

HOW GOOD A COACH ARE YOU?

18 uniquely challenging holes of golf





Coaching: a leadership imperative

In a world where engagement and learning are central to competitiveness, those who do not or cannot coach are ill-equipped to wear the mantle of leadership. And it's not just individuals who benefit from coaching; extraordinary team performance is driven by extraordinary coaching, both from leaders and other team members.

The “golf course” gives you a benchmark against which you can evaluate your own coaching capability. Play your round of golf and mark your score after each hole. Where you shoot par or under – congratulations. Where you fall foul of a hazard, or make a bad shot, there is work ahead.

The questions and ideas have been drawn out of discussion with, and observation of, outstanding (business) coaches from around the world. Each question represents a key element of effective business coaching. The questions are self-explanatory. The “score card comments” have been included to enable those playing the course to better understand the thinking behind the design of each hole and the underlying learning suggested. Focus on how you believe others see you, not on how you would like to act. Keep track of your score. We have a clear sky and the forecast is that the rain will hold off. It's a great day for a winning round of golf.

The scoring is simple. If you score par on a par four hole your score for that hole is four. One over par and your score is five ... and so on.



SCORE CARD COMMENTS #1

Coaching is not a cure all. It's about modifying behaviour, not about changing the person. It embraces understanding, caring, curiosity and listening, but should not be confused with counselling. Chronic absenteeism, anger management and/or personality problems lie within the realm of counselling.

This is not to marginalize the role of emotion in the coaching experience. There are two important qualifiers, however:

1. The coachee must be allowed to set the emotional agenda; the coach must learn how to follow; and
2. The emotions we are seeking to uncover are those that underscore possibility, self-confidence, pride, passion, determination and the will to win.



SUNNINGDALE
465 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

I clearly understand the difference between coaching and counselling.

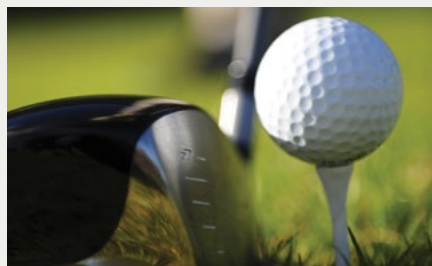
SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ In the rough *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



WINGED FOOT
453 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

My whole approach to coaching is skewed heavily to uncovering where the employee excels and then putting into place an agenda that allows them to do more of what they are already good at.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ In the water *Triple bogey (3 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #2

A winning coach creates value by tapping into the coachee's potential, by surfacing what they are passionate about and by inspiring the coachee to act. Coaching at its best is about uncovering and building on what's working – even if it happens only some of the time.

Focusing on what is missing is like colouring inside the lines; it hobbles the conversation and restricts what is possible. Mastery in coaching means accessing the whole canvas, moving beyond past practice and the status quo.

Coaching allows the employee to stand tall, and exploit their potential. Working to limit weakness is a great way to foster survival. Sadly, it does little to identify and nurture the capacity for excellence that lies within each of us.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #3

The coach is faced with the reality that team behaviour, team norms, and team censure are powerful forces in shaping and reinforcing (or not) individual behaviour. Coaching at an individual level is significantly enriched where:

- The team's vision and strategy are clear;
- Psychological safety is a way of life;
- Each team member understands their own role; and the role of everyone else on the team;
- Speed of action and "stretch" are ever-present rallying cries;
- Trust underscores everything the team does;
- Team interaction is marked by respect, optimism, openness and candour;
- Self-serving agendas are challenged; and
- We measure team effectiveness.



ROYAL
COUNTY DOWN
473 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

I have a well-earned reputation for coaching the team.

SCORE

Always

☐

Par

Mostly

☐

Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes

☐

Bad swing *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever

☐

Lost in the heather *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



CONGRESSIONAL
470 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

As a coach I change my approach to reflect the coachee's life stage, learning orientation and the organizational culture out of which they operate.

SCORE

Always

☐

Great putt

*Birdie
(1 under par)*

Mostly

☐

Poor lie

Bogey (1 over par)

Sometimes

☐

Sand trap

Double bogey (2 over par)

Hardly ever

☐

Two lost balls

*Quadruple bogey
(4 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #4

Cultural reach means recognizing that the career stage, multigenerational differences, approach to learning, energy, work-family balance and resilience are important coaching considerations.

Cultural reach also embraces the various sub-cultures inside the same organization. In one part of the organization, hierarchy, strict controls and short-term results rule.

Elsewhere a significant degree of freedom to act and a culture where new ideas, rather than short-term results, dominate.

In a third part of the business speed, extensive strategic partnerships, innovation, collaboration and temporary teams are the order of the day.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #5

It is helpful to think about the coaching conversation as benefiting from one of four quite different approaches.

1. Those who deliver results and live the organization's values. The need: development coaching. **Challenge!**
2. Those who live the values but don't consistently deliver results. The need: performance coaching. **Coach!**
3. Those who deliver results but don't always live the values. The need: honest and candid feedback. **Confront!**
4. Those who neither deliver results nor live the values. The need: the individual in question is either in the wrong role or the wrong organization. **Change!**



WHISTLING STRAITS
584 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 5

I know when to challenge, when to coach, when to confront and when to make a change.

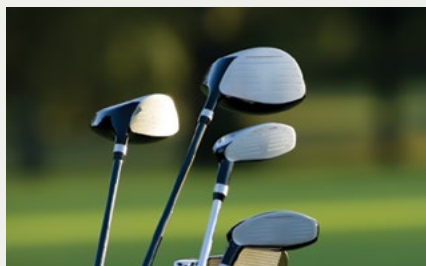
SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ In the water *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



OLYMPIC
437 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

As a coach I am highly attentive to my language. And knowing how imagery shapes behaviour, I am especially attentive to the use of metaphor.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Wild slice *Triple bogey (3 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #6

In a real sense no one can be coached. We can only coach ourselves. Thus, the role of the coach is to change the conversation the coachee is having with themselves. A masterful coach influences this conversation by:

- Drawing out the emerging business context to show the coachee why change is needed;
- Bringing the voice of the customer to the table;
- Allowing the coachee to surface their own story;
- Encouraging the coachee to pay attention to their inner dialogue;
- Shaping a new lens through which the coachee can reframe their perceived reality, e.g., sharing best-practice, measuring the right things;
- Introducing enabling resources into the coaching conversation, e.g., appropriate imagery, language and new metaphors; and
- Asking breakthrough questions.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #7

Everything the leader does is, in some respects, coaching. Attempts at coaching that are not rooted in authenticity become acts of manipulation.

The coach who emphasises listening but who isn't working to become a better listener is unlikely to be successful.

The coach who talks about commitment and focus but who is highly disorganized is open to ridicule.

The coach who emphasises the organization's vision and values but who doesn't live those values is part of the problem.

The coach who isn't open to being coached cannot grow as a coach.



ROYAL PORTRUSH
431 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

I often receive feedback that others find me authentic.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor drive *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Out of bounds *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



BALLYBUNION
163 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 3

When I coach I go out of my way to express that I truly believe the coachee will deliver what is being suggested.

SCORE

Always ☐ Hole in one! *Eagle (2 under par)*

Mostly ☐ Scrambled to save *Par*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Bogey (1 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Behind tree *Double bogey (2 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #8

What the coach *believes* is what the employee literally *perceives*. No matter what the coach might say, if they don't *believe* that the coachee can and will move to the next level, the coach becomes part of the problem.

Conversely, when the coach *really believes* that the employee *will* succeed that, in and of itself, becomes a powerful and formative part of the coaching experience.

Masterful coaching cradles the conversation in self-fulfilling intention devoid of doubt. If you don't believe, you can't succeed as a coach.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #9

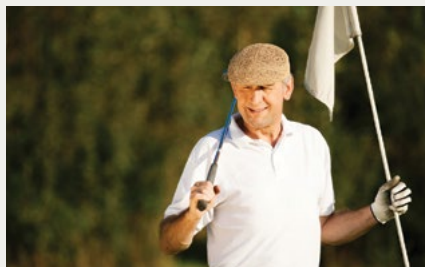
There are six building blocks in a successful coaching conversation:

1. What is the issue/opportunity? (The issue first raised is often not the real issue.)
2. What does future success look like? (Make tomorrow come alive. Create the video. Be there!)
3. What is happening today? (Agree on today's reality. Wherever possible, build on what works.)
4. What is the one change that would make the greatest difference? (Explore the options but focus on one change at a time.)
5. What specific, time-bounded goals will lead to a move forward? (Push for action/commitment and allocate resources.)
6. Feedback. (Ongoing, authentic, catch 'em doing it right.)

Like a jigsaw puzzle, although you need all of the "pieces" (building blocks) to complete the picture, it matters not in what order the pieces go down.



PINEHURST
441 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

When I coach I use a robust coaching "template" that allows me to quickly evaluate and adjust where I am in the coaching conversation.

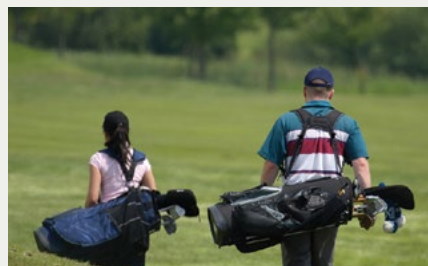
SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ In the trees *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



SHINNECOCK
HILLS
412 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

When I coach I feel that I am able to purge my mind of potential solutions.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Out of bounds *Triple bogey (3 over par)*
Lost ball

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #10

Sooner or later in the coaching conversation the underlying issue surfaces. This is when the experienced coach steps back and passes ownership to the coachee. It is also when a coach with less experience finds their mind flooded with ideas and suggestions that they absolutely know will work.

The dilemma? When we already have the solution, we stop listening. When we are trying to figure out the best way to persuade the coachee what they need to do, we are no longer present. When we already have the answer, we are saying "no" to engagement and learning. When we rely on yesterday's solution, we limit tomorrow's possibility.

Mastery in coaching means developing an ability to enter into the coaching conversation with a beginner's mind. It means being open to being surprised.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #11

Unless the coachee feels a sense of ownership of the agreed upon coaching outcomes, deep-rooted commitment is unlikely. Ownership is made more likely when the coach brings clarity to the conversation by:

- *Drawing out the real issue.* The issue that comes up first is often not the real issue. The real issue surfaces when the coach creates the space through silence, stillness, listening, and asking simple questions (e.g., “tell me more,” “dig deeper”) for the coachee to self-discover the underlying problem/opportunity.
- *Bringing tomorrow’s success to life.* This happens when the coach encourages the coachee to step out of today and create, in as much detail as possible, a vivid picture of tomorrow’s success. A “video” that allows the coachee to experience what success looks and feels like.
- *Uncovering the coachee’s capacity to deliver leadership of self.*



MERION
471 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

As a coach I am skilled in helping the coachee create a vivid and detailed “video” of tomorrow’s success.

SCORE

Always

☐ Par

Mostly

☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes

☐ In the brook *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever

☐ Wild slice *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



RIVIERA
479 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

I go out of my way to listen ... really listen.

SCORE

Always

☐ Par

Mostly

☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes

☐ Hit “Bogie’s Tree” *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever

☐ Out of bounds *Triple bogey (3 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #12

One of the fundamental building blocks of coaching is the leader’s capacity to listen.

Listening is far from a passive activity. Really listening means entering into a behavioural dance where intonation, posture, pacing and presentation are at least as important as content. To listen is to be aware of what is not said.

To listen is to be able to interpret the meaning of what is being said by being able to see the world through the speaker’s eyes. To listen is to step outside of the communication loop and “observe” what is happening. To listen is to give the gift of being present. To listen is an act of generosity that says, “I care.” To be a successful coach is to care!

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #13

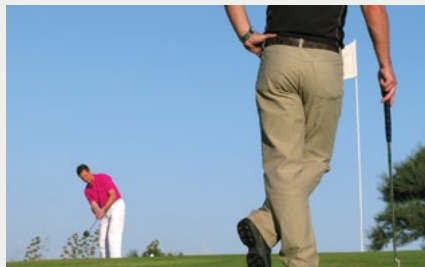
There are a number of legitimate and fruitful conversations that take place at work. The first is tell and listen: "I need you to do x by Friday." A second conversation is captured by the term tell and sell: "I need you to do x by Friday, because ..." A third conversation, problem solving, runs along the following lines: "I want you and I to sit down and discuss x so that between us we can figure out the best way forward."

Although meaningful, none of these three conversations is about coaching. Coaching is built on one very simple, but essential, principle ... the way forward lies with the employee. Put a different way, **coaching is an advice-free zone.**

As soon as the coach starts to give their suggestions ("Have you thought about..." "My suggestion is...") coaching is interrupted and problem solving has begun.



VALDERRAMA
368 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

When I coach I resist the temptation to slide into problem solving.

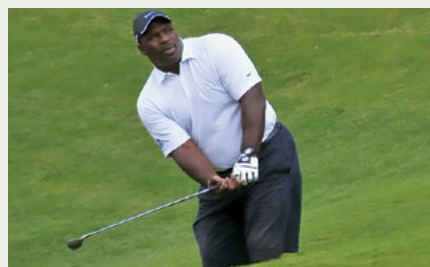
SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ In the pond *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



AUGUSTA
440 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

When appropriate, I bring story and personal experience to the coaching discussion. I do so in such a way that the initiative remains with the coachee.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor drive *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Behind tree *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Lost ball *Triple bogey (3 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #14

If the coachee is stuck, must the coach be limited to the role of a cheerleader/facilitator sitting on the sidelines? Is a wealth of experience to be set aside?

Enter story, and the role of the coach as mentor. When the coach offers input in the form of a story drawn from experience, the "advice" invariably lands in such a way that the initiative remains with the coachee.

What we are describing is a subtle shift from coaching to mentoring that allows the coach to put new ideas on the table (with discretion, and often as a last resort) without telegraphing a message to the coachee that says, "I am now taking control."

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #15

A successful coach displays mastery in asking great questions. A great question is one that changes the conversation the coachee is having with themselves.

To coach is to know that language (e.g., a question) creates imagery and that imagery shapes our behaviour.

To coach is to also understand that the mind cannot negate. When we tell our eight-year-old not to spill the milk, what their mind conjures up is an image of the milk being spilt. The outcome: we increase the probability that the youngster will spill the milk.

To coach is to ask questions that seek (create imagery around) what we want.



ROYAL ST.
GEORGE'S
453 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

In coaching situations I ask great questions. In particular, I am skilled in posing questions that ask for what is desired rather than those that reinforce what we don't want.

SCORE

Always

☐

Excellent drive
Excellent putt

Birdie (1 under par)

Mostly

☐

Poor lie

Par

Sometimes

☐

Sand trap

Bogey (1 over par)

Hardly ever

☐

Great drive

Terrible short game *Double bogey (2 over par)*



CYPRESS POINT
231 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 3

I am highly attuned to, and quick to challenge, defensive routines.

SCORE

Always

☐

40 ft. putt

Birdie (1 under par)

Mostly

☐

Scrambled to save

Par

Sometimes

☐

Sand trap

Bogey (1 over par)

Hardly ever

☐

In ocean

Double bogey (2 over par)

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #16

Although stretch and agility are central to how an organization "wins," not all employees want to let go of the sense of security that the status quo (mistakenly) provides.

As a result, to coach is to be attentive to and challenge what can best be described as "defensive routines." These routines often surface as follows:

- *The real problem here is...* Response: "Let's focus on what **you** can do differently."
- *I will never be able to ...* Response: "What would be happening if you were able to ..."
- *Everyone knows that x simply doesn't work.* Response: "According to whom?"
- *We already have an excellent approach.* Response: "Compared to what or whom?"

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #17

Coaching isn't a fad or an occasional activity, it's how excellent leaders win through talent. Coaching is a discipline where:

- Optimism, affirmation and the spirit of "catching people doing it right" energize the coachee.
- Not every coaching conversation needs to deliver a home run. Successful coaching moves the employee in the right direction.
- To be a coach is to be tough-minded. When faced with a difficult conversation, having the facts, timing, candour, openness and a focus on the need to act become essential coaching capabilities.
- Not everyone is open to and/or wants to be coached. No matter how successful their performance is today, an individual who resists appropriate coaching is about to become a problem.



ST. ANDREWS
461 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

I balance going out of my way to "catch people doing it right" with, as demanded, being tough minded.

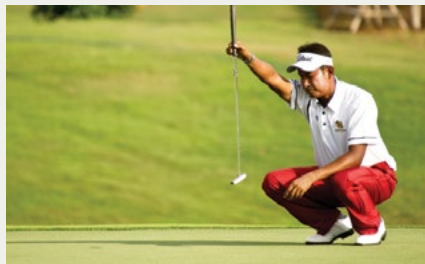
SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ In the rough *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Road bunker *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Lost ball *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



PEBBLE BEACH
543 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 5

As a coach, I take the time to follow up. Indeed, I always follow up. If I have a strength as a coach it is how I follow up.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Front bunker *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Out of bounds *Triple bogey (three over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #18

If the agreement coming out of the coaching conversation isn't written down, it won't happen.

The coachee must understand that anything agreed upon during the coaching conversation is far more than the pursuit of possibility.

The outcome of a successful coaching conversation is a hard commitment. There is no "try" or "I will do my best" implied.

Coaching is ultimately, however, about the work. If someone is in the wrong role and/or engaged in work that provides little stretch, all the coaching in the world will be for naught. Similarly, if the new behaviour agreed on during the coaching conversation cannot be applied shortly thereafter, little value is created.



Hole

Going over your scorecard

Learning restricted to new knowledge is incomplete. Even practice, important as it is, doesn't deliver new behaviour. Change demands insight, practice **and reflection**. As you relax after your round of golf it will be helpful to reflect on the following:

HOLE

YOUR SCORE

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Coaching and counselling should not be confused | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. | At its best, coaching builds on strengths | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. | Coaching the team | <input type="text"/> |
| 4. | A masterful coach delivers cultural reach | <input type="text"/> |
| 5. | The four conversation themes: Challenge, Coach, Confront, and Change | <input type="text"/> |
| 6. | To coach is to change the conversation the coachee has with themselves | <input type="text"/> |
| 7. | To coach is to be authentic | <input type="text"/> |
| 8. | What the coach believes makes a huge difference to the coaching outcome | <input type="text"/> |
| 9. | Knowing where you are in the coaching conversation is essential | <input type="text"/> |
| 10. | A beginner's mind | <input type="text"/> |
| 11. | Helping the coachee create a vivid "video" of tomorrow's success | <input type="text"/> |
| 12. | A successful coach makes listening a key capability | <input type="text"/> |
| 13. | Successful coaching moves beyond problem solving | <input type="text"/> |
| 14. | Sharing your story (mentoring) | <input type="text"/> |
| 15. | A successful coach asks great questions | <input type="text"/> |
| 16. | To coach is to be attentive to defensive routines | <input type="text"/> |
| 17. | To coach is to "catch people doing it right" | <input type="text"/> |
| 18. | Follow up | <input type="text"/> |



Today's score card

Under 72 **World Class!** You can work on anyone's team.

72 – 74 You are a good coach. You operate as a professional. This does not mean, however, that you should stop working on your game.

75 – 77 Work harder. Your basic technique is, for the most part, sound.

78 – 85 You must work on your coaching skills if you are to progress and succeed as a leader.

Over 85 You are communicating to others that when it comes to people management you are a “good amateur.” Do not expect to seriously compete for a key leadership role with your current level of coaching competency.

Remember, the course has been scored with today's business context in mind. Increased competition, a changing environment and disruption generally will make the course far more difficult tomorrow. Even if you are at par today, continuous learning and improvement are essential. Read through all the questions and, in terms of your current situation and role, identify below the three areas where you must focus initially to improve your coaching skills. If you can't coach, you can't lead!

To improve my coaching skills I must focus on: (define the three most significant)

1	
2	
3	



John O. Burdett

In-the-moment coaching.

According to Gallup, employees who receive regular recognition are 4x more likely to be engaged. Go out of your way to “Catch ‘em doing it right.”

JOHN O. BURDETT has worked in over 40 countries as an executive and as a consultant for businesses that are household names. He continues to work on leadership development and organization culture for some of the world’s largest corporations.

In 2019, his work with ABB’s top 240 executives received a major international award for the most innovative leadership development initiative of that year. His ongoing partnership with TRANSEARCH International means that his proprietary work on talent acquisition, in any one year, successfully supports many hundreds of top leadership appointments on six continents.

He has written extensively on executive coaching and was awarded international coach of the year by the Finnish Institute of International Trade. Business graduates at the University of Texas indicated that his material on coaching was the single most valuable learning source they took away from their undergraduate degree. He has also coached numerous executive teams around

the world in how to coach. He currently coaches a select group of CEOs.

Apart from a range of corporate leadership workshops, he has taught at business schools on both sides of the Atlantic. His work on the MBA program at the University of Toronto received a teaching excellence award. John holds a doctorate in management development and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

In addition to numerous business articles and twice being awarded article of the year by MCB publications, John has published 16 books on leadership, talent management, coaching and organization culture. A number of them bestsellers. His most recent book is a fully revised version of his international bestselling book on executive integration: *Without Breaking Stride*. To download his current business articles go to www.transearch.com/orxestra/downloads

