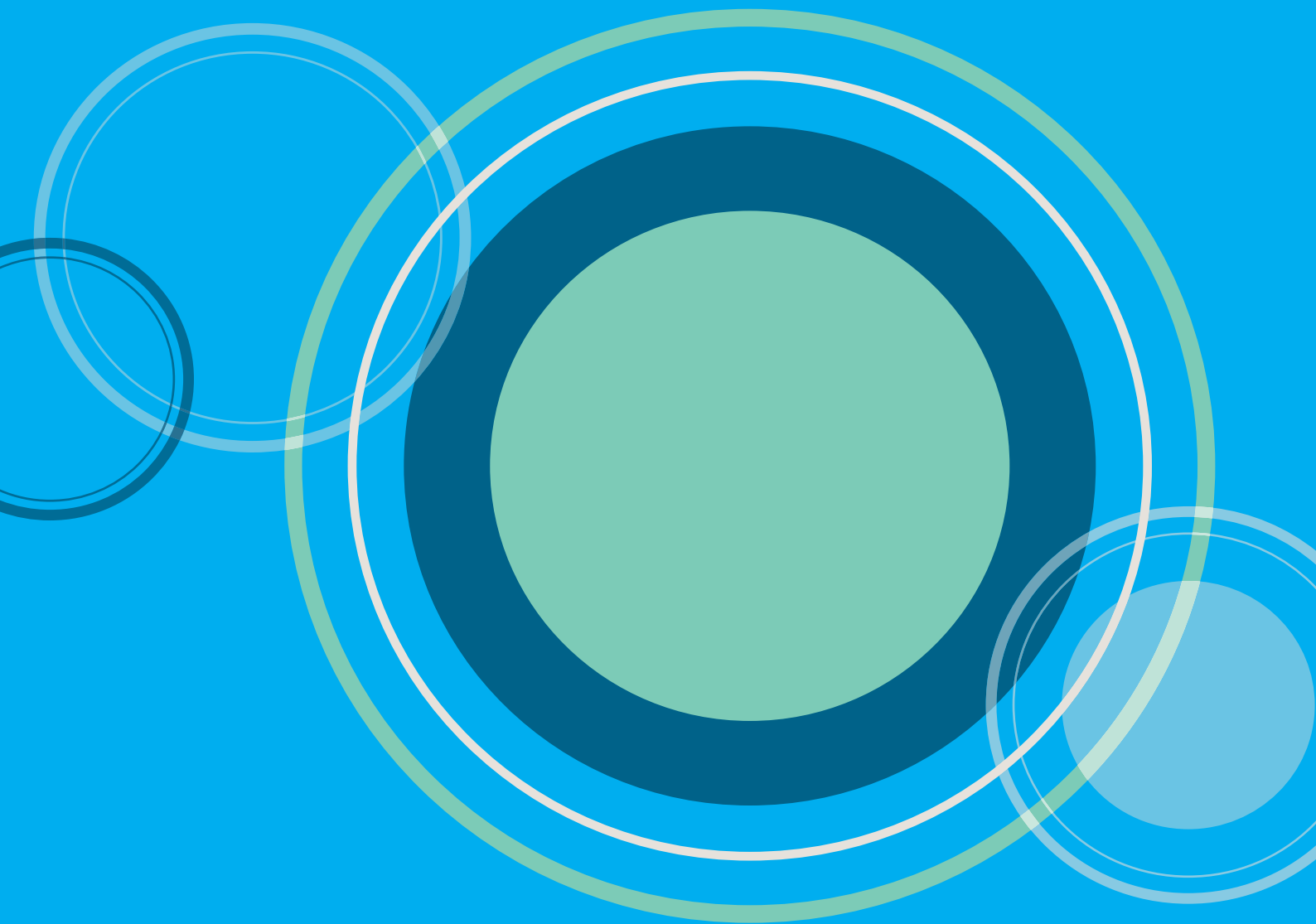


# Coach & Mentor

THE OCM JOURNAL

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# Editorial

Ed Parsloe

## How to create IMPACT in a world without answer

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Since the financial crash of 2008, the world has changed. The last 10 years have proved somewhat of a challenge for our economy, our politics and our planet. Blame the bankers, blame Brexit, blame Trump, Farage or Boris, blame ourselves as unfettered consumers, blame who you like but the reality is that our country and indeed the wider world, is teetering at crisis point. Change is the new constant and volatility the new norm.

What does this mean for organisations and the millions of people that work for them?

Well, one of the things we know is that strategy execution in this context can be challenging. Given the instability and often changing political landscape, organisations are unable to set long term plans as they are having to react to the latest political machinations and evolving economic reality. Organisations and their leaders now need to work in an extremely agile way to ensure any tactical changes required for effective strategy execution are properly communicated and employees feel properly supported to deliver change.



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The problem though, is that many leaders and managers lack the communication skills to be able to effectively engage their direct reports and teams in the need to change or provide adequate answers in why they should adapt. This lack of support or challenge not only leads to poor strategy execution but also creates issues with engagement, accountability, productivity and ultimately talent retention as dissatisfied employees seek pastures new.

If this all sounds depressingly familiar, the good news is that there is a solution – coaching and mentoring – which brings me neatly onto the theme of this year’s journal: “How to create IMPACT in a complex world without answers”.

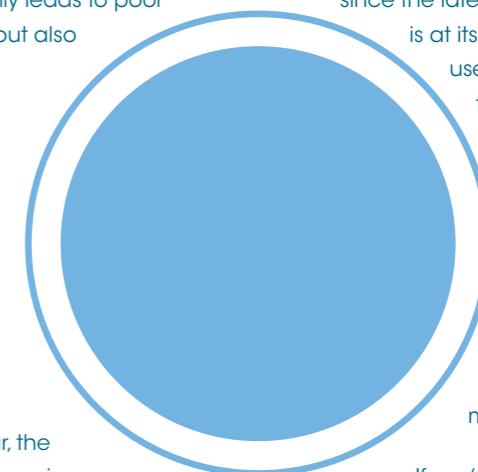
At The OCM we’ve become rather bored of the prevailing VUCA paradigm. Yes, the challenges outlined above are real, complex and difficult to solve but not impossible. We want to change the narrative. When looking at what approaches, mindsets and behaviours organisations and their leaders should develop, demonstrate and nurture in order to succeed, we came up with the acronym of IMPACT – innovation, motivation, purpose, adaptation, coaching and testing. It is our firm belief that great coaching and mentoring lie at the heart of many of these concepts and this year’s journal explores many of these ideas.

By way of an example, I’d like to briefly

explore the concept of testing. What we mean is that during times of uncertainty, organisations could potentially benefit from adopting the test and learn philosophies practiced by retailers, banks and other consumer-focussed companies since the late 1980s. Test and learn is at its most effective when used to gain insights from tactical changes in strategy execution rather than the formulation of strategy itself. That said, testing is really only useful when a desired outcome is clearly definable and measurable.

If you’re in charge of your organisations coaching strategy and you’re looking to create IMPACT, what might this mean for you? What can reasonably be tested in a (semi) scientific manner? Don’t forget, if you’re going to the trouble of creating a testable hypothesis – for example, our engagement survey results increase when we provide coaching to X group as compared to Y group – then you must also put in place effective tracking, monitoring and measurement processes to ensure you can analyse the results.

To give you some inspiration, we’ve provided three short case studies at the end of this journal as examples of projects you might try in the spirit of test and learn. And that’s the purpose of this Journal, to provide some inspiration! Please don’t be a passive observer during this period of uncertainty, there’s huge amounts you can do to create IMPACT even if we don’t have all the answers. Yet.



# Habits and addictions

Anna McLean

## The good, the bad, and the opportunity to change

Not so long ago, when I met with clients and asked with genuine intent "how are you?" they would usually reply "fine thank you". Now, however, when I ask the same question, 9 times out of 10 the reply is "I'm really busy!" This is usually accompanied by a heart-felt outpouring on the demands of juggling a responsible work role, a hectic home life, and a vague attempt at some form of exercise, social life, and giving back. I've become increasingly aware that we are in the middle of an epidemic of "busyness" – driven by the need to justify our importance, value or self-worth in response to our increasingly complex and uncertain world.

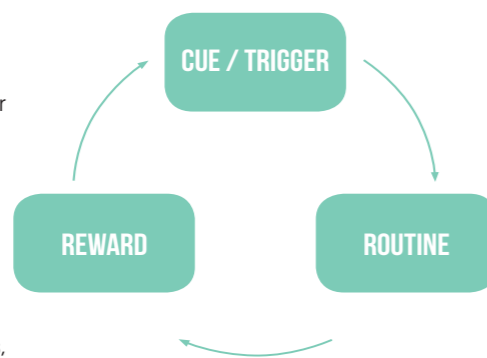
To manage this burgeoning sense of "busyness" we develop habits. At some point, habits can turn into addictions. Our inability to switch from acting habitually to acting in a deliberate way can often underlie addiction. Determining the difference between a habit and addiction can be difficult, because both grow out of behaviours that are consistently repeated. To confuse matters, we often use the words interchangeably.

According to research, there is a fine line between habit and addiction based on factors such as time spent engaging in the behaviour, chemical reactions in the brain, and whether or not withdrawal symptoms are experienced. However, there is one significant factor that differentiates the two. Habits can serve us well or work against us, while addiction is definitely not our friend – addiction implies *dependency*. The trick to identifying whether you (or your client) has developed a habit or addiction often lies in the amount of time and effort it takes to *break*.

### How habits form

Habits are regular practices or tendencies that are often unconscious (Brann, 2015). In essence, they are mental short cuts we have learned from experience. In other words, a memory of the steps we took

to solve a problem in the past. Habits begin with a "loop" based on a reward system (Duhigg, 2012). A cue (or trigger) tells the brain to go on to autopilot while performing a routine. If the brain benefits from the routine, it will continue to do the action. For example, in the morning your alarm goes off (cue/trigger) you drink a cup of coffee or tea (routine) because it gives you a boost and wakes you up (reward). After a stressful day (cue/trigger) you get home and have a glass of wine (routine) because it helps you to relax (reward). The loop is a self-reinforcing mechanism that over time becomes automatic.



### What neuroscience tells us

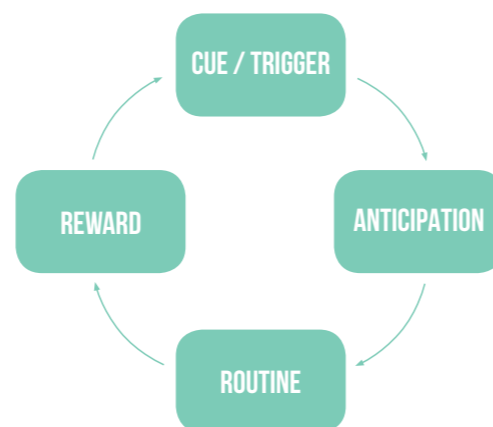
**NEURONS THAT  
FIRE TOGETHER,  
WIRE TOGETHER**

*Hebb (2002)*

As we have repetitive thoughts or take actions repeatedly, the neurons in our brain fire again and again (Hebb's Law).

This process results in the creation of increasingly strong neuronal circuits. The part of our brain often associated with habits is the basal ganglia – this is where our neural pathways that encode habits are found.

Dopamine is the "feel-good" neurotransmitter and hormone that is responsible for our reward and pleasure networks. In essence, habits are a dopamine-driven feedback loop. For years, scientists assumed that dopamine was all about pleasure. However, we now know it plays a key role in many neurological processes including motivation, learning and memory (and much more). Dopamine is not only released when we experience pleasure, but also when we anticipate it. When we predict that something will be rewarding, our levels of dopamine spike in anticipation. And whenever dopamine increases, so does our motivation to act. It is the *anticipation* of a reward (not the fulfilment of it) that gets us to take action.



### When habits serve us well ..... and when they don't

Habits are good for us (and our clients) because they free our minds to focus on new things, making us more efficient and productive. Habits that serve us well enable us to manage a large amount of information, choices, decisions, emotions,

targets and goals that we experience every day. In fact, we have habits for a large part of our daily lives – some 43% of our behaviours are performed out of habit and are unconscious (Wood et al, 2002). This means our brain has more capacity to focus on other tasks.

Our brain can't tell the difference between good and bad habits – we have to do that. We have to intentionally fight a bad habit and replace it with new routines otherwise the pattern will unfold over and over again every time the habit is activated by the cue or trigger.

### What this means for us as coaches

The upside of habits is we can do things without thinking. The downside is we get used to doing things in a certain way and stop paying attention. As coaches we can become 'addicted' to many things in our practice:

- Models and frameworks in our toolkit that we roll out repeatedly so that we find ourselves on auto pilot. We are led by our toolkit rather than responding to our clients in the moment. We become rigid around structure and control rather than maintaining a flexible approach.
- Our role as enabler can shift (consciously or otherwise) to one of rescuer as we are drawn into the world of our client.
- We can become addicted to the dopamine rush of "Ah ha" moments or big ticket coaching outcomes.
- Similarly, our Ego takes over and we become directive, sharing our knowledge and experience as we anticipate the buzz of demonstrating how smart we are.

Through regular reflective practice, feedback and supervision we have the ability to raise our self-awareness and check habitual behaviours. By noticing our cue or trigger we can stay alert to a

bad habit developing before it becomes a coaching 'addiction'.

### What this means for our clients

In our 24/7 connected culture, boundaries have become eroded and it's now seems acceptable to send emails, texts, and a whole variety of instant messaging any time of day or night. More worrying still, we expect an immediate response (and get irritated when it doesn't come). We receive an instant high from dopamine every time we hear the buzz of our smartphone or the ping of our email as the screen lights up with a new notification or mail arrives at our inbox. The dopamine hit reinforces (and motivates) our behaviour that makes us feel good and, in turn, can create an unhelpful habit.

Clinically speaking, we can't become addicted to a device, however, we can develop behavioural addictions to smartphone functions (e.g. instant messaging, social media, etc.) and its evident compulsive smartphone, email and social media use is on the rise. According to a recent study by Ofcom, on average we check our smart phone every 12 minutes during waking hours. Two in five adults look at their phone within five minutes of waking, while a third check their phones just before falling asleep. Alarmingly, 71% say they never turn off their phones, and 78% say they couldn't live without it. Technology can, and does, serve us well. However, we have to be careful with when and how we use it so that it doesn't work against us.

Time management, productivity, communication, effective working relationships, and work/life balance are recurring topics my clients bring to coaching. Our leaders have developed unhelpful habits that diminish their ability to think clearly, creatively and strategically. Coaching has a role to play in helping our leaders raise their self-aware about the things they do habitually, providing

challenge in identifying the cues and triggers, and support to create new routines (behaviours) that generate satisfying rewards.

Clear (2018) suggests the reason we don't stick to habits is because our self-image gets in the way. He goes on to say that becoming the best version of ourselves requires us to continuously edit our beliefs, and improve and expand our identity. The process of building habits is the process of becoming ourselves. Creating small, helpful habits can make a meaningful difference by providing evidence of a new identity.

### A final word

Habits never really disappear. Our brain doesn't have a mechanism to stop a habit, rather through practice we can create new, useful habits to replace the old unhelpful ones. If we want to master a helpful habit (for ourselves or our clients), the key is to start with repetition, not perfection. The amount of time we have been performing a habit is not as important as the number of times we do it.

Time now for that glass of wine, or perhaps I'll put my running shoes on and go for a jog instead.

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# How Coaching is Key to Innovation & Change

Carl Gregory

I've often wondered why so many organisations and people struggle with change. After all it's a phenomenon that happens constantly during our lives and apart from death the only certainty we will ever face. You would have thought that over thousands of years of evolution we would be more used to it by now and certainly better at dealing with it, but we're not!

Let's start with a simple test. When I mention the following 2 words, what is your immediate, gut-feel reaction?

- Change
- Conflict

Is your immediate feeling a Negative one? (I feel uncomfortable, uncertain with this)

Or is it a Positive one? (I like this, this is in my comfort zone)

My guess is that probably more than 80% of you will have a Negative feel. Am I right?

I'm in the other 20%. I've always viewed change and conflict as a challenge. Something which you go through to achieve a positive outcome, whether that be generating new ideas to solve a difficult business problem or to achieve challenging commercial targets.

Let's continue with the theme of the "C" Words....

Just as "Change" is the "Challenge", "Coaching" is the solution.

I'm sure you've heard the saying "Necessity is the Mother of Invention", well "Coaching is the Enabler of Change".

The organisations which embrace change in this way are always the most innovative. They are the Disruptors. They have the right leadership, culture and diversity in place to encourage and share new ideas so that change is always viewed as a positive.

However, if you are working in a culture which is very rigid, hierarchical, change and risk averse, it is going to be extremely difficult to encourage free thinking and new ideas.

There are also employment legislation factors to consider which impact upon organisational culture. In the UK, in the first 2 years in a new job you have limited employment rights. Is it any wonder then that most people keep their heads down and avoid challenge/conflict to the status quo? This is fine but it's not going to lead to generating a culture of innovative thinking and off-the-wall ideas about how to change the company. People play it safe.

Some organisations pretend to be supporters of change because it projects a positive image, but in reality, they don't. They effectively want all the benefits of the bath without getting wet.

Which is why Coaching is key to Innovation & Change. Coaching is all about removing the brakes - people's psychological barriers. It's a way of engaging and developing an individual to become the best version of themselves they can possibly be. It's about unlocking their full potential. Believe me, earlier in my career I was a sceptic. Like you, I was brought up in a rigid academic system where we were taught in structured sessions according to subject and led to believe that this is the best way to develop people. However, I gradually came to understand that by coaching senior executives you can achieve change and innovation relatively easily within your organisation. It's all about knowing how to manage it and realising that developing a Coaching Culture is so much more powerful than traditional

training methods.

## The Culture Test

I've devoted a large part of my career to working with organisations to develop their cultures. I'm fascinated by it and it's become my passion. Why? Because Organisational Culture is the fundamental key to any successful business. If you have the right culture with fully-engaged employees, I can guarantee you will deliver high levels of customer satisfaction. This in turn will lead to excellent financial performance.

Long derided as a fluffy buzz word, most people now realise that Culture is key to business success. The challenge is that many don't know how to influence or fix it. The most successful companies however plan their cultures strategically and methodically as they realise it is the fundamental foundation for future profitability.

After a while, as an expert working for many years in this area, you don't just feel the culture, you can smell it - a sixth sense if you like. So can your customers, but more of that later...

Try this simple test. Rate the culture of your organisation on the following scale:



Just go with your gut feel. I can guarantee that if you are at either end of the scale, you will know it.

I don't need to define Toxic because I'm pretty sure most of you can do that for yourselves. What about Electric though - what does that look like?

• There is a real buzz about your organisation - you can feel the energy the moment you step through the door.

• All your employees identify, buy-in and commit to your business culture. Every single one will go that extra mile.

• Communication is impressive - conversations are creative, meaningful and of high quality.

• Experts mentor colleagues and learning is happening constantly because people devote the time to coach others.

• Customers leave your business with the feeling of having had a truly world-class experience.

Ask yourself honestly - does your business have this??

The trouble is, the more senior you are in an organisation the less you will feel the culture and be affected by it. Don't let this fool you - take the time to survey employees at all levels and get their input. Also speak to your clients/customers. They are experts at "sniffing out" your culture because they place such a high importance on it - more than we realise in fact. They are not just there to buy your product/service. In most cases they want to identify with what you stand for as a business.

One big issue I find is when there is a misalignment between the working environment and the culture. On numerous occasions I have walked into impressive, glitzy business HQ's just waiting to be wowed, and what I've found is the exact opposite - a dull, uninspiring environment devoid of any customer centricity. It wouldn't have been so bad if I'd expected it, but having had my hopes built up they are cruelly dashed by the

reality. This just amplifies the mismatch...

My guess is that most of you will be somewhere between 4 & 8 on the scale. This is OK, but why settle for second best. With the right expert support and focus you too can have that Electric Culture and the extra profit that goes with it!

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# Effective Simplicity

Hélène Cooper

## The value of simplification

In this article I discuss how embracing the concept of simplification can help people reduce stress in their everyday work/life and achieve their aims more effectively.

## Uncertain times, Information overload and constant pressure

At a time when, more than ever, we all need to be agile and flexible so we can respond to a complex and ever changing world where the future is uncertain, it is becoming increasingly challenging to know what to do to have maximum positive impact. And to make matters worse, the speed of change keeps accelerating.

In this context the constant flow of information adds further weight to the level of stress, and, its corresponding increase in cortisol has an impact on our ability to think. The fear of losing out, of not being aware of the latest news, to miss out on something important pressurises us into being in constant contact with others, through mobile phones and business or social networks. The consequence is our time and our brain are saturated. To quote Paul and Virginia Brown 'The energy that is being used to manage everything concerned with the stress is not available to the area of the brain that seem to have the capacity to sort out problems'.

## How can we help our clients? Simplify!

Within this context, is it time to get back to basics in our coaching practice and help our clients find the time and space where they can increase in resilience and re-energize the resources within? This will enable them to have the impact they are looking for, not just in their professional life but also often their personal one too. To coin a currently over used phrase: 'to take back control'

For me, the answer to "how do we help our clients" is obvious - through effective coaching.

However, to paraphrase Eric Parsloe, coaching may simply be a conversation but the fact it is simple does not mean it is easy. How do we ensure skilful simplicity in our coaching conversations to create the supportive exploring space which will enable clear thinking in our busy world?

Simplicity has always attracted me. It helps me focus on what needs to be done, where to start and how to progress. Nothing described below is new or unique, but the steps are distilled from observing what worked well in my practice with clients operating in a complex, uncertain, fast changing world. Although the impact they have depends to some extent to my coachees' preferred way of working, everyone seemed to benefit.

## Simplification Key steps

These steps follow a simple logical pattern: De-clutter, Simplify the task, Use the whole of the self, Take time to celebrate.

### Step 1 - De-clutter

How do we help our coachees find light in the fog? To create space and time? The answer appears simple: just encourage clients to leave the world temporarily outside/offload, not just emails, mobiles phones... to make space for breathing and simply be.

Many coaches have brought a few minutes of mindfulness into their practices to promote calm and readiness. Some may use imagery to take the conversation into a more creative territory. Others ensure coaching take place in more unusual spaces walking in nature for example (walking in nature brings an extra element of peace and provides many sensual cues to expand thinking beyond the obvious). These are just a few example of how coaches work with their client's preference to create a space where productive thinking can take place.

Contracting to clarify that creating time and

space is an essential element of the coaching commitment is key as it may mean leaving mobiles outside the room or walking out of the office.

Taking the time to build a strong rapport will ensure the conversation is anchored in a deep level of trust and unconditional positive regard enabling clients to feel safe and supported so they can stretch safely beyond their comfort zone.

Once these are in place, it is time to evolve a clear and compelling vision of the wanted outcome.

### 2 - Simplify the task.

Having a clear understanding of where you want to get to is the next step in the process, simply because that alone will make the task easier. How this is done very much depends on the client's preference. For some, setting SMART goals works best, for others an image or a mindfully created experience of it will feel like to have achieved it will be more motivating. There is no right or wrong way here, only a focus on what works best for the coachee.

To make the outcome even more desirable, what matters is that the future picture focuses on benefits. By this I mean not just for the self in the work context, but on the total self; 'what's in it for me' and extend the thinking to consider 'for us, the company, others in my life'. Noticing how this outcome is anchored in personal values and beliefs will take this drive for change to a new, stronger level of motivation. Bringing to awareness alignment of goal and/or direction with others not just the organisations, but also family, friends will take it even further.

Spending enough time at this stage of

the coaching conversations is essential. In Atomic Habits, James Clear explains that 'being specific about what you want and how to achieve it helps you say no to things that derail the process'. The clearer, the more compelling the vision, not only the greater chances of success, but also the easier it becomes to make choices, to prioritise.

Listening to radio 4 recently, I heard Ken Gabriel (CEO of Draper) talk about the management principles of successful innovation. Sharpness of focus is explained as one of these principles. Greg McKeow in Essentialism explains how clarity simplifies the decision making process by making the 'trade offs' visible and enabling conscious choices. In other words, when experiencing the unavoidable clashes and conflicting demands along the way it becomes easier to push back or consciously let go off distractions that might arise.

### 3- Use the whole of the self

In a 'rational' world, particularly in the work context, using reason is often the default factor to work with. Although it is certainly a very important and useful tool, it is not the only one, and when the brain is 'tired' or stressed it can benefit from the help of other forms of intelligence, creative and emotional to name but a few.

As visual preference is the most common one and many coaches use visual tools. 'A picture is worth a thousand words' I cannot recall who's

quote this is attributed to, but it is certainly my experience that when coaching a simple visual tool instantly highlights important elements. How many of us have seen the impact of the wheel of life/work in showing challenges and the interconnectivity between many elements of a client's life for example?

Using a picture to illustrate an issue and discussing it often helps coachees take the emotion out of the situation and see more clearly and calmly what may be standing in the way or could enable the way forward. Moving items around in a systemic way can open up new perspectives, throw light on more enabling moves or help increase understanding. Over the years, I have found the simpler the tool, the more useful, memorable and reusable, but this may well be influenced by my own preference which in turns effect the way I present and use it in situ.

### 4 - Take time to celebrate

The one step clients overlook is the last one - take time to celebrate. It could be because the way forward was split into such small steps they are hardly visible or feel they are too small to be celebrated. However, taking the time to do so injects us with dopamine, the reward hormone, which not only helps us feel good but also energises us towards the next step.

So support your coachee in talking about their journey with others. It will deliver extra encouragement along the way as well as raise awareness to supporters and

stakeholders about the positive impact of change over time. The added bonus here is that the organisation will more easily recognise the Return On Investment, not just on your coachee but also on the coaching process as a whole.

In summary when the environment is so challenging and uncertain, it is time to de-clutter, simplify, use the whole of the self and celebrate success. Simple enough, isn't it, but not necessarily easy to achieve.

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# Leading with Purpose

Diane Newell

In this article I set out 2 simple propositions about what supports purposeful leadership, and illustrate the power of coaching leaders to clarify purpose with some work we have been doing with a major FMCG organisation across Europe.

In general we respond positively to being described as a 'purposeful' leader, I doubt many of us would hear it as anything but positive feedback. But there is confusion in and amongst leaders, HR professionals and amongst academics about what we are talking about when we describe someone as purposeful, how to develop purposeful leaders and exactly why doing so would be of value.

Let's start with a definition, what does it mean to be Purposeful? The OED gives 3 definitions

1. Having or showing determination or resolve.
2. Having a useful purpose
3. Intentional.

So 'purposeful' can be both a description of how we are acting and/or why we are acting. And the why might be 'useful' or it might just be 'intentional'.

So, when we describe a leader as 'purposeful' are they merely determined or are they acting explicitly intentionally in pursuit of organisational purpose? Can they be described as purposeful if they act in line only with their Individual Purpose? Or do they have to be consistent with both? How do Ethics, Morals, Values and Beliefs intersect with purpose, either Individual or Organisational? And is being 'authentic' and being purposeful the same?

In this article I want to explore what we mean by 'purposeful leadership', and offer some conclusions drawn from experience of working with leaders.

*"Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction."*

*John F. Kennedy*

I want to start by thinking about purpose at the organisational level. It's hard to imagine a completely 'purposeless' organisation. For profit organisations might be described as being there to make money by definition. But that would be like saying that all people have purpose because we all, at least nearly all, want to continue to exist and carry on eating, drinking and breathing. Its true, and in extremis might become our sole purpose, but it isn't a description of a 'purposeful' life that we would recognise. Once those basic needs<sup>1</sup> of survival and safety are met we seek some sort of 'actualisation' a realisation of our unique potential. True organisational purpose goes beyond describing the current organisational strategies or goals. It describes WHY the organisation exists as well as WHAT it wants to achieve and HOW it wants to be.

The more complex and rapidly changing the environment is the more important it is that individuals in the organisation have a shared understanding of WHAT organisational success is, as well as a clear understanding of what is expected of them individually in contribution to that success. When they have that understanding they are equipped to make better decisions, both individually and collectively. They can prioritise between competing demands and agendas in environments too fluid or complex for standardised processes and guidelines to be sufficient. A common understanding of organisational success can act as a 'true north' in helping people to collaborate effectively in ambiguity.

Going beyond WHAT to WHY and HOW is important because it allows individuals to 'engage' – that is to find meaning and motivation in their work by connecting shared organisational purpose and identity to their own purpose, beliefs and values. Just as with any individual purpose 'organisational purpose' might be judged as 'useful' or not. And as with an individual we will make judgements about the organisation's 'authenticity' based on our judgement of behaviour vs. their stated beliefs and values. For employees, the behaviour that we judge is the behaviour of the leaders that we see as 'representing' the organisation -so if their behaviour is inconsistent with stated organisational identity we judge the organisation itself to be inauthentic.

*Proposition: Organisational leaders are 'purposeful' if they act and communicate with determination, consistently with their organisation's purpose. The impact of this is that those they lead have clear and consistent understanding of the organisation's*

*purpose (why what and how it wants to be) and of how they as a team and as individuals contribute to that purpose.*

As an example, the purpose of The OCM is to bring the power of coaching and mentoring into the world of organisations – making individuals, teams and organisations stronger and more capable. To enable this, we have a number of beliefs and values that as leaders that we try to live consistently. We believe in our capacity to be a force for good in the world, by impacting on organisations, their leaders and employees. We value building trusting partnerships in which we can adopt a high challenge, high support position with our clients. By being authentic in our application of these beliefs and values, we help individuals engage with our purpose and understand how they can contribute to it.

## Individual Purpose and Engagement

Engagement is an emotional connection and commitment to something, in this case an organisational purpose. When we have that connection we will work to make the organisation successful in its purpose, not just because we are paid to do so but because it is meaningful to us. It is intrinsically satisfying.

For most of us work brings a mixture of extrinsic and intrinsic reward – and few if any roles are so perfect that everything in it is intrinsically satisfying. Our overall sense of satisfaction is driven by the

balance between the energy we give to the role and the rewards we receive. Both from research and observation individuals who derive intrinsic satisfaction are engaged in a way that is more robust than those purely extrinsically motivated, because they get direct emotional rewards by creating organisational value.

Unfortunately, although we can recognise when we have or haven't got intrinsic satisfaction, many people are unclear about what adds to or detracts from that sense of engagement. So individuals including leaders find it difficult, particularly in times of change, to consciously nurture their own satisfaction, making adaptations to changing requirements whilst maintaining their engagement. As a result, leaders might dilute the perceived authenticity of organisational purpose through their own behaviour. Both implicitly and explicitly they find it difficult to authentically share with others their commitment to proposed organisational change, which dilutes their effectiveness in communicating change in a way that engages and inspires others.

I am convinced that understanding your own purpose, beliefs and values is essential to living your life in a way that will be most rewarding and meaningful. It is also vital to being a successful leader, especially in times of change when so much is ambiguous and we look to our leaders to help us find meaning and direction.

*"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why."*

*Mark Twain*

*Proposition: Organisational leaders cannot be 'purposeful' (determined and acting consistently with organisation purpose) in times of change and ambiguity unless they have a clear and authentic understanding of their own purpose, values and beliefs and are able to connect that with those of the organisation. Purposeful leaders are inspiring when that purpose is seen as 'meaningful' to others, and when they can communicate their own purpose, and their engagement with the organisation. That inspiration helps others to find their own engagement.*

*Putting propositions into action – values based leadership*

We are working in partnership to put these propositions into action with the head of Manufacturing and Supply of a major FMCG in Europe; the implementation was developed and initially implemented with a member of his team following and during major reorganisation. The reorganisation has driven a big increase in scale and complexity in leadership roles, and the objective is to find new ways of leading that will be effective in this environment, to allow the high levels of engagement and commitment that the organisation had to be maintained whilst gaining the competitive and performance benefits that the reorganisation aimed to deliver. The programme is still developing and being implemented, and I look forward to sharing the longer term outcomes in a future article, but the impact to date has been extremely satisfying for us all. We have seen individual leaders reporting a clarity of purpose that they hadn't had before, and finding that sharing that skilfully, when communicating around organisational strategies and goals is creating a qualitatively

# Leading with Purpose (cont.)

Diane Newell

different level of impact in their teams. We have seen that leaders are taking active and purposeful control of their own development to be successful in these reshaped roles, in line with organisational purpose and with their own needs and purpose,

One of the reasons for the success of the programme is a pragmatic 'test and learn' methodology that enabled us to create a really effective approach, and to constantly adapt it to meet needs across a complex organisation. Test and learn also ensured that we brought in the understanding of leaders 'on the ground' and built a sense of shared ownership in the approach across the leadership team, in particular those working in Safety – as the element of organisational success that the leadership team chose to focus on was a shift to 'Living Safety as a Value'.

The other reason for success is that throughout we adopted a coaching approach, and provided coaching support and challenge to leaders in thinking about their purpose, beliefs and values. Breaking out of learnt ideas about what leaders 'should' value to make explicit your true identity and having the courage and vulnerability to share who you really are isn't 'comfortable' for most leaders. Without one to one support the tools and approaches we used would not, we all judge, have been sufficient for most leaders to get and use real clarity.

We were able to bring in a variety of approaches and models into a one day

workshop to enable individual leaders to think about what being a purposeful 'Values Based Leader' meant for them, and to clarify their own Purpose, beliefs and values. We used (and licensed) a model from Blessing White to give a framework around which our 2 propositions could be developed.



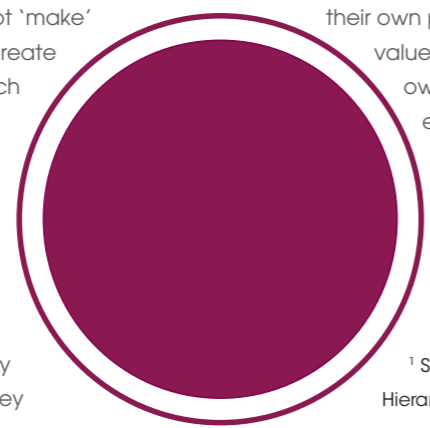
And we used a values clarification process based on values cards (also licensed from one of our alumni). The organisation has a strong set of Values, and the first purposeful engagement we explore with leaders is with these, demonstrating that we all engage differently with the same Values. This is key in thinking about how as leaders we 'engage' others, making tangible that we cannot 'make' others engaged, only create the environment in which they can find their own engagement.

Leaders in the organisation go on to spend time exploring 'Living safety as a Value' what it really means to them, how they engage with it, how they can communicate that authentically to others and how they can develop new habits that demonstrate their commitment.

They are supported in putting their values into action around safety through team workshops, and one to one coaching either from OCM coaches or their line managers. Line managers are in turn supported to coach effectively to create engagement through our ELECTRIC Coaching™ skills programme.

So what conclusion can we draw from these propositions, and this experience? You will no doubt draw your own, but here are mine:

1. Purposeful leadership – defined as leaders who are consistently determined and acting consistently with organisation purpose – is vital for success in complex, ambiguous environments.
2. Being purposeful, and creating purposeful leadership, is not 'complex' theoretically – but it is not easy to do consistently and effectively, particularly in those complex ambiguous changing environments.
3. To do so requires attention to clarity – ensuring that leaders have shared understanding of organisational purpose – the WHY, WHAT and HOW.
4. It also requires that we create the environment in which leaders can find their own purpose, beliefs and values, manage their own engagement and engage others – that necessitates providing leadership coaching and developing a coaching culture.



<sup>1</sup> Self-actualisation, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, 1943

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# Outplacement Coaching and the Returning Expat

Julia Calleja

Many of us feel some sense of uncertainty about the future – it is what compels us to plan and manage our days. Planning gives us a sense of purpose and a feeling of control over the future.

Redundancy however, or the threat of it, creates an uncertainty that affects our psychological wellbeing in a profound way. It is something that happens to us and is out of our control. When redundancy becomes a trigger for anxiety related ailments, many people turn to their GP to seek support.

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is a common diagnosis for situational depression. This means a specific incident triggering anxiety and depression in an otherwise healthy and competent individual, rendering them unable to navigate the challenge of the situation – perceived or real - of which redundancy is a good example.

'Anxiety is a type of fear usually associated with the thought of a threat or something going wrong in the future, but can also arise from something happening right now.'

One in six people in the past week experienced a common mental health problem such as depression or anxiety. It is also likely that individuals do not seek help for significant levels of anxiety, meaning many remain without diagnosis or treatment.'

Mental Health Foundation

GPs play an important role in referring patients for CBT and other talking therapies. Many also prescribe medications which chemically enhance patients' levels of serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter which plays a major role in the body by contributing to well-being, good mood, appetite, memory, and sleep.

So how can outplacement coaching and mentoring help?

Professionals working with 'at risk' groups or individuals in the workplace are provided the opportunity to deliver outplacement coaching sessions based around action-oriented learning; the intended learning outcome being to help individuals regain the self-motivation to set personal goals.

This type of intervention requires a blended coach/mentoring approach. Classic coaching - with the sharing of tools and techniques - can help coachees reflect on past experiences in order to learn from them, explore their current reality and their options for action.

By clearly identifying development needs, coachees are able to set realistic and sustainable learning objectives, to plan and to prioritise their future. In short, coach/mentoring can help individuals establish what support they need and how to get it.

So what happens to those who choose not to seek medical help or who are not able to access coach/mentoring services in the workplace? The following case study provides an example of redundancy leading to GAD.

### Case Study

Helen had been working for an international company in an overseas posting for ten years. She was a head of department, a confident and accomplished woman who had established good working relationships within her organisation and with her overseas clients.

When she was given notice of redundancy, she set to work contacting her network of colleagues and clients and was hopeful of finding an alternative position within the country she had made

her home. Unable to secure an alternative position within her notice period, Helen was re-patriated to the UK, leaving behind the home and the friends she had made.

Her UK property had been rented out to tenants. She served them notice but in the meantime, found herself living out of a suitcase staying as a guest of friends and family. Her personal possessions were shipped back and when they arrived, the container was placed into a storage facility unopened.

For the first six months Helen tirelessly searched for work. Being well qualified and experienced, she put the rejections of her CV down to the fact that she was in her '50s. She did manage to secure a series of interim assignments, but nothing with the prospect of security. She described this time as 'feeling in limbo' and not feeling like she 'belonged'.

Ten years earlier, when she had accepted the job overseas, her HR department had made sure she was well-prepared. She had been given the chance to visit the country, see the offices and accommodation and meet other expatriates before she accepted the posting. She had undergone training about the country and found the other expats were a great source of advice and emotional support during the first few months of her onboarding process.

However, when she was sent back to the UK, there was no such support. Just a one-way ticket and the assumption that she had somewhere to live. No one prepared her or followed up with her after she had left the company.

After about a year, Helen realised that she was struggling with her mental health. With the anxiety of working from month to month and living in rented accommodation, she felt unable to settle down. She had no friends nearby but

# Outplacement Coaching and the Returning Expat (cont.)

equally, no energy for creating a social life in a place that she was just passing through. She felt she had no future.

Following a family member's suggestion that she see a GP, Helen started on the road to regaining her wellness. The GP referred Helen for counselling, and she also attended some group therapy and took the prescribed anti-depressants. What this did for Helen, was to teach her how to recognise when things were getting on top of her, and when to ask for help. Within six months she was feeling more positive and decided she could manage things on her own going forward.

None of this however changed Helen's work situation; that would require her to take action. This she did, with the support of a career transition coach.

A company is accountable in situations where employees suffer industrial injury which does not manifest until years after the employee has retired (for example, in the case of exposure to asbestos). In the same way, this case study suggests that employer's duty of care should go beyond the working contract, as unsupported staff facing redundancy or redeployment, are susceptible to suffering from anxiety and depression.

The business case for supporting returning expats, extends beyond protecting the company's brand image. Having invested in the career and skills development of key management staff by sending them on overseas assignments, the organisation expects to see a return on investment when this experience is brought back to the expat's original office. However, without support, most returning expats will leave their organisation within 12-24 months of returning, citing issues such as the absence of a clearly defined career path and feeling disconnected to the working environment.

Here are some top tips for supporting UK staff being sent on assignment overseas:-

1. Ensure the expat stays connected to their office of origin during their assignment, especially with their mentor. Their UK manager should also check in at least once a year to see how they are doing
2. Periodical staff briefings that communicate UK business highlights and employee updates are a good way of keeping the expat updated with changes at home.
3. Reciprocally, the expat must be encouraged to keep in touch with their colleagues, sharing something of their work/life experience abroad and to show an interest in the UK business.
4. The benefit of maintaining Executive coaching throughout the assignment will help the expat to think about the future and where they want to take their career in the longer term. It is good to let valuable staff know, that they are part of the long term plans of the business.
5. Resettlement and transition is a complex process involving many administrative and logistical arrangements. Practical help and advice should be the same on repatriation as it was for demobilisation.
6. It is imperative not to leave discussions about their next role until they are recalled home. The expat experience will have changed them and they will want to utilise their new skills. They will not be happy to return to do the same job at the same level as they did before the assignment.
7. An important factor in the wellbeing of staff, is that they feel a sense of control and to be considered a valuable stakeholder in the business.

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Julia qualified with the OCM in 2008 and was Chair of the Guildford branch of the OCM network until 2010, when she took an expat assignment in the Middle East. On returning home, Julia set up the 'British Expat Community' in Bournemouth, a support group connecting over 50 repatriates. Helen's story is typical of the many stories shared within this group.

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# How can we coach for Innovation – Graham Clark

## the "sweet spot" where creativity and execution come together?

Confession is good for the soul – so here goes. I'm not a particularly creative person by nature. In management team meetings I enjoy talking through creative ways of solving things but I notice that I have an increasingly irresistible urge to start putting together a plan and start assigning actions. I can feel myself getting a bit anxious and even impatient when colleagues seem to be doing nothing more than playing around with ideas without them coming quickly to a point.

It's a weakness I know I need to manage better in team meetings: the danger of not spending enough time thinking "what if...?" is that I just end up executing something that's a variation on an existing theme, rather than something truly innovative. Of course, as a coach I'm well aware of this - but the drive to plan is something I constantly need to manage.

Perhaps because there are a lot of people like me with the same 'hurry up' driver, it's my belief that true innovation is elusive in the workplace. There are a surprising number of factors which get in the way, and we'll explore these later. But for now let's look more closely at what innovation actually is. "Creativity" and "Innovation" are often used interchangeably but in fact they are not the same. There's a lot of research out there about both, but a good summary is:

Innovation = Creativity x Execution

In other words, it's about generating creative ideas and then bringing them

to fruition in an efficient and profitable way. In an HBR paper, Innovation is Not Creativity by Vijay Govindarajan, Harvard Business Review, August 03, 2010 the researchers polled a large group of senior executives about their companies' ability to execute – rating both Creativity and Execution on a scale of 0 – 10 (worst to best). Overwhelmingly, the executives believed that their companies were significantly better at Creativity (scoring 6 on average) than Execution (scoring 1). That's a pretty stark difference.

And this paucity of execution is really important for us to bear in mind as coaches. At our best we need to create a thinking space where creative ideas can happen. And, crucially, help our clients to execute them in what is often a complex environment where the deck is firmly stacked against bringing these ideas to fruition.

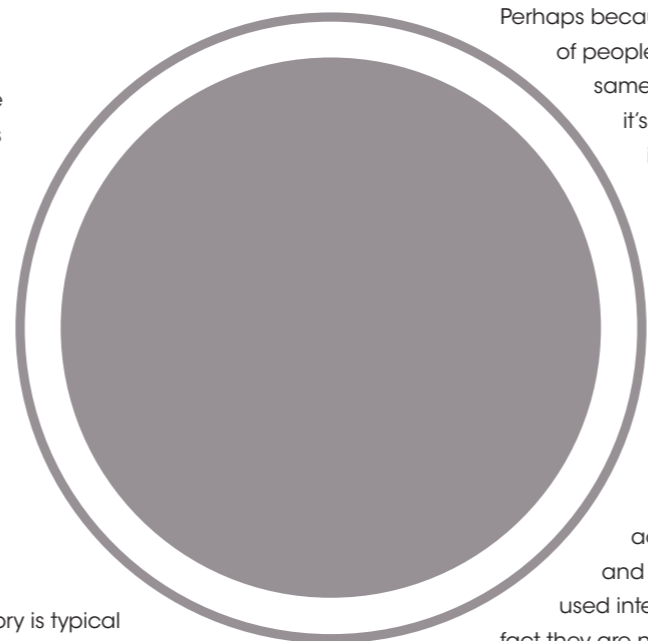
### Creativity

As coaches we're in a strong position to encourage creativity. A lot of our professional training is about encouraging different ways of thinking. Most importantly, I believe that what we provide is a focused but non-judgemental space in which the coach helps ignite and cultivate the spark of creativity in the client. As coaches we have a lot of licence to use a whole range of techniques – some quite unorthodox – to encourage this.

The key of course is to be radical enough to challenge and provoke new insights and new connections in the client – without unsettling the client too much. I always believe that as a coach we should be 'half a step' ahead of our clients, alongside and yet slightly ahead so that we can encourage new perspectives. Yet we also know that coaches create that wonderful sense of ease and a lack of pressure where our clients are in a state of "Flow". The balance we strike between a sense of purpose and focus on the one hand, and a state of ease and unfettered creativity on the other, is I believe a core way we add value.

We add huge value to our clients by providing valuable feedback about the creative process and we can point out areas where their thought processes could be broader. We can also stimulate a change in thought processes by how and where we coach. We can change the location of the coaching to somewhere conducive to creative thought. OCM coaches coach some clients in galleries, shops and in the countryside – and use a range of tools incorporating a mix of visual, kinaesthetic and auditory stimuli when our clients need them.

Another key way we help though is to encourage effective collaboration with colleagues. One major source





# How can we coach for Innovation – the “sweet spot” where creativity and execution come together? (cont.)

of creativity is taking a concept that applies in one context and applying it in a different one. For example, applying a technology used in one industry to a completely different one.

And productive, collaborative conversations with colleagues and with one’s broader network are an important way in which this happens. A well-known aspect of the modern workplace is the tendency for more atomised working – and it’s easy to see how this can get in the way of true creativity: if conversations with others aren’t happening, the spark of creativity is hard to ignite. Coaches can encourage clients to “look up and out” from their work and find opportunities to be creative with others.

### Execution

Although creativity itself is important in innovation, my experience echoes the research – for many of my clients the more run-of-the mill matter of getting things done is the more pressing barrier to true innovation.

To be clear, I’m not saying that the solution is to be like Boxer from Animal Farm. “I... will... work... harder...” is not the right strategy for innovation. “I will work harder in an efficient yet empathetic and highly collaborative way” is not as snappy, but it’s closer to what makes the difference.

There is innovation out there in the

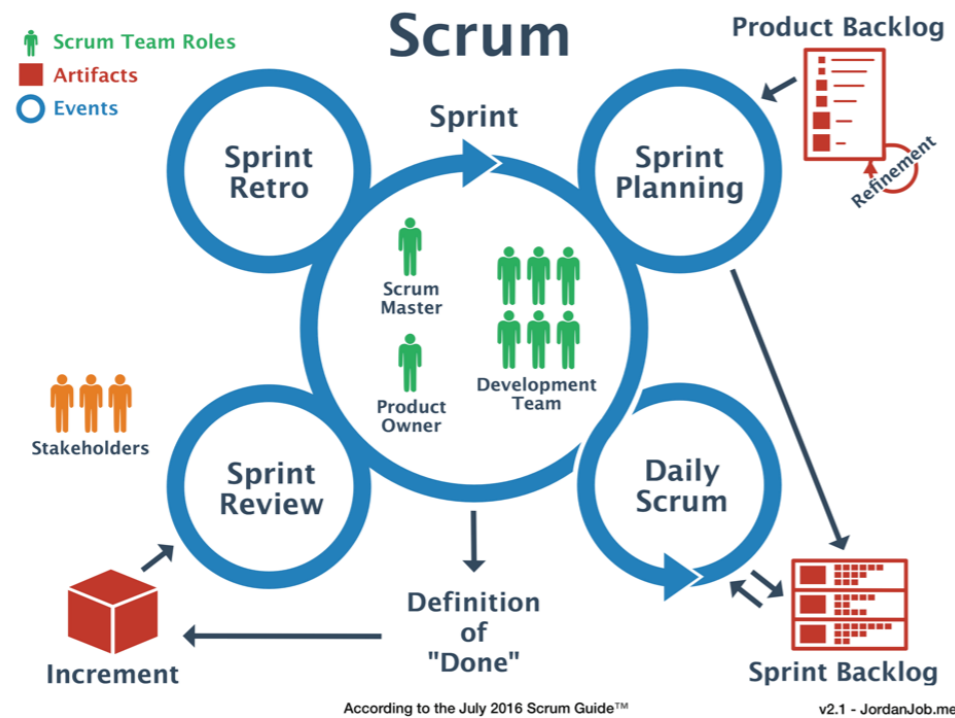


Figure 1 – Simplified Scrum Diagram courtesy of JordanJob.me

way that people execute. Recently I’ve become interested in disciplines like SCRUM which are fundamentally focused on executing complex pieces of work quickly. I believe there is a lot that coaches can learn from these – and a lot that Scrum experts can learn from the coaching profession in turn. I’ve summarised some of the key principles in Scrum which I’ve used in coaching with my clients and which I think we could all build on and borrow from.

For me there is real power in combining creative thinking with fast execution using Scrum principles – supported by a coaching-focused collaborative approach.

The key concept of the Scrum is a Sprint – a set of activities which collaborating groups undertake to bring a project / programme to the next stage, addressing some or all of the backlog of activities. Each Sprint takes place over a short period- typically 2 weeks – and there will be multiple Sprint cycles.

The process starts with a Sprint planning meeting where key members of the collaborating teams meet to determine what needs to be accomplished by whom in this Sprint, to iron out any potential risks and ensure effective collaboration.

The teams then execute their assigned activities – and progress is tracked visually on a Scrum board (and charts of activities completed) which are updated in daily Sprint meetings. These Sprint meetings provide the opportunity to discuss any ongoing issues and align activities between teams.

Towards the end of the Sprint, the product is reviewed by a core team including the overall ‘owner’ of the product – to

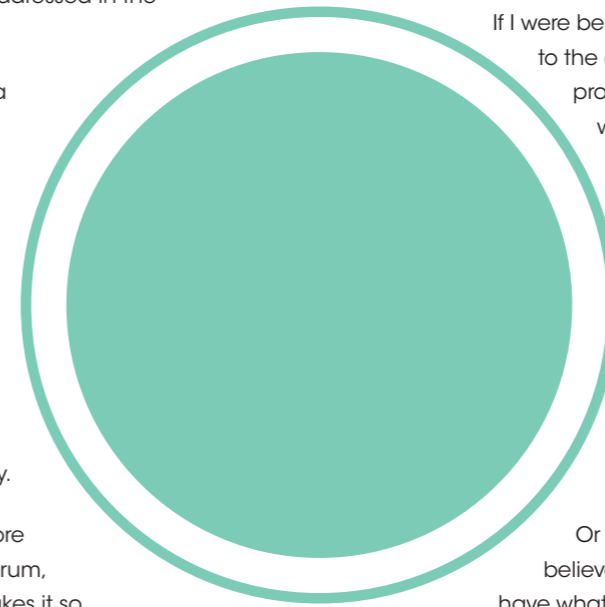
determine progress and highlight any issues which are now fixed or ones which need to be addressed in the next Sprint.

There is also a retrospective of the Scrum process itself so that the team can learn from the experience and improve collaboration and efficiency.

One of the core features of Scrum, and what makes it so potentially powerful, is the idea of iteration and improvement. This is in regards to both the product being worked on, and the efficiency of the team itself.

So, why aren’t more coaches using

execution methodologies like Scrum in our work with clients?



If I were being challenging to the coaching profession as a whole, I’d say that many coaches may be more comfortable with the creativity aspect and less comfortable with execution.

Or perhaps we may believe that our clients have what they need for innovation in terms of process and discipline – and that as coaches we just need to sprinkle in a bit more ‘right-brain’, creative, emergent thinking.

However as the research suggests, we

are more likely to have success with our clients when we focus on BOTH aspects. The key is to encourage our clients to start to develop their creative ideas quickly and iteratively - testing and learning and failing fast in order to progress. When we do this – and add in the creativity and focus that coaching can provide – our clients will be unstoppable.

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# When is being directive not being too direct?

Charlotte Bruce-Foulds & Alison Williamson

## When is being directive not being too direct?

This year in our regular speakers corner slot - where contributors have an opportunity to share their own thinking and ideas on a particular subject - Charlotte Bruce-Foulds and Alison Williamson, share their practical experiences and theoretical insights into directive coaching. Is it always to be avoided or is there real value to be realised when used consciously?

## Being "directive" is not always as direct as it sounds - Charlotte Bruce-Foulds

When coaching is described, very often it is accompanied by some mention of it being exclusively a "non-directive" intervention. Here at The OCM I am pleased to say we have never really subscribed to this view. Our approach has always been situational, working along a continuum that moves from directive through to non-directive. This has always felt much more appropriate to me as being directive is not always as direct as it sounds!

## Let me explain.

To me personally, being inappropriately directive as a coach is telling someone what to do or bombarding them with suggestions of things that you think would solve their problem for them. Now that really isn't coaching - that's fixing. However, sharing knowledge and then allowing the client to decide what to do with this shared knowledge is very different. Perhaps this is more about mentoring then? Which is another reason why the OCM term of Coach-Mentoring works so well for me. It allows me to be confident that if sharing my knowledge will add value to my client - not because of

my need but because of theirs - then providing some direction enables my client to progress their thinking and reach more positive outcomes for themselves.

## Being directive in a world without answers

In this VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) environment we live in, how are those people who require calmness, certainty and clarity, able to function at their best? Learnt behaviours I hear you all cry! Yes indeed we can adapt to the environment we are working in and, indeed, choose to change some unhelpful behaviours.

Nevertheless, personality profiles haven't fundamentally changed, there are still many profiles out there that find a VUCA environment particularly difficult to deal with and may find themselves drifting towards 'survival mode' where decisions become more difficult to make. Sometimes it becomes about just getting through what's put in front of us, rather than openly and proactively being positive and engaging within our working world, where often there are few absolute answers. This is where being directive and using appropriate challenge can add real value. What's more, in my experience, it's an approach that can often be the catalyst to change.

## A DIRECT approach

I have outlined my approach to being DIRECT below, where often being directive takes the form of a real challenge to a client's course of action and I have included a real-life example to illustrate this. I am not offering this as a coaching model, more a way of describing an approach that I find helpful as a coach-mentor.

Some might describe this as being overly directive, but it fulfils my belief that as long as the ownership for any decisions made stays firmly with the client, directing them towards making them can be a valuable catalyst for change.

**Determine** - the client's state of mind, are they in survival mode, how resilient are they if you were to challenge?

**Investigate** - what is going on in their world at the moment?

**Reveal** - show empathy and your perspective on the situation. Hold the mirror up. What patterns of behaviour or insight from their choice of language or metaphors have you observed?

**Explore** - their reaction to your perspective, their response to your feedback.

**Challenge** - appropriately, based on all the above, to think differently about their

situation, perhaps to acknowledge a reality or reach a decision.

**Test** - their commitment for taking action, their desire for change, a new way of thinking.

## DIRECT in action

I thought it might be useful to share this is a real-life scenario to illustrate DIRECT in action. It's taken from a session I had working with an HR Professional who was one of my candidates studying for an OCM coaching qualification.

**Determine** - it became apparent (by her manner and tone of voice) at our telephone coaching session that she was on the edge of survival mode.

**Investigate** - a lot going on all at the same time: Health issues (pregnant with first child); Work issues (problems with TUPE over a forthcoming acquisition) and behind with her written work on her coaching qualification.

**Reveal** - "it sounds like you've got an awful lot on your plate at the moment. Last time we spoke, you said the work issues would be resolved to give you more time to catch up and yet if anything it seems as if you have even more to cope with now than before."

**Explore** - resignation and agreement to the fact things were getting on top of her at the moment and how frustrated she was at not achieving the goals she had set herself last time.

**Challenge** - "it sounds to me as if you need to decide whether you want to continue with this coaching qualification at this challenging time or not?" Firm response

that she wanted to continue - her clear decision.

**Test** - how could she make realistic commitments to change the status quo and achieve her restated decision to complete her coaching qualification? This resulted in her booking a day off work the following week solely to focus on her qualification, which she took and got back on track.

## In summary

To many coaches, reacting in the moment to what is presented in a coaching session is key. However I have met a number of coaches that believe that this does not include being directive, even when the situation warrants it. From my own experience of counselling - a self-professed non-directive intervention - even then I have witnessed more directive approaches that have provided real insight. A counsellor holding the mirror up to illustrate recurring patterns to test my thinking of a situation was far more valuable to me than merely asking open questions.

So if we are to be true catalysts for change and in real service of our clients, working in a world that increasingly provides few definitive answers, let us recognise that using a more direct approach can sometimes provide them with a valuable answer and a way forward.

## Can judicious use of directive coaching add real value to our clients? Alison Williamson

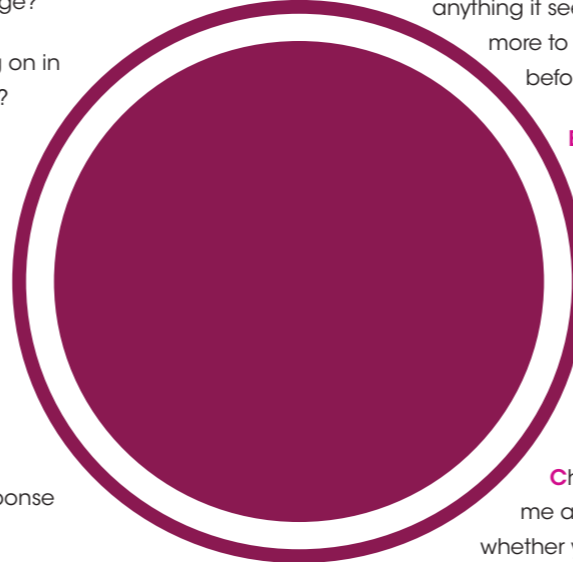
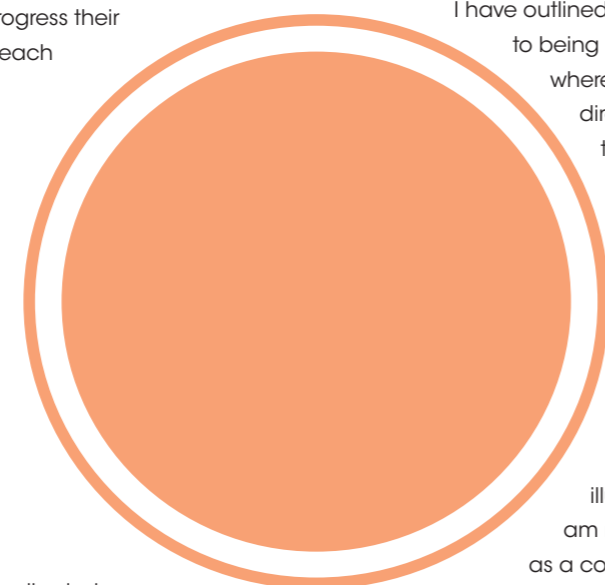
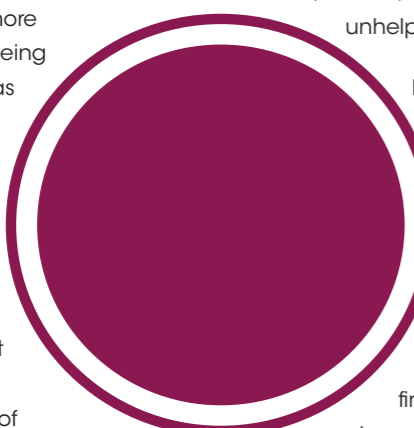
In speaking with Charlotte about this topic, her thoughts have prompted me to reflect on the whole concept of the coach being directive with the client.

In the early days of learning to be a coach, the fundamental principles of 1) listening and 2) asking questions are taught. Tied to this, is the belief that the

client has the answers or if they don't, they can find them. So as fledgling coaches, we often need to find ways to recondition ourselves not to offer ideas or solutions (if we might have habitually done this before), not to take control or take over the conversation, not to show our wisdom and knowledge. We just have to listen and ask questions, don't we?

I once heard the late Sir John Whitmore say that learning to be a good coach was "more about giving up (old habits to direct and tell) than learning new ones." And I do still believe this is the case, albeit it can develop into something a bit more complex. For me, I believe that a directive approach in coaching is something that can be thoughtfully and consciously introduced, once everything else has been stripped back. Therefore, I do see being directive as being an advanced level coaching technique, because what's important is the true motivation behind it and the delivery to which the coach needs to apply high levels of self-awareness, skill and precision.

In his book: "Effective Coaching" (2003) Myles Downey writes: "I need to make sure we do not get too precious about non-directive coaching. To do so introduces a significant interference. There is a very delicate balance to be struck here because I do not want to give licence to those who might revert to habit and start instructing, making suggestions, giving advice or worse still,



# When is being directive not being too direct? (cont.)

attempting to control. The balance is between what is vital in the non-directive model (ownership, responsibility, learning, high performance) and acknowledging that the person doing the coaching has intelligence, experience, intuition and imagination, that in many cases will almost certainly be of value.. Imagine withholding a really good idea.. And so, I want to debunk the notion that there is a correct way to coach."

Being directive can be exactly the best and most effective intervention in a coaching moment, provided it's delivered by the coach with their eyes wide open and having a full intention of helping the client. It could be something as simple as the coach saying to the client: "You've mentioned twice today that you keep

meaning to get started on the book you want to write; so why don't you just get on with it?" or "You say there's no one in the office that would help you with the new project, but what about John, who sounds as though he could add real value to the work, why not ask him if he could help you?"

### In summary

Coaches may have perceived power by default (or placed there by the client) and generally should be working to remove unhelpful power from the coaching relationship. If a coach adopts a directive approach even just for a moment, this "uncommon" intervention against a backdrop of mainly asking questions, can amplify the point so it reaches the

client with a high-level impact. The coach must be aware of this and be able to work with whatever comes next. I believe that in working to serve the client, the coach should not be personally attached to anything they have offered. Being prepared and willing to bring a directional approach into the work whilst not actually minding about whether in the end it is of use to the client is, I believe, what matters.

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## ELECTRIC Coaching™ dates for 2020

The new dates for 2020 are as follows:

24/25 March - Oxford

09/10 September - London



ELECTRIC Coaching™

ELECTRIC Coaching™ is our 25 hr EMCC accredited coaching skills course designed specifically for leaders, managers, HR professionals and aspiring coaches who wish to:

- Drive performance within their team;
- Encourage others to take responsibility for their development;
- Have supportive yet challenging conversations at work;
- Increase engagement & improve productivity;

[www.theocm.co.uk/customer/electric-coaching/electric-coaching-everyday-coaching-skills](http://www.theocm.co.uk/customer/electric-coaching/electric-coaching-everyday-coaching-skills)

# When backward, is the new forward

Angela Hill

**Revisiting what has gone before to bring vitality and impact into coaching and mentoring practice today to get in front of what's next.**

**The time we live in**

We are all here together in the present moment. Nothing that has gone before in history can be the same. There can be echoes of wisdom and warning to pick up but the now is very much determined by social mores, individual values and current problems.

**In memory of 3 Alans**

Fake news, data mining, exploitation of people and planet for the benefit of the few, polarisation of views, plotting or shouting ever louder from a position of being right is the backdrop to politics, business and much of social discourse right now - or so it seems. And yet the compassion and common goodness of humanity is there when we take a moment to tap into it.

As coaches and mentors and for some leaders, when we take time to connect with what has most meaning for us through retreat, open dialogue, reflective practice or within safe supervision space, we have the opportunity to connect with the deeper wisdom arising from the extraordinary human capacity to adapt and flourish.

I want to share with you more detail of a framework created for the OCM in 2018 (FIELD of Practice) to wrap around beneficial supervision for clients. Our intention was to enable coaches and mentors to review and prepare their practice for what's next. It is an invite to journey backwards in order to be more grounded in your current 'now' and prepare for future practice challenges.

We also realise in this shared now that individual reality is based on our own past, perceptions and beliefs. What I see and think and what you see and think are very different. Only open and real dialogue to discover and respect what your and my reality is can surface that. It is in the tension between us where we can find as yet undiscovered options or solutions for new ways of doing or being.

Alan Turing -  
Mathematician  
1912- 1954

One of our current dilemmas in coaching, mentoring and society at large, is how to 'do the right thing' where digitalisation and AI are concerned. Recent evaluation of the use of algorithms to speed up decision making e.g. in processing large quantities of data for cost/time effective recruitment and in car design (crash

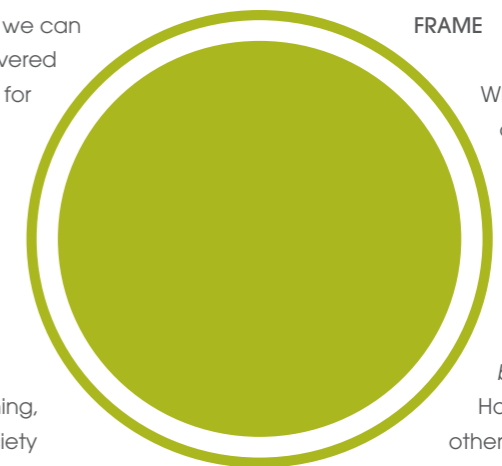
safety and driverless) has been shown to have programmed in gender and race bias with measurable links to poor outcomes.

The innovative and brilliant mind of Alan Turing to conceive and build an algorithm of decision making logic helped decipher the Enigma Code and contributed to victory for tolerance of difference in the mid-20th Century

However as a man of his time the prevailing social conventions and law meant he was criminalised for his personal choices and as a result his work or life promise was not fully realised. What more could Alan have achieved and have contributed to computing and AI for the benefit of society?

### FIELD of Practice

This framework explores and tests assumptions and paradigms to focus on the difference that result in meaningful outcomes.



What are the frames of reference or footings in your practice? "It is the coachee's agenda". "Coaching is aligned with business purpose" How do these and other accepted norms create tension in your work?

What conventions of our time have you bought into without question e.g. chemistry sessions for executive assignments? What identity do you choose to hold to - pure coaching, solutions focused, NLP etc., and why?

# When backward, is the new forward (cont.)

Angela Hill

Supervision is an opportunity to take a critical approach to challenge and review your 'taken for granted's' as well as extend your adaptability to work with difference and include the interests of those you have contracted with – beyond the individual and your 'norms'.

INSIGHT

In your stage of development as a coach or mentor – what self-awakening is 'live' for you now? What, who or where is your wisdom source? How connected are you to the 'other' and how they make meaning? What do you notice in the moment between you, the ebbs and flows and how do you work with this? What can you discover from zooming in and zooming out to the wider system or through real dialogue about your insight, impact and what is valued most?

You will notice some roots in this framework from Gestalt, Adult Development, and Systems theory among others but also to 'deep time'. The discoveries of past human experience, which challenge assumptions. Example: the roots of democracy in Britain from the settlement of marauding Vikings.

ETHICS

Alan Kurdi 2012 -2015 - A precious life

The photograph of Alan who drowned in the Mediterranean as his family fled civil war in Syria in the hope of a better future went viral on news and social media in 2015. As a result many nations and individuals collectively questioned their response to the plight of asylum seekers. 4 years on and how many other children, sons and daughters have lost their lives, been separated at borders, or blocked by walls?

At what point as a coach or mentor in your practice and area of influence, do you stand up for what you believe to be the right thing to do? Collective blindness can descend like a convenient 'comfort blanket' on all of us.

Shortcomings accepted from individual fear or inability to make the necessary change stick.

As a collective of coaches and mentors globally, becoming a more powerful voice for change for the common good is long overdue.

What have you been willing to risk to step up to the plate? Speaking truth to power and side swerving collusion needs courage. The choice not to act and not be judged is about who you are as a coach mentor. It is your decision to take. You will find support during and beyond your decision making in supervision.

LEARNING

How much are you learning day to day from your work and connecting beyond to the work of others?

Example: Europe and Britain – UK island nation or one continent?

5,000 – 6,000 BC the two land masses were connected by an area known as Doggerland. Now vanished but regularly surfacing evidence of human community, activity and connectedness as a whole. Described as 'vanished but close and as a metaphor for lost things.' (Laing review of Blackburn 2019). In this review the link is made to the Anglo Saxon and Middle Ages theme of 'ubi sunt' (ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt – where are those who have gone before).

In our coaching and mentoring how much respect do we pay to those who have gone before? In this disposable 'plastic' consumer convenience 'use once and move on world' how is this evident in our coaching and mentoring beliefs, habits and techniques?

Are we selecting the best principles and building on these or being choked like marine life by the detritus of productisation?

The logo chosen for FIELD of Practice is an origami shape to honour Eric Parsloe



the OCM founder, who worked with other thought leaders to establish the EMCC and to connect coaches through dialogue with a common cause at the Dublin Coaching Conference in 2008. For Eric one of the best and simplest approaches was the 'blank sheet of paper'. In OCM supervision we explore

how each practitioner can shape and reshape their work to benefit the individual, team and organisation, while continuing their own self-awakening and capacity for curiosity and unknowing.

DIFFERENCE

Who or what has made/ is making the most difference on your practice? How do you evidence how you are adapting effectively to inclusion and difference? What do you bring that is different to your coaching in the moment and to sustain its impact over time?

If we reflect backward and observe lessons from history, going backward to move forward, we can find models and examples to emulate and those to avoid. Humanity over the eons has preserved a common set of virtues such as integrity and doing right by others.

When we explore thought leaders from past times we see some of their shadow in play still i.e. the Greeks, Western Philosophers and world faiths.

Some like we as ordinary humans accepted social norms and the prejudices of their time. The Greeks accepted slavery. In comparison post Enlightenment we have Human Rights legislation then disregard modern slavery and human trafficking.

What will future generations regret from our 1980-2019 obsessions with profit and consumerism?

The deep time evidence and message

for humanity is of ordinary people settling to live and support their families and community (Doggerland). More recent studies show how after natural disasters and other harmful crises, people come together as one to help vulnerable individual, families and communities. Racism and prejudice is put aside.

Let me introduce my third Alun. He is an executive coach and was my CMS when I was developing skills and understanding as a coach mentor and supervisor. A man of great integrity who approached his work with dedication and humility. Above all he had an innate sense of the right thing to do. We all need a magnetic north and for a long time Alun was mine.

Ordinary people doing extraordinary things

When all the brouhaha of twitter rages, spin and demonising others is seen to be a self-serving illusion perhaps

interconnectedness will become the new norm. My hope is that through a restorative mist of compassion will walk forward ordinary people dedicated again to the common good. People who quietly give of themselves to enable others to be or achieve a better and more meaningful life. Some of this crowd will be coaches, mentors and leaders.

Exploring your own FIELD of Practice is just one simple way you can pick up your

stride to join that march.

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## Case Study

Ed Parsloe

### Recent examples of organisational projects that create IMPACT

#### Coaching for Results at Royds Withy King

We are currently working successfully with a large law practice to support their future growth and development following a recent merger.

The senior partners wanted to "shift the leadership dial" and create "one team", along with a consistent leadership approach across the organisation.

We worked with the senior partners to create a coaching programme, tailored to the specific requirements of the business, to develop senior executives to maximise their team resources. The challenge was to create the solution in a flexible way to accommodate their high existing workload and the lack of time they had available.

Consultation, delivery and implementation took around 12 months to complete and a significant impact has already been observed both in terms of staff retention and engagement. Every delegate that participated is still employed within the business and there was a success rate of over 85%.

The client is now looking to continue to implement the programme further by rolling it out with other target groups within the organisation.

#### Developing a Coaching Culture Reaps Rapid Rewards at Sodexo

We are currently working with a global facilities organisation in their UK & Ireland businesses to develop their coaching capabilities to drive engagement and high performance.

The organisation, with approximately 35k employees, wanted to achieve Silver level Investors in People status; increase their levels of employee engagement; and retain the best talent. Alongside this, they wanted to create and establish a coaching culture throughout the business.

*This was seen as a way of demonstrating the company values of delivering quality of life to clients and employees alike.*

*The first steps on the journey were to work in partnership with the client to develop a comprehensive programme to develop internal coaches. We trained a pool of coaches of both senior operational & HR professionals to provide developmental coaching to middle and first-line managers, identified through the appraisal process or transitioning to a more senior role. The success of this led to the development of further in-house training in 'coaching as a leadership style'.*

*The results were extremely positive: 90% of coaches agreed that "The coaching has made a positive difference" and "The coach-mentoring has directly resulted in business/organisational benefits". Staff engagement increased by 6% and the organisation achieved its coveted IIP Silver status.*

*There is now an increased demand for coaching and mentoring throughout the organisation and we are currently working intensively with another cohort. The company is looking to develop and roll-out coaching and learning mentor apprenticeships in the future, as it looks to further embed its "coaching culture".*

My relationship with the OCM spans over 10 years. I value their approach and the values of the organisation, so that whenever I think of accrediting coaching training, I would always want to work with them. I appreciate the professionalism of all of the team that we work with and the can-do attitude. I enjoy working with the team and feel that I always learn something from every interaction.

#### SHAMIM STOKES Chartered FCIPD

Head of Learning and Development UK and Ireland – HR - Transversals. **Sodexo**

#### Developing future leaders at construction giant Henry Boot

We are privileged to be partnering with construction giants, Henry Boot, to develop their strategic leadership capabilities.

18 months ago, the company decided to make a strategic investment in its future leaders. The organisation employs great people, has a strong culture, focuses on long-term sustainable performance and has a high level of social & community responsibility. However they needed to ensure that the right people were leading the key business units and that there were suitable succession plans in place to drive the business forward.

To be successful long term, business leaders with fresh thinking were needed who could challenge and disrupt the market. People who could drive the strategic transformation of the business and act in an entrepreneurial way.

Henry Boot started by carrying out a series of competency based assessments to identify the strategic capabilities of their existing and potential future leaders. From these we developed a Coaching Framework implemented by a team of expert coaches. Working with the first 15 candidates we carried out detailed diagnostics and developed a bespoke, individual action plan for the development of each.

To measure the impact on the business, detailed surveys have been undertaken with the line-managers as well as the coachees to identify observable changes in their leadership approach. In addition, measurements have been made against their performance in key strategic organisational projects. The results have been significant and Henry Boot is now looking to develop its next group of leaders as part of this innovative, industry-leading process.

# Get Qualified with The OCM

LEADERS IN COACH-MENTORING

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### ELECTRIC Coaching® – Everyday Coaching Skills - Foundation Level EQA

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#### Workshop based

24/25 March - Oxford

09/10 September - London

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### Diploma in Professional Coach-mentoring™ - Practitioner Level EQA

<https://www.theocm.co.uk/customer/professional-coaches/diploma-professional-coach-mentoring>

#### Blended learning qualification for those who want to become a full time coach-mentor, flexible start times and workshops. Distance learning version also available.

### Diploma in Professional Coach-mentor Supervision™ – Practitioner Level ESQA

[www.theocm.co.uk/customer/professional-coaches/diploma-coach-mentoring-supervision](http://www.theocm.co.uk/customer/professional-coaches/diploma-coach-mentoring-supervision)

#### Blended learning qualification for those who want to become an accredited supervisor of coaches and mentors. Flexible start times, short course version also available.

The OCM To find out more or book a place please call: **01869 338 989** or visit: **www.theocm.co.uk**