



10 ESSENTIALS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATIONAL COACHING STRATEGY

Coaching and mentoring are essential components of an organisation's talent and leadership strategy. When used strategically, coaching has the power to transform individuals as well as organisations, particularly when there is an explicit link made to the organisation's objectives.

Graham Clark summarises 10 key considerations for an effective coaching strategy, based on over 20 years of work with clients at The OCM.

1. ESTABLISH WHAT COACHING AND MENTORING MEAN IN YOUR ORGANISATION

We find that across organisations, there's a surprising variety of definitions of coaching and mentoring so it's important to ensure that you and your key stakeholders are aligned on what you mean by them. We've included some thoughts on a definition – but you may need to tweak this depending on your organisational culture and how you need to manage your stakeholders.

Coaching centres on conversations with a purpose, to facilitate a person's performance and learning, help someone achieve their potential and bring about lasting change. These conversations involve open questions, active listening, challenge, support and feedback.

Mentoring is similar – but there's more of an emphasis on knowledge transfer and development of specific skills, and it's sometimes a more directive process.

2. BE REALLY CLEAR ON THE OUTCOMES YOU WANT FROM THE COACHING AND MENTORING STRATEGY

How does your coaching and mentoring provision link to organisational strategy and the people capabilities and culture that need to be in place to deliver it? The more you can make this link explicit, the more likely it is that the programme will have traction and longevity.

Remember: Good coaching benefits the individuals who are coached – great coaching benefits the organisation as a whole. This doesn't usually happen by accident. It's usually the result of deliberate linking between the coaching programme and organisational needs.

If the aim over time is to develop a coaching culture, then this needs to be explicitly stated as one of the outcomes you're looking for.

3. THINK ABOUT WHO YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT WITH COACHING AND MENTORING IN THE FIRST YEAR AND OVER THE LONGER TERM

External coaches often support senior leaders and others in mission-critical roles. In particular, where the leader is in a time of transition, planning career development or needing to progress in a particular area. Team coaches often support senior teams – particularly during times of change.

Over time your coaching strategy might widen to include larger swathes of your employee population.

4. CONSIDER USING A BROAD RANGE OF RESOURCES TO DELIVER COACHING AND MENTORING

Typically, when organisations start using coaching, most of it will be delivered by external executive coaches, working with senior individuals and teams. Over time if the strategy is successfully implemented, internal coaches, mentors and line leaders deliver more of the coaching - and reliance on external partners drops away. An important principle to apply is that the coaching and mentoring should be delivered by the lowest cost resource which can deliver it competently.



The diagram above shows the range of resources which typically deliver coaching and mentoring. When considering which resource is best placed to support an individual or a talent pool, firstly consider how complex their situation is. People working in roles and situations in which there is significant complexity need more highly-skilled coaching support.

Similarly, consider the extent to which the recipients of the coaching and mentoring would benefit from an external perspective. External coaches and mentors can provide best practice and expertise that may be lacking in the organisation. This is not always necessary however, and sometimes mentoring or coaching delivered by colleagues from another part of the business can be very effective.

Increasingly, organisations are using more virtual coaching and mentoring – both with external partners and internal resources. This minimises travel costs and increases the flexibility of delivery. There are still some cases where face to face coaching is best, especially where the coach is helping a leader manage their interpersonal impact and improve communication.

5. TRAIN YOUR INTERNAL COACHING AND MENTORING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

If you're using internal coaches and mentors, you'll need to invest in their development on an accredited training course. Make sure the course is EMCC or ICF accredited – courses which have this standard will prepare your coaches and mentors to fully support colleagues. Poorly trained or untrained resources risk doing more harm than good.

Remember the role that line leaders can play in your coaching strategy. Line leaders will often benefit from some training in the fundamentals of coaching. They may not need in-depth training but a blended / digital learning programme which helps them develop essential coaching skills and then apply them in practice can really improve the quality of coaching conversations which happen on a day-to-day basis.

6. CONSIDER WHAT METRICS YOU WILL USE

Think about this from the perspective of individual coaching arrangements (particularly when using external resources) – as well as organisation-wide metrics to evaluate the coaching and mentoring programme as a whole. Linked to the point above, look beyond Return On Investment as the only metric. There will be a range of qualitative and quantitative measures that together reflect the impact that the programme is having – of which ROI is likely to be just one.

7. FACTOR IN SENIOR LEVEL SPONSORSHIP FOR YOUR COACHING PROGRAMMES

Ideally, this should be a C-level leader who has had a positive experience of coaching and a particular passion for coaching as an organisational enabler.

8. THINK ABOUT A MULTI-YEAR PLAN

The programme is likely to evolve over time, with a greater emphasis on the coaching and mentoring being delivered by internal resources as leaders' skill levels increase. Have a plan which reflects this change and ensure that senior stakeholders understand this trajectory.

9. PLAN OUT YOUR ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Managing and monitoring the implementation of a coaching strategy requires administrative resource and may require coordination between different business units, depending on how centralised or distributed the provision of coaching is in your business.

10. DO YOU NEED EXPERT SUPPORT?

Consider whether you'd benefit from external expert support at the start of the implementation of your coaching strategy. This means you'll have a clear direction in mind and a clear implementation plan, so that you start your programme well and set it up to deliver value for years to come.

Author: Graham Clark, MD, OCM Enable.

THE OCM ARE LEADERS IN COACHING AND MENTORING, PROVIDING:



EXECUTIVE
COACHING



TEAM
COACH-MENTORING



BUILDING COACH MENTORING
SKILLS IN LEADERS



DEVELOPING INTERNAL
COACHES AND MENTORS

For more information or to arrange a conversation, please email Graham Clark,
Managing Director, OCM Enable graham.clark@theocm.co.uk