

# Coaching intervention boosts **Toyota Malawi** operations

In a bid to deliver value-for-money cars to the market, Toyota famously designed the world-celebrated Lean manufacturing principles. Now, to stave off the effects of the economic recession, Toyota Tsusho Africa's Automotive division has adopted integral coaching techniques to enhance company leadership.

New research from the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) suggests others would once again do well to follow its lead.

Completed by Duncan Harrison as part of his UCT MBA requirements in late 2008, the research report set out to measure the effects of an integral coaching programme at Toyota's Malawian operations.

Janine Everson of the Centre for Coaching, based at the UCT GSB, supervised the study and suggests that its findings have exciting implications at a time when companies worldwide are looking for cost-saving and streamlining techniques that can boost competitiveness.

"Saving on costs and becoming more competitive requires strong leadership that can filter down through an organisation to make sure that deliverables are met without stifling creativity and employee motivation," said Everson.

"Toyota Tsusho Africa's Automotive Division has shown that it is a true innovator – willing to use breakthrough techniques to put it ahead of its competition. That it is doing so in Africa shows how much hope the company has for its future on the continent.

"The company wants to enlarge its footprint in emergent markets in the years ahead. This strategy will help it to climb out of the recession with few battle scars," she added.

To achieve its African vision, Toyota Tsusho Africa's Automotive Division implemented an integral coaching programme across its division on the continent. Results from Harrison's research, which used both quantitative and qualitative data, show that the coaching intervention has delivered the desired effects at its Malawian operations, at least.

The study used data covering a forty-six month period – made up of two equal time periods, namely a pre-coaching period and a post-coaching commencement period.

It found, amongst other things, that Toyota Malawi observed a massive 92% increase in Economic Value Added (EVA) after the coaching intervention, with 82% of survey respondents adding that the initiative had improved their team performance.

Toyota Malawi also observed a 35% improvement in the productivity of its Service Divi-

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sion after the commencement of the coaching initiative, while 82% of respondents felt their division had improved productivity, the report said.

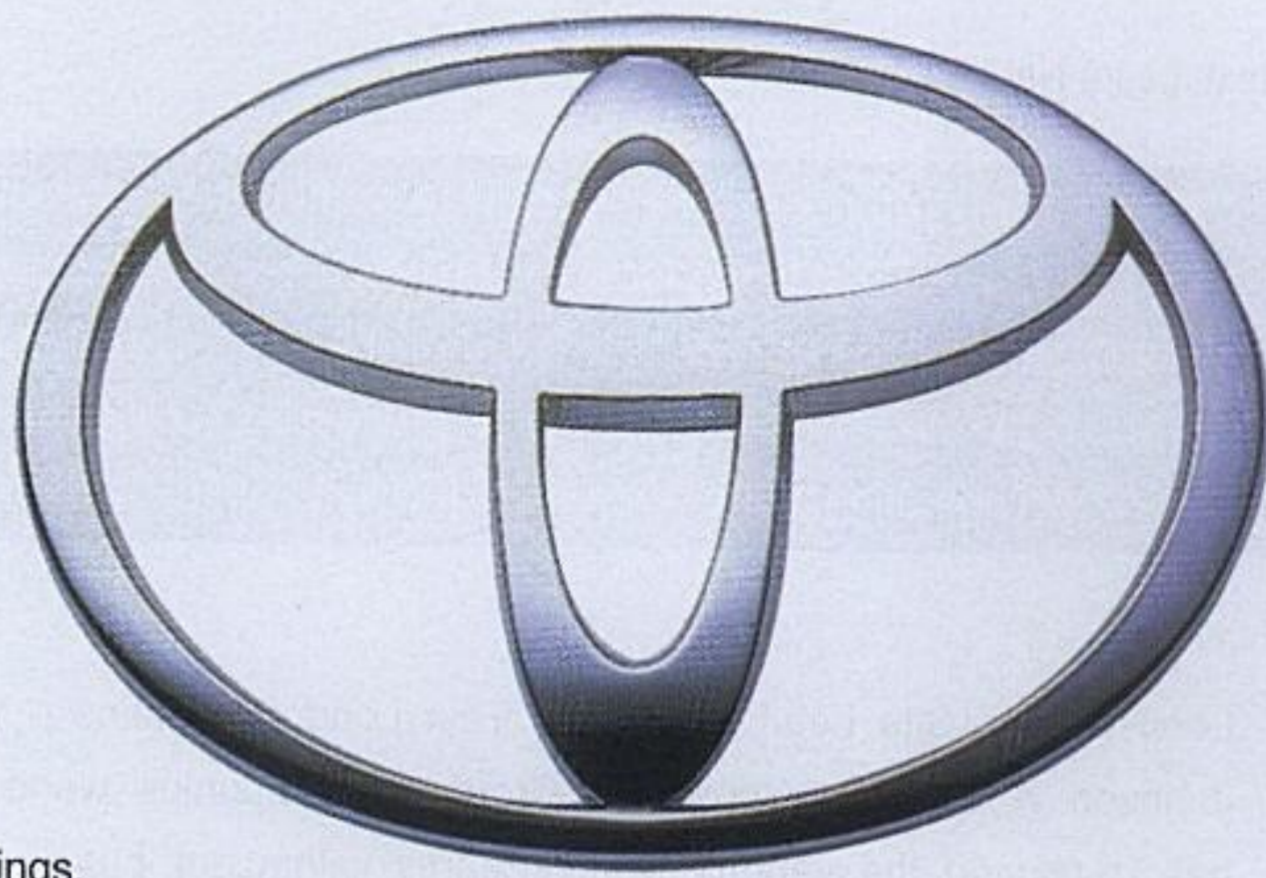
Further findings showed a 1% improvement in stock availability and a 3% reduction in stock availability volatility, with 73% of respondents reporting that coaching had improved management effectiveness.

According to Everson, these findings provide evidence that coaching – especially integral coaching – is a highly effective method to boost company performance.

"Studies like this serve to reinforce what we already believe at the Centre for Coaching – that coaching interventions are a highly effective means to improve efficiency and enhance leadership," said Everson.

"That a high performing division like Toyota Tsusho Africa's Automotive Division can realise such tangible results from a coaching intervention is testament to the power of this approach. That the intervention delivered results in different areas of competency and across different departments simply strengthens the argument for integral coaching."

Everson added, "In the search for the next



competitive advantage, organisations are now looking towards coaching as a means to empower their executives to become better business leaders. As an emerging concept in traditional coaching theory, integral coaching adopts an all-encompassing approach to the coaching process in order to bring to bear all the various fields of human knowledge and endeavour."

It is this holistic approach to leadership development that makes integral coaching so powerful, said Craig O'Flaherty, director of the Centre for Coaching.

"Integral coaching works because it understands that humans are not reducible to titles but are multi-faceted and have unique needs and desires.

"By using multiple assessment tools, the process allows the coachee to arrive at a deep understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes, fears and goals. It doesn't take a one-dimensional view but rather encompasses a holistic approach that covers the cognitive, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of a person to arrive at a point where real growth and development can flourish," he said.

As academic institutions worldwide continue to take note of integral coaching, more studies of this nature will continue to emerge to prove its efficacy, said both O'Flaherty and Everson, who have designed and implemented coaching interventions at several companies worldwide with equal success.

Judging by the Toyota Malawi results – both quantitative and qualitative – integral coaching is as strong in practice as it is in concept.