



## A Synopsis on the History of Coaching

The origination of the term 'Coaching' started in the later part of the 1880s and this term has been mostly associated with the sports profession through its varied forms. The first thought which rushes to our mind when we think about coaching is about sports coaching as this profession is very well-developed in the sports arena.

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Coaching can be defined in several ways and methodologies depending on the area where it is utilized but the need is to define it in layman's term so as to understand the gist of the subject. A very simple definition of this broad term is the fact that Coaching is a true methodology which concentrates on directing, instructing and training either an individual or a group of people with the only aim to attain certain goals and objectives.

### **Coaching through the Ages**

The emergence of coaching was a very gradual and slow process and there are several theories which support the initiation of this methodology and the Grounded Theory of the Roots is one significant theory which commemorates the foundation of coaching. Strong roots of coaching have been noticed in several perspectives such as psychology, social sciences, business and several others. Let us split up this journey into the significant time periods in which this method emerged into a major stream as in the current times.

### **History of Coaching – Prior to 1900**

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During the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and towards the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was noticed that philosophy emerged as a separate branch of social sciences and thus exclusive studies were carried out to study the intricacies of the human society and the individual as such. Psychology

emerged in its initial form during this period wherein which there were vague descriptions of mental functions and perceptions.

In 1879, Wundt and James carried out exclusive work on philosophical traditions and during this period, psychology did experience growing pains just as what coaching seems to be experiencing as of now. The contemporary branch of modern management certainly had its roots put out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it was towards the middle of this era, that theories and structuring such as training, motivation, organizational structure, etc. were laid out and brought to notice during the industrial revolution.

Personnel management also emerged during this period along with consulting and it was in between the 1880s to 1950s that the first variety of management consultants came into the picture. There were not many changes which occurred in other disciplines during this period such as sports, performing arts or also in the field of education.

### **History of Coaching – 1900s through 1920s**

This was the period for technological advances and the scientific perspective was at its peak at this time. In fact, you can even perceive that the root disciplines of coaching were even founded during this period. Industrialization took an advanced turn during this period and the discovery of the theory of relativity in physics played a great role during this time. In fact, this time was actually referred by Goldman as a 'shift from mechanical model to the organic model of the world'.

Freud who took up an enhanced interest in Psychology became the first person who interpreted psychotherapy during this time. By the end of this century, there were five sub-disciplines from psychology which is a huge achievement in itself. From the 1900s, there was a marked difference in how managers

From the 1900s, there was a marked difference in how managers utilized scientific theories in managerial functioning which was to a greater degree in response to Industrial Revolution which certainly demanded work specialization, the unity of command, proper hierarchical chain and coordination of activities.

In the 1910s, one observed scientific and classical management perspectives started to emerge and in the 1920s, the human relations movement also initiated. The famous Hawthorne studies were developed in the 1920s and business theories and practices also started adopting psychological theories and models to run the business.

## **Fast Forward**

### **History of Coaching – the 1980s**

It was in between the 1970s and 1980s when the United States understood the potential of the coaching process in the business sector and concluded that coaching is essential to support and aid managers so that they can attain their performance requirements and can also contribute directly towards the survival of the business. It was Kinlaw who emphasized that all forms of coaching necessarily includes two main features which are one-on-one conversations and concentration on performance or subjects related to performance.

In Britain, the subject of coaching received a fresh meaning and referred to the process wherein which you can conduct direct discussions with your colleagues in an attempt to solve problems and thereby complete the required tasks. Coaching and counselling were often used interchangeably.

The 1980s definitely saw the growth of coaching and its complete domination into the business literature. Discipline journals greatly accepted the success of coaching and published numerous articles on this concept and it was during this time as well that the inception of coaching was traced to its roots of leadership development training and management practice of learning skills and understanding. Even the collaborative model of consultation was referred to have certain similarities to that of coaching.

### **History of Coaching – the 1990s through 2004**

It is surprising to note how the concept of coaching progressively spread during the nineties and references to coaching were continuously mentioned in journals and the increase of such articles drastically increased during this period.

The development in the coaching industry has been tremendous and has reached a maturation level during this point with respect to the accumulated coaching experience, increase in the number of coaching professionals in various arenas and the enhancement of sophistication in management and human resource professionals.

Several coaching books hit the market at this time and journal articles written on coaching started getting flooded in the various publications and this number rose drastically in the early 2000s. 39 books on coaching were also published in the 2000s and contributed heavily towards the strong development of coaching. Whitmore in 1992 his book “Coaching for Performance” popularized the [GROW model](#) and made coaching more accessible to the workplace.

## **History of Coaching – 2004 to 2010**

In the recent years, the sphere of coaching has adapted several models wherein which the root disciplines of coaching can be employed in the various business sectors and theories in the psychological section have been exclusively utilized for the purpose. There were also influences of coaching from disciplines such as sociology, linguistics and anthropology and the coach-client relationship is being extensively studied and monitored as well.

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As we can see coaching is not new, we do not need “specialist” training or accreditation, what we need is experience.

### **References used in the History of Coaching include:**

**The Inner Game of Tennis** By Tim Gallwey 1974

**The Power of Positive Thinking** By Dr Norman Vincent Peale, first published in 1952

**Freedom and the college** By Alexander Meiklejohn 1923

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