

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## COACHING OR MENTORING...ANY VALUE?

In Corporate America there are hundreds of people who work to enjoy life. This principle is often unconscious and causes them to compromise their priorities everyday. In the past twenty years of working in corporations, I always conducted the mandatory meetings required for each employee. In my last position, each of my staff received a formal mid-year and final review. As a manager of people, I knew that my staff and associates needed more than a twice a year face to face. So, I openly offered more time to coach or to mentor my staff. I always had an open door policy. This policy meant that other associates could request some of my "personal" time. And believe me, they did.

The "value" of coaching or mentoring is only measurable or quantifiable if the recipient is committed to this experience. Secondly, for those individuals that were not members of my staff, I always asked them to list the expected results from this new relationship. In life or work, you get payback if and only if you commit to a certain endeavor. A common axiom in golf is "advice on the golf course is worth exactly what you paid for it...nothing". If you want to learn how to golf better, pay for lessons. The same approach is applicable to coaching or mentoring.

Unlike those informal mentoring relationships, professional relationships are often discarded as costing too much. Why? Everybody has friends, family, relatives or business acquaintances they often rely on for advice and insight. Their time and advice is free. The difference between the two is cost, expectation and outcome. I suggest that a formal coaching and mentoring relationship with a professional who is experienced in your field is often times a better fit. The key to learning is simply

experiencing something from a different point of view. Someone who has experienced your type of position, an approximate career role or, a similar situation in a corporation is more likely to give you advice that is practical. Secondly, if the coach or mentor is truly experienced their advice is worth something. To use another axiom "been there, done that" is appropriate when you work with a professional.

If you are lucky enough to have people around you who care and provide you with good advice, that is fantastic. This is not the norm in Corporate America. From my experience, most managers are not good coaches and mentors. They have never been trained nor do they have the aptitude, or the time. When you engage in a professional coaching or mentoring relationship you are purchasing all three: experience/ aptitude, a structured outcome and a commitment of time.

For example, when I moved to Minnesota in the mid nineties, I wanted to learn how to catch walleyes. I purchased and read magazine articles, bought a boat and necessary equipment, studied videos and practiced on local lakes. For me to go to the next level, I needed to learn from a professional. So, I searched for a professional guide that I could hire for three days. I also searched and chose the best lake in northern Minnesota that met my desire to catch walleyes. The lake I selected was Lake Winnie by Bemidji.

That lake is not very commercialized. It is surrounded by both reservation land and the Chippewa National Forest. While reading and talking to people, I learned about a

guide who goes by the name of the "Griz". I hired the Griz and went fishing. Wow! Having fished Winnie for almost thirty-five years, he knew the lake and how to catch walleyes. He let me ask questions about his boat, equipment, how to locate fish in the spring and summer, and basically, taught me how to catch walleyes in that lake.

Think about it, I could have struggled fishing by myself or with friends. To progress to the level that I wanted could have taken me years. With that professional fishing guide, I paid to learn from his experience. It was worth it. With the Griz, I learned how to catch fish rather than just go fishing.

Is hiring a coach or mentor of any value? Yes, if you are willing to commit time and money to the experience. You first need to decide the type of coach or mentor you require. You can engage someone who has practical experience in your profession or career. Or, you may choose an executive management professional who is trained in the field of Psychology, leadership development and communication. Just like my three days of fishing with a professional guide, a coaching engagement is not an on going relationship. It is structured with specific agreed upon outcomes and timelines. If for any reason the professional relationship falters, the agreement should be terminated.

If you are interested in learning more and want to receive a free consultation about the coaching or mentoring process, please contact the MINCON Group.

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## PART TWO THE BAD



IN A RECENT DELOITTE RESEARCH STUDY OF 70 SHARED SERVICES LEADERS, 74 PERCENT INDICATED THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION MET OR EXCEEDED THE COMPANY'S EXPECTATIONS; HOWEVER, ALL INDICATED THEY SIGNIFICANTLY UNDERESTIMATED THE IMPLEMENTATION EFFORT.

"Future of Shared Services – Realizing and Sustaining the Benefits,"

Deloitte Research,  
Deloitte Services LP, p. 5,  
2003.



## IT SHARED SERVICES: THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

In the first part of this article, I provided some discussion as to why an IT Shared Service model is a good thing (the Good). This month, I will outline a few of the challenges organizations face in building and implementing an IT Shared Services organization (the Bad).

### The Bad: It takes time, hard work, and a change in culture.....

- Building an IT shared service organization does not happen overnight, I have seen it take between 2 to 3 years to get it fully implemented. But, if it is done correctly it can begin to pay for itself after the first year with the business starting to understand the true costs of the IT services that they utilize and therefore better prioritizing their spending.
- The biggest IT organization challenge of implementing a Shared Service environment is for the associates to recognize that the business people who receive their services are now their customers. Often, people within IT Shared Services do not see themselves as customer representatives, but just as employees doing something for another employee. There needs to be a change in culture, moving the IT associates into a customer focused approach.
- Whether centralized or not, the Information Technology leadership need to recognize that moving multi-departments into an IT Shared Services model requires very strong teamwork, everyone has to feel comfortable with the long-term vision of shared services, understand where they fit into this new world, what will be required of them, and how they as individuals and as a team are going to get there.
- An important part of building the shared service organization is defining the plans on how you are going to achieve it. The following is a short list of items that need to be included in this model. This is not the complete list but it will give you a good understanding of the type of work that will need to be accomplished.

1. Costs identified in the defined Service needs to be correctly allocated from the general ledger to the Services that IT provides. (Costs not only need to be identified but there also needs to be a strong tie to the Finance group to achieve this)

2. Cross business/departmental costs need to also be included in the IT Service costs, i.e. Facilities and Payroll. (Again, Links in Finance, Human Resources and any other corporate service group)
3. The Services have to be flexible enough to account for the fact that each business uses the services differently. (One size does not fit all)
4. The Service rates need to be set based on the volumes (appropriate business drivers) projected by the business. Start by providing the business a history of past consumption as it relates to the Service and work closely with them to create a future volume model based on their business objectives. (Rates & Volumes model)
5. The Shared Service model need to have a method of handling over and under recovery; the business needs to fully understand this model and how it will function. (Credit, Debit and Rate Adjustments)
6. The Shared Service model needs to be able to re-align the resource and capacity of the Services with the needs of the business units. (This helps identify Services that are too costly. These either need to be reworked, replaced or potentially outsourced)
7. To help eliminate the frustration and anger that can occur between an IT Shared Services group and the business units, IT needs to make sure that the business fully understands how and why services and costs are created and allocated. (Full disclosure is necessary, the businesses have to know the costs and the business drivers used)

To sum up "the Bad", implementation of an IT Shared Service Organization does not happen quickly, it will take time, be patient. The IT culture needs to become "customer focused". The Services, their costs, the appropriate business drivers, the allocation mechanism, and working with the business to help them fully understand the Services and what controls they have over them are key items in planning a Shared Services implementation. Next month, I will wrap up this three part article with "the Ugly", going over what I feel are two major reasons why an IT Shared Service organization can fail along with my thoughts of where you might start.

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## ABOUT US

The **MINCON Group** is an affiliation of Independent Consultants from various business and corporate disciplines whose common goal is to achieve business results through **Innovation, Experience and Leadership**. The group is comprised of senior level managers and professionals offering a variety of services in the areas of Leadership, Strategy, Assessments, Seminars, Turnarounds, Cross Cultural and Multi-Country Engagements.

Each of the Independent Consultants affiliated with the **MINCON Group** are incorporated and insured. This guarantees that each business client is working with a business owner whose success is based upon their ability to deliver results and complete customer satisfaction. Their success is their reputation in the marketplace.

The **MINCON Group** established an affiliation with select Consulting and Management Consulting companies. These relationships are leveraged to enhance our services offering. The affiliations provide competent temporary staffing for projects, programs and a packaged solution for any customer's unique requirements.

The **MINCON Group** publishes this "Monthly Newsletter" containing a variety of articles which describes actual business issues. These articles are written by us for our clients, the affiliates and the industry.

We also participate in public speaking engagements. A list of speakers and suggested topics is listed in our Services section on our web site.

## WE'RE ON THE WEB

WWW.MINCONGROUP.COM

## UPCOMING IN OUR OCTOBER ISSUE

- IT Shared Services: the UGLY
- Does your IT strategy mirror your business strategy

If you would like us to speak on any topic listed in our Services section on our website to your group or staff, please contact us.



We are also available for a free individual or team consultation on any service we offer.



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