



The Big Blue Box Ltd

Setting up a Coaching Project

One of my 'champion' coaching project sponsors treated coaching as a 'gift' to their senior leadership team of direct reports.

Executive coaching is a considerable investment of valuable resources to support personal development and enhance individual performance. The context can be dynamic, complex, and sometimes urgent. Its influence covers the wider organisation, its goals and aims, its culture, leadership, and performance. It can profoundly affect the individual's life and career, skills, behaviour, and role.

Coaching itself is complex, its deployment requires subtle balancing between management and control, trust and flexibility, confidentiality, and openness, and even vulnerability with a clear understanding of boundaries.

Culture

Coaching can change the culture. Cascading coaching skills into the organisation will enhance the wider culture.

The organisational culture around coaching is essential for effective deployment, engagement, and buy-in. Successful adoption will require senior leadership sponsorship. Senior leaders must set an example.

It should not be a solely remedial intervention.

Communications around coaching provision should be flexible, to reflect variations within the organisation, such as demographics, and localised technical or professional 'cultures'.

Identify the need

Have clear goals and engage the coaching project to support those aims and objectives.

Coaching is now well-established as a tool to support and enhance high performance. It offers complementary support whilst managerial and professional, technical, and operational skills are developed through training.

For too many organisations their first engagement with coaching is in a late stage, remedial project, seeking to mitigate an unresolved, significant, or serious 'people issue.' This can be particularly true for new, startup organisations, where 'people processes' are under-established.

Established HR and people-management processes routinely identify broad development needs throughout an individual's career progression from operational, managerial, and strategic to senior leadership roles.

Development and support for senior leadership roles usually require subtle, individualised provision to maximise potential and fine-tune behaviour, for which coaching is ideal.

Sometimes, however, a coaching response is ideal for those 'ad hoc', critical people-issues which usually arise outside the regular process and procedures.

The Big Blue Box Ltd

Contact: 1 The Laurels, Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey. KT13 9LF

Tel: voice/fax: 01932 843933 www.thebigbluebox.co.uk

Registered Office: Suite 1, Concept House, 23 Billet Lane, Hornchurch, Essex. RM11 1XP

Registered in England No: 4401635

Setting up a Coaching Project

Define the coaching project's target participants

Define the target participants, not only the senior leaders and high-potentials.

Coaching is ideal for addressing individual challenges as they could also be complex problems requiring a customised approach. Indicators could be changes in an individual's behaviour, performance, engagement, health and well-being, and could be identified through observation and pastoral support.

Coaching is highly effective for developing self-awareness, people skills, personal effectiveness, leadership potential, and behaviour change, especially in supporting those moving from hands-on operations into strategic leadership, 'political' and 'influencing' roles.

Candidate Selection

Coaching is not right for everyone.

It would be natural to consider senior leaders, high potentials, mid-level, and new leaders as potential candidates. Not everyone will be ready for or need coaching. It might be worth considering an element of exclusivity and aspiration in the selection process to increase engagement.

Appropriate resourcing

Resource coaching appropriately, for the long-term.

Coaching enhances individual and business growth. A startup organisation may not yet have a budget for any leadership development. Budgetary provisions should be available alongside other investments.

Training and professional skills development will provide broad, regular support in established organisations. Issues for which coaching is the solution can be ad hoc, specific to a key individual or situation whilst also forming a regular part of the development offered to key people.

Budgetary provisions around coaching may require flexibility. Have clear sponsorship and support.

Provider choice

Choose the provider with the 'culture fit', qualifications and experience that match the needs.

There is an oversupply of coaching providers. This has tended to reduce the cost, widen the choice and reduce the quality and depth of experience. This will require project sponsors to select providers with care.

Evaluation

Decide how to measure coaching – take a wide spectrum of measures over time.

Coaching is proportionately costly compared to other development provisions so the benefit and return on investment must be assessed.

Coaching outcomes occur in unexpected places and across varied timescales. Outcomes can 'slow burn' or instantaneous, ranging from insight to life-changing, through individuals and teams, to culture change for the wider organisation.