

ADVANCED COACHING SKILLS FOR SENIOR LEADERS

A FTSE 100 organisation approached us to develop a group of senior leaders who already had some experience of coaching training but needed to see improved results from their coaching interactions with their sales force.

Rather than providing a more traditional advanced coaching programme we constructed an intervention based on the concept of self and peer assessment. This is both an intensive and pragmatic approach that, when facilitated well, allows participants access to fast and deep learning. A good fit, therefore, for the commercial context in which the sales leaders were operating.

Groups of leaders were taken through the process over a number of sessions. After time spent sharing their coaching challenges in pairs and trios, they were asked to prepare:

- An example of their work where they had experienced uncertainty, a lack of result or a sense of something missing in their approach to coaching.
- A summary statement with context and examples to help their peers understand the feedback they were seeking.

The self and peer assessment process runs for 11 minutes as outlined below with each leader being given the opportunity to be the focus of an assessment:

- 3 minutes to make your self assessment
- 2 minutes for any clarifying questions from your peers
- 3 minutes of direct feedback from peers (rattle and shake)
- 2 minutes of self-reflection for the individual
- 1 minute to share a re-assessment based on what has been learned

The group then met again, three more times, a month apart to repeat the process. This series of iterations increased confidence in both the approach and in each other, raising the quality of both the self-assessments and feedback.

As part of the process we developed a number of internal managers as facilitators thus allowing the process to be offered more widely within the sales organisation. This approach has been so successful that it has been extended beyond an approach to coaching and is used for leaders as part of their organisation's leadership development portfolio. We continue to facilitate some of these groups partnered by internal facilitators.

The benefits of this approach:

- it is simple in structure but potent in its impact and results
- it is pragmatic and can be built into most development programmes
- it provides a valuable alternative to traditional structures; highly experiential, ensuring learning is widely shared
- it builds trust and cooperation between participants
- it ensures each individual is empowered to take responsibility for learning /development
- it can create a sense of community amongst disparate groups of leaders
- it works with all seniorities