

insight series



Key Success Factors for Internal Coaching

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Summary

lifetimeswork has worked with a number of organisations including S&N, NHS and BT, delivering coaching programmes against agreed organisational themes. These cover a range of organisational requirements, a number of which include coaching managers to become coaches. All of this experience gives us a very hands-on view of what makes coaching work within an organisation.

Further to this, we have reviewed some of the research (see Appendix for references) available on coaching to correlate our experience with the wider coaching population in order to understand what the key success factors are when using coaching as a key development method. Our results show

1. Internal coaching has been demonstrated in organisations to have a significant potential to deliver ROI. It is difficult to quantify exactly as it varies from organisation to organisation, although there is consensus around a 4-5 times return on initial investment. What is common to most organisations is that delivery of this value is dependent on 10 Key Success Factors, which are described in this document. These, for example ensuring the purpose and desired outcomes are clear and that there are supporting processes and systems in place, are as important as ensuring coaching skills are developed.
2. There is significant opportunity to enhance the value returned in any organisation's internal coaching programme by considering these 10 Key Success Factors. In particular we recommend focus on three areas:
 - a. Ensure that the purpose of coaching is clearly set out
 - b. Ensure that the internal coaching programme is credible, well understood and well communicated across the business
 - c. Ensure that the impact or value of the overall coaching programme is measured against the objectives

Often, some change of practice will be required to implement these successfully, not least that all the internal coaches will have to accept that a level of coordination on measurement is necessary to drive impact.

3. To be a good coach, commitment to development is required in addition to skill and experience. Becoming a coach involves a deep level of personal development and as such the experience has been shown to be at times frustrating, at other times fabulous; any organisational coaching programme must expect and manage both the highs and the lows.



There is consensus that coaching delivers around 4-5 times return on initial investment

The Background

Coaching and Internal Coaching on the Rise

There is an increasing drive amongst organisations to adopt coaching as part of the development culture, through developing managers as coaches, improving the use of external coaches and developing an in-house coaching capability.

Internal coaches sit somewhere between line managers as coaches, who work to a fairly fixed job performance related agenda, and external coaches who often work to a more open agenda, with a greater use of coaching tools and methodologies. Internal coaches focus on the individual's agenda outside of the line relationship but inside the organisation, with its goals and agenda in mind and are most often involved in enabling behavioural change and helping individuals with their development. External coaches also do this, but are used over and above these areas to enable more complex, often transformational change.

Specific roles for internal coaches tend to be:

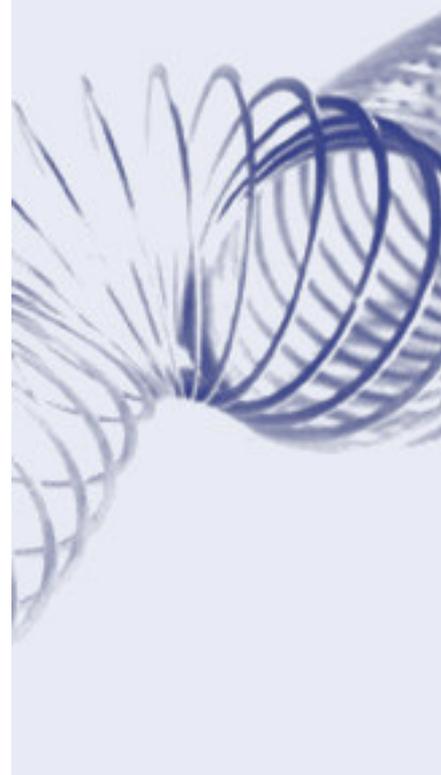
- The technical skills coach or champion. These are people skilled in particular aspects of the business, usually provided to leaders and senior managers to help as part of leadership skill development. Examples might include strategy, business development, international cultures. This is similar to what external coaches do.
- The business change coach. These concentrate activities on helping individuals or teams improve business processes or change initiatives in line with business goals.
- The specialist development coach focused on enabling behavioural change.

The rise of the internal coach reflects organisations' drive to build a coaching culture and to provide flexible, timely coaching in a more cost effective way - basically, to deliver more coaching for less spend. A key role of internal coaches at the start of an internal coaching programme is to support the development of a coaching culture by providing illustrative examples of its benefits and to familiarise key stakeholders with what it involves.

There are pros and cons of using internal coaches, as follows:

Pros	Cons
Readily available	Credibility issues
More cost effective than external coaches	Trust/boundaries/confidentiality
Offer on-going support	Being swamped
Extensive knowledge about organisational context	'Corporate blind spots' – sharing same world view as client and losing objectivity and distance
May know clients and understand their roles and responsibilities	Risk of coaches moving too easily into training/team building or mentoring
Scaleable to large numbers of clients	

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The Key Success Factors

There are 10 key success factors for the implementation of internal coaching in an organisation that have emerged from the **lifetimeswork** experience and research:

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10 Key Success Factors for Internal Coaching	
1	Ensure that coaching is the right tool for the job.
2	Ensure that the purpose of coaching is clearly set out and aligned with business strategy and that desired outcomes are defined.
3	Ensure that the internal coaching programme is credible, well understood and well communicated across the business.
4	Ensure that the coaching programme is well supported by line management.
5	Ensure there is a clear contracting process for coaching that is transparent and is always adhered to.
6	Ensure that the impact or value of the overall coaching programme is measured against the objectives.
7	Ensure that the right coaches are used.
8	Ensure that there is a clear coaching framework and set of rules that enable internal coaches to retain objectivity and distance.
9	Ensure internal coaches are supervised and update their skills.
10	Focus less on role and more on ability to coach.

We recommend focus on three areas:

- a) Ensure that the purpose of coaching is clearly set out
- b) Ensure that the internal coaching programme is credible
- c) Ensure that the impact or value of the overall coaching programme is measured against the objectives

Key success factors in detail

1. **Ensure that coaching is the right tool for the job.**

This is about matching coaching as a developmental tool to the organisational context and objectives, plus ensuring that it's the right type of intervention for the individual or team. Coaching can be delivered one-to-one or at a team level. Coaching is goal-oriented, and as such in the latter context can form part of a wider team development initiative. Coaching is not training – in coaching the client is enabled to discover the answer from within. Any organisation adopting coaching must also recognise that not everyone is open to being coached.

Some examples of the areas where coaching is used to great success are:

- Performance improvement
- Behavioural and attitudinal changes
- Relationship improvement
- Increasing flexibility - change of perspectives; strategic thinking
- Connecting with intuition and creativity
- Alignment of business and personal/team goals

Typically the contexts where organisations adopt coaching as a key developmental method include:

- Fast growing or fast changing businesses
- Business performance improvement
- Long term leadership drive
- Complex transformational or organisational change
- Changes in job role
- Additional tool for increasing competitiveness in recruitment

Any organisation adopting coaching must recognise that not everyone is open to being coached



Where coaching should not be used:

- Where the individual is not open to being coached
- Where training or any type of intervention where solutions are given to the client is required e.g. functional specific training
- As a replacement for performance discussions
- As a replacement for Personal Development Planning
- As a replacement for line manager interventions

2. Ensure that the purpose of coaching is clearly set out and aligned with business strategy and that desired outcomes are defined

Alignment of coaching resources against organisational objectives is critical to ensuring a return on investment. Two fundamental purposes have emerged for any coaching programme:

- Enabling accelerated performance. If delivered by external coaches this is generally for executives and high potential people, often as part of a leadership drive. If delivered by line manager or internal coach it is in fact most often used for middle management. Outcomes are related to specific competencies and can be explicitly linked to on-the-job and/or business performance measures.
- To enhance or support change, both business specific change and overall behavioural changes. This can be very company/project specific and link to defined project outcomes

The purpose of coaching should take account of the types of results sought and gained through coaching. The main tangible results of coaching are improved productivity, improved organisational strength, and better quality. The main intangible results of coaching are improved relationships with team and direct reports; improved relationships with stakeholders; improved teamwork; improved relationships with peers and improved job satisfaction.

3. Ensure that the internal coaching programme is credible, well understood and well communicated across the business

For line and project managers to be open to coaching and fully adopt all the benefits, they must believe that coaching is positive, developmental and overall enhancing for their career. Coaching should be recognised and rewarded. It also should be accommodated as part of an individual's development. Coaching programmes should be credible in the eyes of the line and project managers; this is driven by three things:

- senior management championing and modelling coaching
- a systematic and transparent approach with robust processes
- good coaches

For these to happen, an internal champion is required. This person should have a strategic view, be motivated, be empowered and respected enough to guide/control the coaches by achieving buy-in and conformance to the vision and the process. In some organisations without clear communication and senior management support, coaching can be taken as remedial and coaches enter into the contract in defensive mode. Clearly the latter is less likely to deliver success.

4. Ensure that the coaching programme is well supported by line management

Line managers ultimately are the ones to ensure that the impact of coaching is channelled appropriately for the good of the business. This is key for delivering a successful ROI. In order to do this, coaching needs to be part of business-as-usual. Line managers should be involved **every** time with the coaching contract outcomes. Coaching should be integrated into the normal performance and developmental systems.

5. Ensure there is a clear contracting process for coaching.

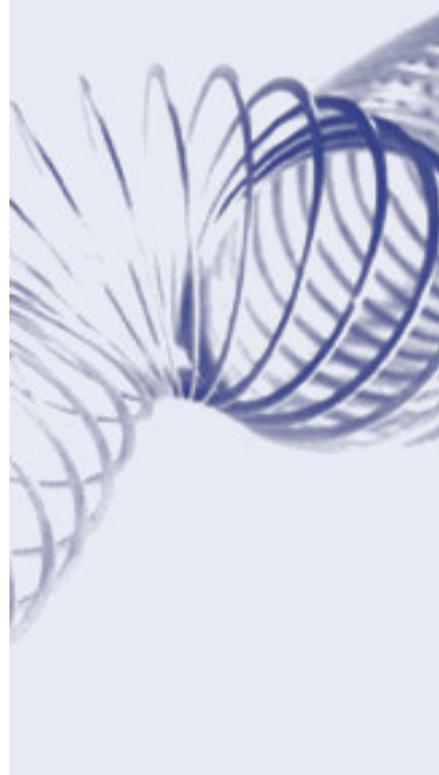
This should include how to handle organisational objectives, confidentiality and evaluation. It should be standard and transparent to all concerned within the coaching. It is advisable to let clients take the lead in setting the ground rules for confidentiality to ensure a trusting coaching relationship is established. Use public (organisational) goals and private (personal) goals and make it clear that public goals should be set with line management input and progress against them also shared with managers. Coaching clients need to understand and agree to evaluation of the investment made.

Credibility of coaching is driven by three things:

1. Senior management championing and modelling coaching

2. A systematic and transparent approach with robust processes

3. Good coaches



6. Ensure that there is agreement and action on how to measure the impact and success of the coaching programme

This is a more difficult area since too much measurement will lead to breakdown of confidentiality. Establishment of ROI is also difficult since the measurement of the impact of coaching can be subjective. **lifetimeswork**'s method is measurement via The Executive Coaching Framework and Value Statements.

The main features of measurement are as follows:

- Establish up front a measure of today's performance against the coaching programme objectives
- Ensure that all coaches understand and agree to adopt this measure
- Ensure that all clients when contracting understand and agree to adopt this measure
- Ensure a rigorous process for measurement. This should take account of the initial baseline position, and mid/post-coaching. There should be a coordinated approach across all coaching contracts – this means proactively managing the coaches. This should form part of the organisation's learning around how best to implement coaching, and this in turn should have a knock on effect to all coaches. Measures being used include leadership 360 tools and competency frameworks. Where there is a specific project objective, bespoke programme measurements are set.
- If ROI is to be measured, ensure that clients and line managers are involved in evaluating the % return from the impact of coaching.

7. Ensure that the right coaches are used

Clear criteria should be used for selection and matching of coaches. All coaches employed should be good, skilled and culturally matched. All coaches should adhere to a common set of guidelines on areas of ethics, delivering against the organisational objectives and measurement. For the latter, there should be clear buy-in to demonstrating the value of the coaching back to the organisation. A further key element here is to allow clients to decide on who should coach, line management or internal coach, based on the type of coaching they require.

8. Ensure that there is a clear coaching framework and set of rules that enable internal coaches to retain objectivity and distance

This includes providing guidance on the how, when and what of coaching to internal coaches and supporting their continued professional development. This reinforces the nature of the role and enables the coach to avoid being drawn into inappropriate coaching relationships/scenarios.

9. Ensure internal coaches are supervised and update their skills

This counteracts the potential for blind spots where the coach shares the same view as the client, by gaining the objective input of a more experienced coach. It also should ensure that each coach adheres to the agreed organisational processes and measures and provides an opportunity for coaches to ensure the continuing effectiveness of work, verify that standards are being maintained and relate practice to theory. Continuous development is key to ensuring that coaches do not become stale and indeed continue to offer value to their client base.

10. Focus less on role and more on ability to coach

This is about ensuring that the job when coaching is coaching, and whatever function or role the coach has in the day-job does not leak into the coaching sessions. Ongoing skill development and sharing of learning within coaching is key to ensure that there is a 'walk the talk' culture around coaching.

Case Studies and Research for Reference

The lifetimeswork experience

lifetimeswork generally only engages in a coaching programme if the organisational goal is clear. We work with coaching both individuals and teams to achieve their goals. The coaching is goal – oriented, so team coaching differs a lot from general team development; instead it works on aligning and developing strengths to match the team goals. Examples of the themes we've worked on are as follows

Talent Management - NHS

Leadership development – BT, SAC

Organisational Values and how to make them alive in the organisation – BT and SAC

Creativity – done for engineers working in oil industry

Emotional Intelligence – BT

Strategic Thinking - BT

Strategy Development – for telecoms organisation

Operational Improvement – NHS

Team Dysfunction – NHS

Leading Organisational Change – NHS

Other Case Studies

BBC

75 internal coaches have delivered over 5k hours of internal coaching in 12 months. This is used to develop managers as leaders against a competency framework and to achieve the culture change goal of the organisation i.e. to be 'the most creative organisation in the world.'

Coaches are voluntary on top of the day job. They are drawn from lots of different functions and accredited through the BBC Coach Foundation Course – this is a 4 month modular programme with taught elements, observed practice sessions, assessed field work and an emphasis on skill development. Each trainee is mentored throughout. An accredited coach has to have three clients minimum at a time, attend monthly supervision and take part in development workshops.

Internal coaches have a supervision framework requiring all internal coaches to also have regular one-to-one and shared learning sessions with other internal coaches. Other support available is through quarterly workshops and short refresher courses.

The key issue internally is the coach/client setting – internal models inevitably take their purpose from the organisational development agenda. Also an understanding of context helps coaches get into their clients' worlds very quickly. There is danger of collusion however. So there is also a need to ensure there is a protocol (framework and set of rules) to keep coaches detached.

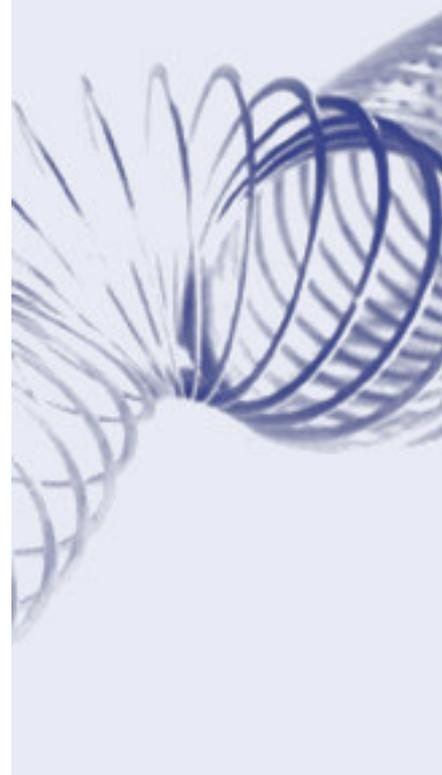
As well as client and coach the BBC model has a 'nominator' who puts the person forward for coaching. The nominator and client must agree coaching objectives.

Corus:

Uses coaches to develop high flyers. – 35 potential future leaders get 12 coaching sessions for half a day each.

Panasonic UK

Using coaching to develop a four-tier pool of future leaders.



Thames Water

Using coaching to coach leaders in Emotional Intelligence

Performance Coaching International Study by Brunel University

Almost 70% of firms using coaches do so to increase performance or profit. 21% wanted to develop leadership capacity, self-awareness, empower staff or improve communication. 10% for balance, support, confidence and being happy at work.

Clients themselves wanted the following: 40% improve performance, 34% increase confidence, 30% leadership skills, 53% a specific skill.

The key thing that inhibits coaching is top executives not embracing and role modelling it.

Effectiveness Evaluation – Top 10 success factors

(The Coaching Research Project 2005 – East London Business School et al)

1. Developing an organisation-specific understanding of coaching
2. Having a systematic approach
3. Choosing an adequate level of organisational penetration of coaching
4. Involving the top
5. Marketing, branding and approaching coaching as a positive development tool
6. Creating win-win situations for all stakeholders
7. Achieving full consistency of coaching measure with business strategy
8. Ensuring complete transparency of the coaching concept
9. Evaluating effectively and carefully
10. Ensuring high integrity and quality at all levels.

Study noted that the more you want to evaluate the less you can guarantee confidentiality.

References

lifetimeswork clients

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Research by David Lane, Annette Filery-Travis and Jessica Jarvis in June 2006
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The Manchester Review: Maximising the Impact of Executive Coaching 2001

