

Leading light by Simon Foster



Tracking the business benefits of coaching



I'm setting out a business case for our business to invest in coaching, but I know our CEO thinks coaching is just a chance to have a chat. How can we prevent it from being just a talking shop and ensure some real business benefits?

We've all talked about improving things – getting fitter, losing weight, working less. We also know that, however much we talk about these things, they only become reality if we set ourselves targets to map the way to our goals.

The same is true with coaching. However good the relationship with the coach, however interesting and enlightening the discussions that you have, behaviour will only change if goals are set.

So what does that mean?

Take responsibility.

Coaching is all about what an individual wants to achieve. It's an adult/adult relationship, not a process to go through passively. The person being coached needs to take responsibility for the changes they want to make. It's going to take time and effort to change, so ensure that there is 100% commitment to make that happen.

Set objectives.

We're all familiar with setting SMART objectives for others, particularly as part of best practice for performance reviews. But this should also be part of the coaching process. The coachee needs to be clear about what they want to achieve, and realistic about the steps needed to get there. What do they look like specifically, and can you measure them? For example a coaching session might get right down to the level of detail about what is going to happen in a particular meeting, for example. The coach and subject then need to agree what improvement or success will look like.

Use a competency framework.

Using a framework with a clear rating scale will give a backdrop to the coaching discussions and provides a ready-made structure against which

you can chart progress. It will allow the coaches to map their current skill level in the context of your organisation's expectations, and illustrate what this would look like at the next level up. This will provide clear goals to work towards.

Establish a contract.

Make sure the coach has the remit to challenge healthily. They're not there to be best mates; they're there to help people achieve their potential, so mutual respect is key. This also means agreeing how often meetings will take place to ensure there is time to implement any agreed actions before the next session.

Get to the heart of the matter.

The coach may help individuals see that there are underlying or linked issues which get to the root of the problem. It's important that the coaching process doesn't just deal with the visible symptoms or discussions will be superficial and the impact will not be long-lasting. Encourage participants to be brave and open – if they waste time having defensive conversations, the sessions will be 'talking shops' rather than the constructive planning sessions you want.

Go public.

Being coached is a fantastic opportunity and a public demonstration that you are capable of even greater things, not a disciplinary procedure.

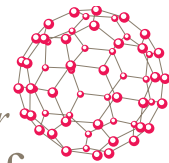
Encourage the people being coached to share with others around them what you're working on and ask for their feedback and support. This will:

- Reinforce their commitment to the targets
- Continue the impact of the coaching between sessions
- Speed up their progress

Chart progress: Ensure that your coachees regularly look back over what they've achieved, especially during longer coaching relationships. Take stock of where they've got to. If the improvement has been gradual, they may have forgotten where they started, and just how far you've come. Take time to re-energise the process by reminding them - and celebrate those successes!

simon.foster@chpd.com

For more on coaching visit: www.chpd.com



Centre for
High Performance
Development

News

IIC connects to Bucharest

IIC Partners, the global executive search alliance has announced its 61st office, Trust & Partners of Bucharest, Romania.

Bucharest is the third IIC presence in East/Central Europe, joining Warsaw and Prague, and bringing the number of European offices up to 27.

"We were actively looking for a partner in Romania, but not really optimistic we'd find the right kind of firm. When we met the partners of K.M.Trust and examined their process we realised it was exactly the kind of opportunity we had in mind," said IIC Director Chris Stokes of Key2People in Milan.

"Romania became part of the European Union in January, its economy has been on the upswing in recent years, foreign investment is rising and it's a country in which IIC clients are increasingly interested."

Set up by three partners in early 2006, K.M.Trust specialises in automotive, banking, finance, insurance, telecom, professional services, FMCG, information technologies and manufacturing sectors.

Managing Partner Radu Manolescu commented that Romania is a rapidly developing market economy that requires comprehensive international business connections.

"It was clear that we needed excellent European and global search capabilities to meet the growing needs of our clients," he said. "We looked at our options and IIC was the primary choice, not only because of its obvious strength both in Europe and worldwide, but also due to its consistent growth strategy, level of professionalism, collegial approach and respect for the independence of its members."