



Part Three

Covid Book Series

Leadership, Learning
and Agility: the

WAY OF THE DOLPHIN



TRANSEARCH
YOUR WORLD PARTNER IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

John O. Burdett



Leadership, Learning
and Agility: the
**WAY OF THE
DOLPHIN**

John O. Burdett

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The TRANSEARCH COVID BOOK SERIES

Welcome to **Part Three** in the TRANSEARCH Covid Book Series. **Part Three** explores the need for leadership agility and what that implies: ***Leadership Agility and Learning – The Way of the Dolphin.***

Part one, *Coming Down the Mountain*, looks at how to come out of this crisis stronger. Recognising, as we move forward, how important organization culture is, **Part Two outlines *the Culture Conversation***. Drawing on the reality that tomorrow's organization will be a team of teams, **Part Four** examines what it means to be an outstanding team: ***Great Organizations Are Made Up of Great Teams***. **Part Five** moves beyond leadership as a philosophy and drills down into essential skills – ***When the Trees Get Bigger and the Forest Gets Deeper, It's Time to Sharpen Your Saw.***

A Century of Change

It's fair to say that there was more change during the 20th century than there was in the previous 2,000 years. At the turn of the last century, even in developed countries, child labour was common with children as young as ten in full-time work. In fact, they represented 6% of the labour force. In the US, at the opening of the century, there were only 19% of women in the workforce. By 2000 the number was 60%. In 1900, in the US, 38% of the population worked on farms. At the close of the century that would be only 3%. The biggest shift, however, was from primary production jobs to professional and other service occupations. As we moved into the 21st century, 78% of all employees worked in service jobs. Demographic changes were no less significant. The population aged and became more diverse. In 1900, the life expectancy of a newborn was 47.3 years; in 1999 it was 77.0 years.

Statistics don't truly reveal the stories behind the numbers. Let's look at one example. In 1900, there were over 11,000 hansom cabs on the streets of London and several thousand horse-drawn buses. Each of the latter needed 12 horses to get through the day. It is estimated that there were 50,000 horses on the streets of London each and every day. New York, reputedly, had a horse population of 100,000. When you consider that a horse produces between 15lb and 20lb of manure a day – to say nothing of the flies and spread of diseases like typhus – that's a lot of horse dung. In 1894, a *Times of London* headline read, "In 50 years, every street in London will be buried under nine feet of manure. In 1900, in the US, there were 3,400 companies making carriages and other

horse-drawn vehicles. A similar number existed in England. Producing a carriage was not only a highly skilled venture involving foundry, carpentry, wheelwright and machining skills but, of necessity, all of those involved had to work as an integrated team. In the political lexicon of this century, they were “good jobs.”

A somber lesson to those somewhat skeptical about the speed of change in the 21st century, in less than a decade-and-a-half, the prophetic claim made by the *London Times* was proved to be, well – horse manure. A combination of the ability to refine oil, the internal combustion engine, electricity, the assembly line (1914) and the know-how needed (perhaps the biggest innovation of all) to build large-scale organizations meant that those who worked in the carriage trade – and many like them – were cast aside. Surplus to requirements. Between 1908 and 1927, Ford built 15 million Model T automobiles. The good news? Londoners didn’t have to wade waist-deep in horse manure to get to work. The not such good news? The jobs that were lost were gone forever. How many wheelwrights, carriage drivers, blacksmiths, grooms, buggy whip designers and/or harness makers do you know? To complete the picture, we had the “war to end all wars” (1914-1918) and a pandemic, which took 50 million lives (1918/19).

We Must Address Covid – We Must Also Look Beyond It

The past is, prologue.¹ The parallel between the changes that ravaged society and reinvented business a century ago and what, in its own way, is being reenacted today, is too glaring to ignore. Except, the scope and speed of change today is, by a quantum step, far greater. And in the fullness of time, the potential consequences go well beyond societal and industrial change. We are facing an existential threat to not just a way of life but to, “life.”

One of the lessons the Covid crisis forces us to face is that the future isn’t linear. You can’t prepare for heightened uncertainty with a single plan. “Scenario planning,” meanwhile, should embrace both probable and improbable future events. Expect the unexpected. If your organization isn’t wired to accommodate, adapt, adjust and even take advantage of the unfolding uncertainty, you don’t have a problem – it’s unlikely you will stay in business. There are implications here for investment. The Board supports capital expenditure when its members are confident that there will be a meaningful return on the investment. Confidence, in turn, is a product of: (1) the top team having delivered on past “promises;” (2) the quality of the supporting analysis/projection; and (3) that, in the way the business is run, unexpected problems/challenges will not derail the agreed way forward. To wit, expect in future that Boards of Directors will demand more than the traditional, unidimensional strategy.

The past is, indeed, prologue. Over four centuries ago (1599), Shakespeare wrote, “**All the world’s a stage**, And **all** the men and women merely players;” ... “And one man in his time plays many parts.”²

1 *The Tempest*. Act 2, Scene I, William Shakespeare (1610)

2 *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII

The stage: the environment, realignment of the economic order globally, breakthrough technology, new materials, robotics, cobotics, uncertainty, ongoing disruption **and** a global health crisis. The latter, a human tragedy – the dark shadow of which will long loom large.

The players: *suppliers* who recognise that data is a competitive advantage – *customers* who demand more innovation, greater convenience, lower prices and ever-shorter lead times – *employees* who want to work for an organization that: (1) is built around a compelling purpose; (2) matches opportunity with capability; and (3) offers lifestyle flexibility – *society* where shareholder capital is viewed as both undeserved and unwarranted and where the collective voice of **all** of the other stakeholders is gaining political sway. Diversity, fairness, social justice, racial discrimination, access to education (starting with universal broadband) and the growing imbalance between the richest and the poorest amongst us being but part of that chorus.

Playing many parts: leaders who can work concurrently in different cultures, faced with very different problems and who bring to each challenge a range of tools, solutions and approaches. In the text that follows, we refer to this emerging leadership imperative as “The Way of the Dolphin.” It’s a 21st century leadership capability best defined by three terms: “Agility,” “Speed of learning” and “Resilience.”

See also the assessment at the end of the text that asks, **How Good a Coach Are You?** If you can’t coach, you can’t lead!

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Agility is a Way to Think

We have still to discover the extent to which COVID-19 has changed the business landscape. Clearly, office leasing, the recruitment industry, retail, and business travel will never be the same. Homes for the elderly, university courses, cruise lines, and distance employment will, similarly, be very different. We can also assume that the emotional impact of the Covid crisis will affect the business confidence – uncertainty just got more uncertain – for years to come. Beyond that, the road map is marked – “hazards ahead.” The destination – “uncertainty.” Welcome to the future!

When the next Black Swan lies in wait, organization agility isn’t something that is “nice to have.” It’s about survival. The problem? Culture is a system and like any system only as strong as its weakest part. You can’t sprinkle agility on the organization. You can’t add agility piecemeal. Agility has to be embedded into every aspect of the organization’s culture. Be it – scenario planning or systems; the brand or the behavioural interview; shared values or structure; problem solving or process; diversity or dialogue; compensation or competencies; mindset or measurement; talent management or trust; learning or leadership – “agility” must be a fundamental building block in the organization’s DNA.

From my own work on organization culture, it’s clear that the majority of organizations are far less agile than the emerging business environment demands. And as we come down the COVID mountain, that shortfall will become an ever more limiting feature of competitiveness. The question becomes, “Where to start?” Agility has to be integral to the organization’s design. It has to be evident in the organization’s value proposition. It has to be built into the value chain and be apparent in every sales and/or service interface with the customer. It’s a process. It’s a way to act. More than anything else, however, agility is a way to think. It’s a mindset. As such, without “leadership” you still ain’t got much. Not the leadership that got us here – but a way to be that exudes, encompasses, encourages, and expresses agility in everything the leader does. The Way of the Dolphin.



Bass and the Shark

Dan is big, gruff, and aggressive. Command and control are his two best friends. And yes, of course he is, in his own opinion at least, the smartest person in the room. In meetings, his favourite game is “Gotcha!” At work, it is said, one crosses him at one’s peril. In life, he is treated with a mixture of awe, fear, and respect. Talented, experienced, and successful, on the surface at least, Dan simply consumes the weaker species he encounters. He just loves devouring these “bass.” After all, Dan cannot deny his nature. He is a shark.

Identify a tough job – one where the nature of the problem means “going to war with the competition” or “taking the company by the scruff of the neck” – and the quest will be on to find a shark. Once hired, Dan, or someone much like him, is in business and look out bass!

This is not to say that bass are helpless. Bass have a whole range of defense mechanisms. There are a lot of them and, when faced with attack, they are capable of forming strongly bonded teams. Teams that develop strategies aimed primarily at warding off attack. Teams whose goal is to maintain the status quo and who take solace in describing why the suggested initiatives are destined to fail.

Nor, one should add, are bass stupid. Bright, articulate, and often highly educated, bass are particularly adept at either hiding in the weeds or muddying the waters in which they swim. Concealment is realised through a range of well-honed tactics but is especially effective when positioned as, “It may work elsewhere, but we are different.” The conversation invariably starts with some variation of the phrase, “Yes, but ...” Underpinning this approach is not the forlorn hope that delay, abstraction, or rumour-mongering will end in the death of the shark. As a ploy it’s primarily about creating a vacuum of action, with the presumption that the shark will move on to new and different prey. It is also a defense that has historically enjoyed a good degree of success. One should never underestimate the power of the informal organization!

The human tragedy is that bass are capable of so much more. Within a truly agile organization culture and given work that matches opportunity with capability, bass will willingly move into deeper and more challenging waters. As a species, we are copying machines. Given the opportunity, bass will readily switch on their mirror gene and model the behaviour of the right leader. Meanwhile, if your middle managers are disengaged, disappointed, and disconnected, as engagement surveys on both sides of the Atlantic suggest, you are already putting the future of your organization in peril.

Why not hire a shark? If the competition are acting in a predatory manner, surely a shark is demanded?





On a *prima facie* basis there is, indeed, a case for a competitive, aggressive, action-oriented leader – even though he/she is likely to generate a good deal of interpersonal debris along the way. After all, shareholder capital still dominates how success is measured in the boardroom. Focus on short-term results and a shark is likely to be your leader of choice. “We have a strong bottom line. Creating tomorrow’s customer; growing the business organically; attracting, retaining and developing talent; meaningful succession; competing on ideas; and building great teams are clearly important, but we will get to all that in good time.”

I have deliberately described the shark using expansive language. Not all sharks are quite as crass as outlined. Many mask their more predatory instincts with a carefully crafted veneer of courtesy combined with the illusion of cooperation. Support, help, and/or enable a shark, and they can even be charming. Toxic behaviour isn’t always readily apparent. Introduce crisis, conflict, and/or confrontation, however, and the inner shark will likely surface.

Is the term “bass” merely a literary device or are organizations, as the term conveys, regularly populated by large numbers of employees who amount to little more than pawns on a numbers dominated checkerboard? In support of the bass metaphor, it’s worth pointing out that Gallup’s most recent research into employee engagement indicates that only 34% of employees in the US were highly engaged. If you operate outside of the US, you can take little solace from that number. The US has the highest engagement scores of any country conducting meaningful research. And don’t be misled by consultants conducting engagement surveys who provide feedback that 80% plus of employees are “engaged.” They have a vested interest in making the client look good and they do so through the simple expediency of adding “somewhat engaged” and “fully engaged” together to come up with a generous, feel-and-look-good “engaged” metric.





A further word about engagement. In working with executive teams, we invariably ask, “To what extent do you perceive that you are managing your culture?”¹ It’s an important question because the research provides clear evidence that, in managing all of the elements that drive culture, organizations are far better at landing the agreed strategy as well as significantly impacting the bottom line (no small thing).² In the sessions described, there is often the misplaced assumption that the engagement survey is a meaningful measure of culture. Nothing could be further from the truth. At best, the questions in the typical engagement survey make up no more than 20% of the factors that shape the organization’s culture. There is a powerful lesson here. Working on engagement (invaluable as it may be) without addressing all of the other elements that make up the organization’s culture is the business equivalent of trying to drive your car with three of the wheels missing. Just because you sense something is happening doesn’t mean you are going anywhere. There is a good case to be made that the crew of the Titanic were “engaged.” It still hit an iceberg!

Agility and Speed of Learning

Business leaders, in recognising a post COVID-19 world presents a significantly heightened level of uncertainty, have little choice but to forge, to the extent possible, alignment between the organization’s emerging culture and (1) factors external to the business that cannot be anticipated (ongoing disruption), and (2) what tomorrow’s customer will be willing to pay for (business model). To succeed and even survive, leaders must learn not how to manage change (an outdated and ambiguous term at best), but how to ride the crest of change, how to use the challenge inherent in uncertainty to propel the business into a successful future, and how to recognise the limits of coercion and harness the energy drawn out of creative tension and a compelling purpose.

In terms of day-to-day performance, creative tension involves two organizational imperatives – agility and organizational learning. First, agility and with it, by implication, the need to push decision-making as close to the customer as possible. When quality and service concerns from customers are met with a response along the lines of “that is not our policy” or “I will have to ask my supervisor,” what you are hearing isn’t merely a rehearsed response, it’s the death-knell of your organization. Agility, meanwhile, no matter the form it takes, draws on the abiding quest for simplicity. That being understood, simplicity and, its alter ego, responsiveness are far more about mindset than, essential though it is, process reinvention.

- 1 To answer this question, go to the TRANSEARCH International website. There you will find the *Are You Managing Your Culture?* interactive assessment. Even better, go through it with your team.
- 2 “CEOs who insist on rigorously measuring and managing all cultural elements that drive performance more than double the odds that their strategies will be executed. And over the long term, they deliver triple the total return to shareholders that other companies deliver.” Carolyn Dewar, Martin Hirt, and Scott Keller. *The Mindsets and Practices of Excellent CEOs* (October 2019).



To be agile you have to program yourself to think “simple.” But not too simple.

The second imperative, organizational learning, is a topic that has garnered a great deal of interest but is poorly applied. Without an inherent ability within the body of the organization to learn from experience, reframe established practices at critical points on the journey, develop a heightened capacity to act, and, as needed, reinvent how the business does business, tomorrow is destined to be a replay of the past. COVID-19 is many things but, perhaps above all else, it’s a wakeup call for society and business alike. Make no mistake ... tomorrow will be different! The pertinent question becomes, “Will you?”

Learning is initiated by an experience. An action which, in turn, spawns a question. The quality of the question dictating the nature of the learning. Learning unfolds in one of three ways. One: simple learning – striving to do what we have always done, but better (instruction). Two: learning how to learn – moving down a new path (exploration). Three: learning how to learn limited by the imagination of those involved – transformation, innovation, creative destruction, and reinvention (play). Each of those learning approaches shapes not only the outcome but at each stage the speed of learning increases exponentially. Arguably, the only truly sustainable competitive advantage is speed of learning. Conversely, learn slower than the competition, even for a short time, and it may be impossible to recover.³ Without time set aside for meaningful reflection, of course, there can be no learning.

Learning to act and think about the world in a new way is not a linear process. It is much more like climbing a mountain. A base camp is established, and only once the base has been consolidated can the next camp be set up and supplied. Equally important, assumptions about what it means to be a leader have to be redefined at each stage of the journey. Agility and its handmaiden, learning, represent a journey, not a destination: a journey covering three Territories, (T1 – instruction, T2 – exploration, T3 – play); a journey dependent upon the right leadership; a journey punctuated by inherent discontinuity. See **Figure one**.

The three learning scenarios outlined are not merely devices to explain what, in the past, somewhat inadequately, was referred to as “leadership style.” Indeed, the three scenarios portray how learning unfolds in virtually every walk of life. The world of art is but one example. In the 18th century, visitors to Venice – the wealthy, at least – patronised painters such as Canaletto. High on their list of “must have” purchases being a faithful rendering of an aspect of Venetian life, the Grand Canal being especially popular. There is no mystery, symbolism, imagination, or interpretation depicted in these paintings. They were simply a mirror of real life, the “postcard” of the day that just happened to be painted in oils. The viewer’s experience? *Simple learning*.

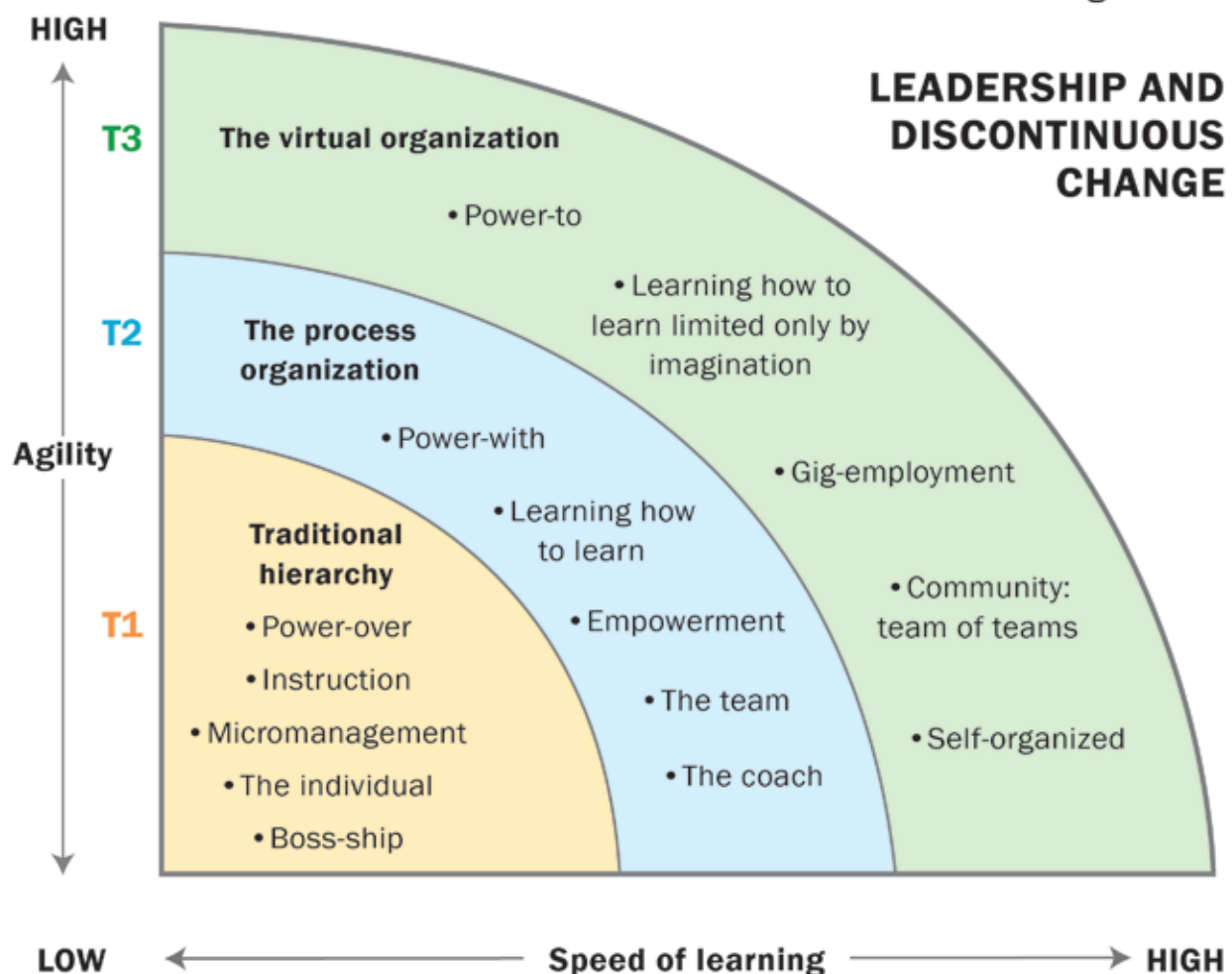
3 One wonders to what extent today’s Board of Directors is providing this kind of counsel. As we become fully immersed in this turbulent and rapidly changing business environment, there is a compelling case to revisit Board capability.



Following the introduction of photography in the 1820s, the second half of the 19th century witnessed a new art form: the impressionist school. Journalists at the time wrote that it wasn't real art – “merely an impression.” Exploring the effect of light, colour, and mood, impressionist artists painted with thick brush strokes applied quickly. The feeling the painting conveyed being more important than any sense of detail. From the viewer's standpoint, every time you look at an impressionist painting you are offered something new – *learning how to learn*.

The 20th century introduced abstract art. Jackson Pollock was once asked what one of his paintings meant. “What do you want it to mean?” he replied. *Learning how to learn limited by imagination*. The mind at play! As a point of interest, although there are exceptions, the market value of canvases in each art form (T1 – classical, T2 – impressionist, T3 – modern) rises exponentially.

Figure one





Much as one might peel an onion, beneath agility and learning lies individual and, by implication, the team's mindset: how each of us interprets the world – the mental model we access to define reality. Our assumptions about work and organizational success frame our behaviour. To survive in the white-water we have entered demands culture savvy and, above all else, an ability to quickly appraise and respond to the ever-changing world around us. The new reality? Personal survival is ultimately about how resilient and agile we are as a leader. And resilience isn't simply about "bouncing back." It means coming out of a world-shaking event like COVID-19 even stronger.

The journey from T1 to T2 and then on to T3 is not for every organization. Those operating within a commodity-type market, where the value proposition is exclusively drawn out of the price of the product or service, often decide that a T1 organization is an appropriate fit with a business model built around being the low-cost producer. Managing a group of young software engineers on another continent and a T1 approach may be the way to go. Operating a mine in a developing country where the work population is poorly educated and/or where they lack a common language, then T1 may well be a sound decision.

This does not mean that all T1 businesses eschew empowerment and employee involvement. Nor does it mean that a shark is the ideal leadership choice. Through an ethos of continuous improvement and employee development (instruction), a number of leaders have pushed the T1 model to the very edge of what is possible ("enlightened" T1). The dilemma being, because such organizations are very slow to change they are ponderous competitively. The very antithesis of agility.

A good many organizations (e.g., Toyota, 3M, Google) have evolved, what can best be described as, a "parallel structure" – organization forms where, although the day-to-day work gives little opportunity for initiative (T1), time is set aside to allow front-line teams to redesign the business process that contains the work being undertaken (T2), and/or are given the opportunity to help create tomorrow's product/service (T2/T3).

Other business sectors have little choice but to move to an organization form dominated by T2 and beyond. Here we leave the bass in the weeds and start to find a far more engaged and fully contributing employee. Teams who, as the culture moves into T3, start to self-organize. Organizations that embrace innovation and reinvention as an extension of the freedom to act that a T2 or T3 culture affords. Businesses where the design of the organization (structure) mirrors, given the choice, how people would choose to work together.

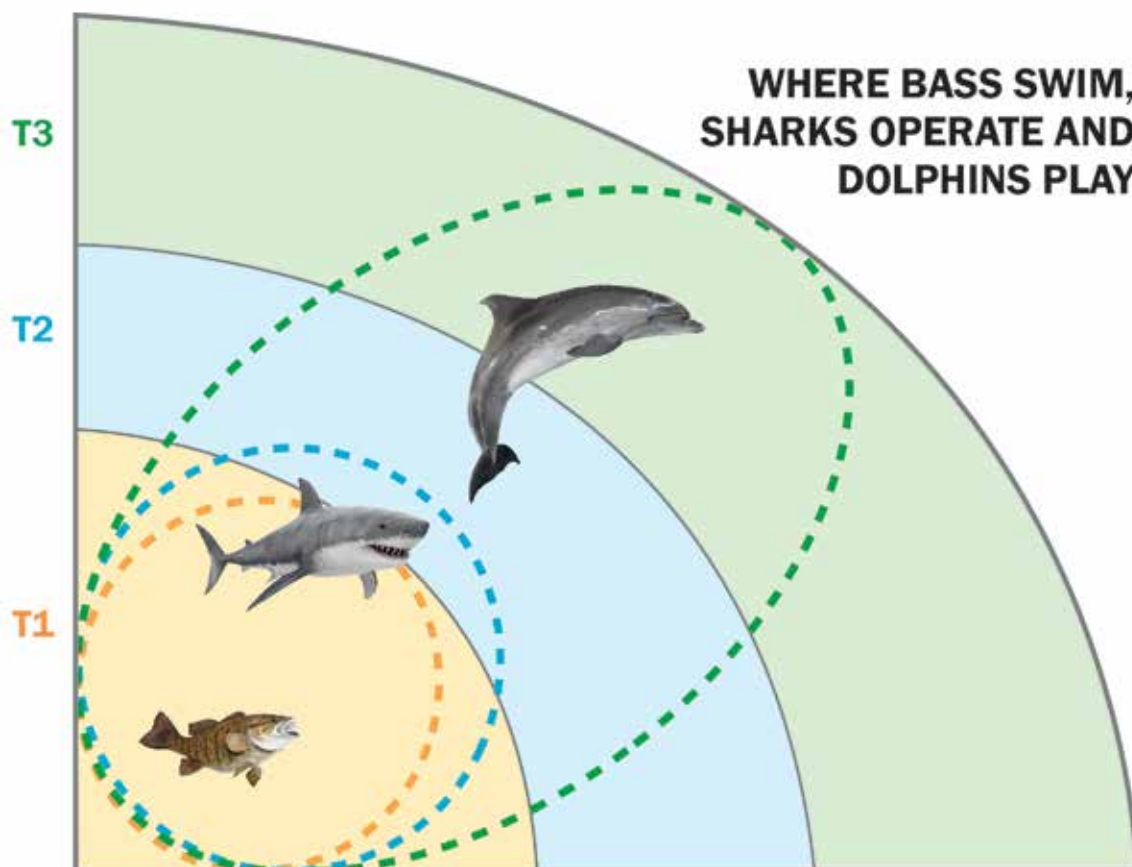
The ultimate arbiter of organizational effectiveness is the marketplace. Customers vote with their feet. Where the value proposition is based on a compelling customer experience, where the business model means the product or service must be continuously reinvented, or where access to intellectual capital defines market success, a T1 way of working will not deliver the level of innovation, organizational agility, or speed of responsiveness needed.



Artificial Intelligence/robotics⁴ will change this assumption in the future but, as a simple economic reality, T1 work, everything else being equal, sooner or later migrates offshore to a low-wage economy.⁵ Not so fast! The need to be close to the market, tax advantages, security, transportation costs, and a host of other reasons often mitigate against moving offshore. The T1 organization isn't a throwback. It isn't obsolete. Indeed, even in advanced economies, in more than a few business sectors, it is still the dominant form – and from our own work with clients, far more prevalent than you might think. Microsoft, Apple, and Google get all the publicity but, in truth, they are outliers.

If the journey being described (T1 to T2 and, where needed, to T3) is not a journey every organization will want to embark on, it is equally not a rite of passage that all leaders are

Figure two



4 T1 work is the sweet spot for introducing AI/robotics.

5 A T1 mindset in a service/consulting business, similarly, opens the door to technology-based approaches. Without a distinct (ideally, unique), future-oriented, bespoke, value proposition – activities that amount to a commodity (easily replicated) are prime targets for those bringing advanced digital solutions to the marketplace.



capable of charting. Sharks thrive in a world of aggression, survival, one-on-one competitiveness, inflating one's worth, blaming everyone except themselves, manipulation, and revenge psychology. Looking good is, not infrequently, far more important than doing good. As such, they are ill-equipped to operate where empathy, listening, coaching, a serving spirit, inclusion, and stripping out the rules define what it means to be a successful leader. See **Figure two**.

As an aside, it's clear that since the turn of a new century, a number of those voted into very high political office, at a national level, represent the very epitome of what it means to be a shark. There is a never-to-be-forgotten lesson here. In a time of crisis, the very last person you want to hand power to is a shark.

The Way of the Dolphin

Elegant, highly intelligent, fast, and adaptive, the dolphin represents a powerful metaphor for today's leadership; an apt descriptor for an individual capable of moving, as needed, across all three of the territories described.

The dolphin seeks collaboration, looks to improve effectiveness by impacting the total system, and strives to expand rather than exploit its natural boundaries. The difference is most clearly identified in how a dolphin creates a powerbase. A shark reaches for the organization chart and emphasises title and formal authority. The dolphin asks a new question.

Apart from speed and elegance, the dolphin has a number of natural assets that makes it the true master of its environment. Comfortable swimming in harmony with others, it can communicate across all three territories. The shark, on the other hand, sees other species as natural prey who its kind are programmed to attack. Weakness and hesitation are a shark's lifeblood. Dolphins respond to signals of concern in an empathetic and caring way. As for bass, in a world ruled by a shark, they, for the most part, spend their lives complaining that things are not as they used to be.

Sharks are always on the move. Egocentric in their actions, they like to fill the room with the energy of their own voice. This is their hunting song. When listening, they do so not in a supportive, empathetic way, but with the self-interest of the hunter. Shark language is punctuated by the use of war-like and combative stories and metaphors which, in turn, are emphasised by the short, stabbing, finger-pointing or chopping motion of the predator delivering the kill.

Whereas difficulty with ambiguity and lack of a cohesive vision limit the shark to a relatively small part of the pool, the dolphin is quickly identifiable by its ability to traverse the water available – even expand the size of the pool. See **Figure three**. The language of the dolphin



is rich and compelling. The dolphin uses words to paint a picture not merely of the way things are, but the way things need to be. Through rich and vibrant imagery they create tomorrow in the room, today. A master of language and story, the dolphin's metaphors are inclusive, often encompassing humour and drawing examples from nature to reframe perception. The dolphin, unlike the bass, is also comfortable swimming at any depth and, with one thrust from its powerful tail, can move from the surface to the bottom of the pool and be equally comfortable – be it organizational level, dealing with concepts, international exposure, and/or involvement in operations.

If there is one significant difference between the shark and the dolphin, it's in the area of trust. People will respect a shark but they will never really trust them. By comparison, in that they put the needs of others first, trust is the abiding contribution that a dolphin brings to selling, the team, and building a constituency.

Loyalty is a somewhat different matter. From my own experience, I have observed that subordinates will often display what appears to be an extraordinary degree of loyalty to





their shark boss. This seems to be a contradiction in terms, that is, until you realise that the loyalty in question is a product of fear. Stripped of self-esteem, feeling unworthy, and bruised and battered by negative feedback, such loyalty is based on insecurity and the belief that working for someone else would likely entail unnecessary career risk. Paradoxically, the shark often displays loyalty to a few chosen “insiders.” This would appear to contradict how you might expect a shark to behave. Until you recognise that what is involved is an unhealthy, mutual dependency that neither the shark or those chosen few he/she is loyal to

LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY

Figure three

BASS	SHARK	DOLPHIN
Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages what has been Stays within the established boundaries Needs rules When things go wrong, lowers goals 	Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages what is (“bass-ship”) Erects boundaries Likes rules When things go wrong, attributes blame 	Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages what can be Plays across boundaries Strips out the rules When things go wrong, reinvents the game
Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive 	Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusive 	Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive
Metaphors and stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defeat Survival Why things will fail 	Metaphors and stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> War Combat Sport 	Metaphors and stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature Heroes/heroines within the enterprise Reframe mindset
Quest: Avoidance of blame	Quest: Personal reputation	Quest: Balance head, hand, heart and spirit
Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependency Lose/win 	Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence Win/lose 	Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdependence Win/win
Power base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strength in numbers 	Power base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal authority 	Power base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration
Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muddying the water The enemy is out there Resistance to change 	Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management by numbers Short-term alliances with other sharks Intimidation 	Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compelling purpose Example A serving spirit
Chemistry of success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear 	Chemistry of success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Command and control 	Chemistry of success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed of learning
Measure of success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survival 	Measure of success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shareholder capital 	Measure of success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder capital



know how or want to break away from. If you are a shark you need someone around who, without complaint, you can use to regularly purge the worst aspects of your personality.

As indicated earlier, because what you see is not always what you get, a well-disguised shark can learn to come across, at least initially, as a dolphin. In case of doubt, the difference between the shark and the dolphin can be found in their approach to business development. The shark is, at heart, wedded to the transaction and making the immediate sale. How can we make money from this? A dolphin defines success in terms of value creation and lasting partnerships. What do we need to do to build a long-term relationship? Successful business development is predicated on building a value proposition focusing on where the customer will be and not where it's perceived that they currently are.

A further point of difference is that the dolphin invariably reaches out and asks to be coached – by another dolphin! The shark, meanwhile, sees coaching as a sign of weakness. It can be argued that, in an empowered workplace, leaders who can't coach can't lead. Put more pragmatically, a millennial workforce won't accept them as a leader. See the coaching assessment at the conclusion of the book: *How Good A Coach Are You?*

When things get tough, with practice, bass are easy to spot. They are the ones hiding in a hole in the coral. When a challenge is presented they ask, "Why me?" The bass is the one who comes into your office to complain but who personally doesn't want to do anything about the problem. Bass resolve conflict by appearing to go along. When the economy is bad, bass ask for contracts that guarantee security of employment. When the economy is good, bass start a chorus of why things are about to get worse.

The dolphin is perceptive and, with exceptional powers of hearing, is quick to identify the needs of others. The bass, hardwired to survive, has a sensory system that alerts it to the distress call of other bass; it is equally highly attuned kinetically to the physical and emotional noise emitted by the shark. The shark operates from instinct. If challenged, the shark attacks. If a high performing bass is the object of such an attack, the shark may well back off. After all, the bass can always be devoured at will. For the bass, this symbiotic interaction fuels reluctant and passive followership and with it the enduring belief that challenging the status quo is a career limiting initiative. For the shark, the behaviour of the bass is yet more proof that hierarchy, rules, and "bass-ship" (the need to dominate the bass) are essential ingredients in the leadership mix.

If the shark's need to attack uncovers a dolphin, it is only because the dolphin chooses to swim to those limited parts of the pool the shark inhabits. If attacked, like a judo expert, the dolphin uses the shark's negative energy against itself. The dolphin responds to problems by reframing the context, creating strategic opportunities, encouraging diversity, building the team, and welcoming constructive conflict as an opportunity to generate new ideas. All this



is performed with elegance and speed of action that the shark cannot even contemplate, let alone match.

Although it's possible to coach upwards, if you are being offered a new position and you are striving to hone your dolphin leadership capability, you should think twice before working for a shark. Dolphins confuse and frustrate the heck out of a shark, and a frustrated shark is not a happy shark.

Conclusion

Can sharks or bass become dolphins?⁶ Each of us have elements of dolphin behaviour built into our psyche. It takes courage, however, to tear down the protective barricade of status and position. It takes tenacity to swim out into uncharted waters, to approach established problems in new ways, and to respond to aggression with compelling language, listening mastery, strategic imagery, and interpersonal subtlety. It takes a special kind of “leadership reach” to be able to successfully work concurrently in very different cultures. And it takes a true sense of caring to eschew power-over and enact a leadership approach based on trust – the assumption that, given the opportunity, people will get it right. None of this suggests that results aren't of paramount importance. Results buy the time needed to enact the leadership change being proffered. That's important because the time to change isn't when you stumble – but while you are still successful.

In a world marked by uncertainty and disruption, the needed shift to dolphin leadership is difficult to deny. Sharks will have to be confronted and coached such that they start to operate against their natural instincts. They will have to add heart and spirit to their head and hand view of the world. And they will have to bring inspirational and caring leadership to their managerial skill set. At the same time, to remain competitive, organizations must provide bass with the opportunity to move into deeper water. Fortunately, for all concerned, the dolphin is a wonderful navigator.

Ask virtually any human resource professional and he/she will point out that there is a shortage of top talent. In truth, there is no shortage of talent. The business seas abound with bass and sharks are commonplace. What's in short supply are those leaders who are a fit for the turbulent business environment we are moving into – who display the passion and capability described here as “the way of the dolphin.” And, by the way, what kind of leader are you?

Following are five suggested action steps in addressing leadership, facilitating learning and orchestrating agility.

6 Having created “Dolphin Camps” for top teams and/or organizations in different parts of the world and coached a number of “sharks,” I can attest that even those long wedded to command and control often have, within them, a dolphin leader waiting to be given permission to play.



1. Work to fully appreciate the social, economic, and political issues that will impact future business. Invest time and money to ensure that you know (really know) what tomorrow's customers are willing to pay for (the emerging business model). Align the "service ethos" with tomorrow's customer. Make the brand promise live inside the organization. Introduce scenario planning. Invest in technical/digital acumen – especially for key leaders. Sharpen your business development saw.
2. Start to measure, using business terms, the culture you have and the culture you need. The latter should support tomorrow's success in the marketplace (value proposition). "Change" means factoring in **all** aspects of the organization's culture – but especially: (1) what it means to be a leader; and (2) how people learn. Working on only parts/aspects of the culture will result in unintended consequences. As step one, challenge, coach, confront and, if necessary, change leaders whose behaviour is out of step with tomorrow's culture.

Of the several approaches we have developed to measure culture, one particular assessment (*the Culture Workup*) is built on the organization learning principles contained here. The assessment presents a compelling, yet simple, business-oriented, sixteen-dimensional profile of the T1, T2, T3 journey. Other culture assessment approaches in our portfolio were developed: (1) with work at Board level in mind; or (2) where involving large swathes of the organization is important.

3. Think about talent management strategically (future needs), not tactically (a replacement orientation). Ensure, for example, that attraction, hiring, the leadership competencies, what it means to be a team, succession, coaching and all aspects of leadership development are aligned with the culture, agility and approach to learning you need to create. In a post Covid-19 quest for excellence, anything less is to settle for mediocracy.
4. Take a hard look at the way the business is currently organized. Does the organization design support or mitigate against agility? If the design looks pretty much as it did a decade ago, you have work to do. Attempts to introduce the emerging technology (AI) into unnecessary hierarchy, top heavy decision-making, and unwarranted bureaucracy are the business equivalent of attaching a rocket to a bicycle. Recognise that organization design represents but one (albeit key) cultural driver and if you change one part of the system you impact the whole.
5. Step back and reflect on the mindset needed within the organization to support tomorrow's competitive success. Deliberately role model and amplify the desired behaviour. Start by sharing stories that capture the mindset needed. When early



examples of the mindset demanded emerge, fan the flames of that embryonic behaviour. Work to “catch people doing it right.” Make use of the power of symbolism. Listen carefully to the metaphors that are introduced, especially by those in key leadership roles. Because the mind can’t negate, ensure that the imagery created by those metaphors support the mindset demanded.

Creating tomorrow’s success, today:

“Believe in your bass, shake up your sharks and develop your dolphins.”

HOW GOOD A COACH ARE YOU?

18 uniquely challenging holes of golf

John O. Burdett



THE WAY OF THE DOLPHIN

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Par	<div style="border: 2px solid green; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie <i>Bogey (1 over par)</i>	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand trap <i>Double bogey (2 over par)</i>	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	In the rough <i>Triple bogey (3 over par)</i>	



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 him/her to do more of what they are already good at.

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	Par	<div style="border: 2px solid green; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie <i>Bogey (1 over par)</i>	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand trap <i>Double bogey (2 over par)</i>	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	In the water <i>Triple bogey (3 over par)</i>	

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #2

A winning coach creates value by tapping into the coachee's potential, by surfacing what he/she is 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 his/her 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 his/her 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 he/she operates.

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 him/herself. 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 his/her own story;
- Encouraging the coachee to pay attention to his/her inner dialogue;
- Shaping a new lens through which the coachee can reframe his/her 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 him/herself highly disorganized is open to ridicule.

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

The coach who isn't him/herself 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 he/she doesn'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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Par	<div style="border: 2px solid green; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin-left: 20px;"></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie Bogey (1 over par)	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand trap Double bogey (2 over par)	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Par	<div style="border: 2px solid green; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin-left: 20px;"></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie Bogey (1 over par)	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand trap Double bogey (2 over par)	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	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 his/her mind flooded with ideas and suggestions that he/she absolutely knows 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 he/she needs 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Par	<div style="border: 2px solid green; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie <i>Bogey (1 over par)</i>	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	In the brook <i>Double bogey (2 over par)</i>	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wild slice <i>Triple bogey (3 over par)</i>	



RIVIERA
479 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

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

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	Par	<div style="border: 2px solid green; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie <i>Bogey (1 over par)</i>	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hit “Bogie’s Tree” <i>Double bogey (2 over par)</i>	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	Out of bounds <i>Triple bogey (3 over par)</i>	

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

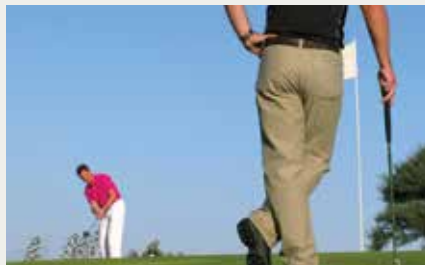
There are a number of legitimate and fruitful conversations that take place at work. The first is tell and listen: "I need you to do x by Friday." A second conversation is captured by the term tell and sell: "I need you to do x by Friday, because ..." A third conversation, problem solving, runs along 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 his/her 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 him/herself.

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 his/her 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent drive Excellent putt	<i>Birdie (1 under par)</i>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor lie	<i>Par</i>
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand trap	<i>Bogey (1 over par)</i>
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/> Great drive Terrible short game	<i>Double bogey (2 over par)</i>



CYPRESS POINT
231 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 3

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

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/> 40 ft. putt	<i>Birdie (1 under par)</i>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/> Scrambled to save	<i>Par</i>
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand trap	<i>Bogey (1 over par)</i>
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/> In ocean	<i>Double bogey (2 over par)</i>

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 his/her 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 him/herself | <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 Burdett has worked in over 40 countries as an executive and as a consultant for businesses that are household names. He has worked on and continues to work on leadership development and organization culture for some of the world's largest corporations.

His ongoing partnership with the Bedford Consulting Group and 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 holds a doctorate in management development and since 2000 has published more than a dozen books (a number of them best-sellers) on various aspects of leadership and organization culture. His Talent Trilogy was completed in 2016. The first in the series, *Attract, Select, Develop & Retain TALENT*, was published in 2013. The second, *TEAM: Align, Build, Connect and Develop*, came out in early 2015. *The Empty Suit*, in 2016. *The A-Z of Organization Culture* came out in 2017. *Tomorrow Will Be Different – Will You?* was published in 2020.

John has a number of books available for download. Go to any of the major, online bookstores. Access using author's name: John O. Burdett



