the walls of fear to allow for open and honest colleague-to-colleague communication... I see this process creating an environment where any colleague, regardless of job title, is comfortable to speak openly with each other. During one of my coaching lunches, my coach brought to me a perception some people have about me... it made me aware of how some of my actions may inadvertently lead others to this perception”. **Brent Golec**, Senior Scientist Liquids Product Development.*

*“One miscellaneous tip...that, for me, captures a fundamental understanding of how to approach coaching is the thought ‘..Progress, Not Perfection..’ Through coaching I am beginning to see how applying this thought can create a rewarding experience for both coach and coachee. The coach’s job is to provide the coachee with tools, leadership, empowerment and encouragement that guide them to always move in a positive direction. Recently I overheard the statement at work ‘..we can do better than this..’. that captures this coaching point” **Mike Puz**, Senior Scientist ExP.*

*“In my recent role as the PRD LTL for 11-Beta, I can freely and openly discuss challenges of the project and receive candid feedback from all members of the LTL forum. In the process, we learn from each other, avoid re-inventing the wheel and present a unified approach in our work. In addition, as an LTL it has been seamless and speedy for me to approach any member of the PRD-LT and ask for guidance and solicit feedback based on the coaching model. This is a great thing...I believe we have taken “The Heart of Coaching” to our hearts.” **Neil Shah**, Senior Principal Scientist, Process Science.*

*“The direction we are working towards is for everyone to feel comfortable and indeed responsible for giving feedback to others around them. This is ongoing and sometimes difficult, but I have seen positive improvements. By asking people to actively give and solicit feedback, colleagues are now dealing with communication and other issues early on while they are small. ...The inclusion of all levels of supervision in both the promotion and annual review processes is now 100%. We have round table discussions on all proposals with feedback from all supervisors and healthy discussion. This has created a departmental*

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*team management culture versus a top down decision management culture” **Joe Tunner**, Principal Scientist, Process Science.*

*“Coming from several former environments where differing views and ideas were discouraged, the (coaching) culture here is a welcome change which encourages the participation of everyone and values their input (even though there may be disagreements). If people feel a part of the decision-making process, they tend to be more motivated as opposed to just putting in their time...I think the environment here is a positive one that encourages open conversation” **Chris Kemmerer**, Principal Scientist, Solids Product Development.*

*“For me, the coaching model has provided an excellent framework for how to speak with colleagues about sensitive issues. In addition to resolving issues, this model has the added benefits of expanding our perceptions and strengthening working relationships. I continue to learn more about my colleagues, and myself, with each coaching conversation.” **Michelle Marra**, Senior Principal Scientist, ExP.*

*“I am very impressed with the coaching culture we created here. I see people proactively seeking and providing feedback, especially on our supervisor forum meeting. I also benefit from having a "coach" (Diana Huber) to talk to. We listen to each other and provide feedback to see how we can do a better job on coaching. Overall, I think it is a great thing to introduce this "coaching" spirit to PRD and the feedback-rich environment is what we need here to prompt open discussion and improve ourselves!” **Yali Tsai**, Senior Principal Scientist, Liquids Product Development.*

*“Creating a coaching culture in PRD requires commitment and determination from all of us to make our department a feedback-rich environment where coaching occurs .....up, down and all across teams. Everyone is expected and welcomed to give and receive feedback and coach each other; it brings out the best in all of us. One of the most challenging aspects that I found is to avoid making assumptions that may affect my thinking. My personal coaches (Michelle Marra and Paul Boldrey) are my learning partners, my personal support system that offers intellectual support and encouragement. We exchange our experience in dealing with situations, discuss options and alternatives, and follow up with each other. We enjoy the learning experience.” **Yai Sartnurak**, Senior Principal Scientist, Solids Product Development.*

*"It has been a real pleasure to watch Pharm R&D over the last year or two as they have blossomed into a dynamic and effective organization. The Jump Start process that was started at the end of 2003 lived up to its name and really got them moving in the right direction. But the icing on the cake (or maybe it's the glue that holds it all together) has been the introduction of Transformational Coaching. People seem truly to enjoy working with each other. There's nothing more motivating than knowing that you have colleagues all around that are*

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*actively seeking to help and support you" John Loran, Vice President Science & Technology, LJ PS.*

Coaching is a fun journey and a path without end. As PRD colleagues demonstrate coaching is the foundation for creating a "high-performance, feedback-rich culture". We have proven to ourselves that through embracing this we learn and grow and become more effective and this is something that we can all do. In a high performance *coaching-culture* everyone is fully committed to teammates' success - **this is PRD!**

Val Harding, Executive Director LJ PRD  
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