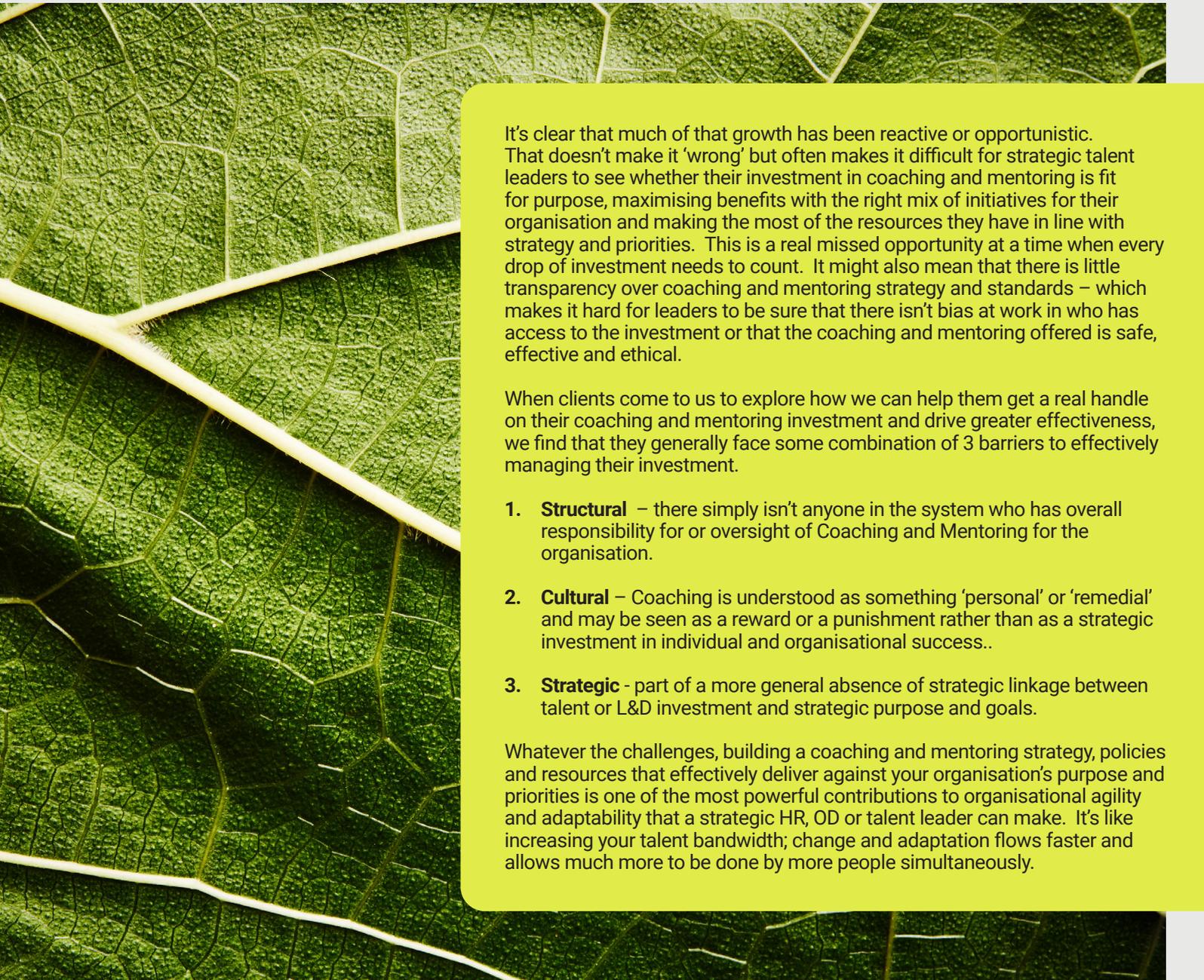


IS YOUR INVESTMENT IN COACHING AND MENTORING EFFECTIVE?

In many organisations, large and small, investment in Coaching – especially external coaching – and mentoring has grown exponentially over the last five years or so. And for good reason, study after study has confirmed its power in making learning opportunities count, building engagement and nurturing diverse talent.

Coaching and Mentoring (4th edition) Chapter 2 – what the Research Says Dr David Wilkinson

Nübold, A. (2021). Evidence-Based Workplace Coaching–Are We There Yet? www.in-konstellation.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Evidence-basedWorkplace-Coaching.pdf



It's clear that much of that growth has been reactive or opportunistic. That doesn't make it 'wrong' but often makes it difficult for strategic talent leaders to see whether their investment in coaching and mentoring is fit for purpose, maximising benefits with the right mix of initiatives for their organisation and making the most of the resources they have in line with strategy and priorities. This is a real missed opportunity at a time when every drop of investment needs to count. It might also mean that there is little transparency over coaching and mentoring strategy and standards – which makes it hard for leaders to be sure that there isn't bias at work in who has access to the investment or that the coaching and mentoring offered is safe, effective and ethical.

When clients come to us to explore how we can help them get a real handle on their coaching and mentoring investment and drive greater effectiveness, we find that they generally face some combination of 3 barriers to effectively managing their investment.

1. **Structural** – there simply isn't anyone in the system who has overall responsibility for or oversight of Coaching and Mentoring for the organisation.
2. **Cultural** – Coaching is understood as something 'personal' or 'remedial' and may be seen as a reward or a punishment rather than as a strategic investment in individual and organisational success..
3. **Strategic** - part of a more general absence of strategic linkage between talent or L&D investment and strategic purpose and goals.

Whatever the challenges, building a coaching and mentoring strategy, policies and resources that effectively deliver against your organisation's purpose and priorities is one of the most powerful contributions to organisational agility and adaptability that a strategic HR, OD or talent leader can make. It's like increasing your talent bandwidth; change and adaptation flows faster and allows much more to be done by more people simultaneously.

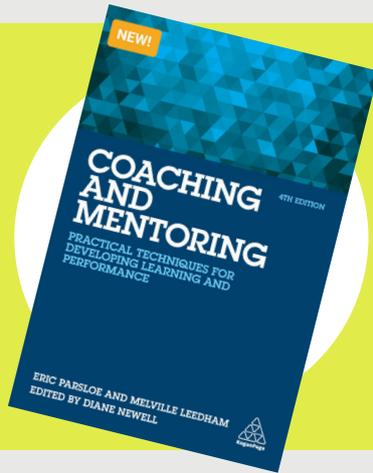
HERE ARE EIGHT QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON.

| | No | Somewhat | Yes |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. We have a clear understanding of the changes in behaviour, impact and culture that would deliver greater success for our organisation. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. It's clear what the purpose of coaching and mentoring is/are in terms of the changes in behaviour, impact and culture of our people. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. It's clear what the focus and goals of individual coaching contracts or programmes are and how those align with the purpose of coaching and mentoring at an organisational level. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. We can easily see how much we invest in coaching and mentoring across the organisation, on who, and why. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. We have data on the performance of coaching and mentoring investment in making the changes in behaviour, impact and culture of our people that we seek. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. We have transparency regarding who gets access to coaching and mentoring, both internal and external, and why. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. We understand whether any groups are disadvantaged in terms of access and whether disadvantaged or under-represented groups receive the coaching and mentoring support that meets their needs. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. We have clear coaching and mentoring standards and processes - consistent with professional and ethical practice - to which all coaches and mentors, internal and external, adhere. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

DID YOU ANSWER:

NEARLY ALL NOS

The good news is that if you are spending on coaching and mentoring in your organisation, you have a real opportunity to make that investment more effective. What are the barriers you might face in your existing Structure, Culture and Strategic Linkage? If you're not yet investing, you have a clean sheet to start building support for a really effective strategy. Where should you start? Perhaps by reading Coaching and Mentoring (4th edition) by Parsloe and Leedham, especially Chapters 9, 10 and 11.



A MIX OF NO AND SOMEWHAT?

You probably don't need this quiz to tell you that there is a lot of room for improvement – what would make the most difference for your organisation, right now? Is that a Structural, Cultural or Strategic shift? Who would benefit from that? Who would need to be involved to make that happen? How can you engage with them to start making a tangible difference?

MOSTLY SOMEWHAT

It seems like you've got a good start in some areas – are there parts of your organisation that are ahead of others? How can you spread their best practice if so? Or do you have a good policy that is patchily implemented? What's causing that resistance? Do you have barriers in one specific area, like Culture or Structure? What's the cost to the organisation? Who cares most about that, and how can you work with them to start a conversation about what the benefit of change would be?

A MIX OF SOMEWHAT AND YES

Congratulations – a lot of really thoughtful work has gone into building your strategy already. But there are some areas that could undermine your good work. What makes those areas 'tricky'? Are the barriers Cultural or Structural? Or do you need greater strategic linkage to the organisation's purpose and key must-win battles? How could you address them? What would be the payback if you did?

MOSTLY YES

Impressive! It sounds like you have really invested in getting coaching and mentoring lined up with organisational strategy. It should be paying dividends! Do you have the measures in place to show that benefit? Is that benefit well communicated to the organisation? And how can you make sure that coaching and mentoring remain well designed as the needs and strategy, structure and leadership of the organisation change? You might want to read Chapter 16 of Coaching and Mentoring (4th edition) by Parsloe and Leedham as a thought starter.

AN EVEN MIX OF ALL THREE

A bit of a mixed picture! What can you do to build on the strengths that you have? Are there some leaders in your organisation that are coaching and mentoring champions that you could engage to turn your ambers to green? And what's the cause of those reds? Do you have largely Structural or Cultural barriers? And is the strategic linkage between Coaching and Mentoring and the organisation's Purpose and must-win battles robust? Which of the gaps are mission-critical and must be addressed? What's the cost of not doing so? Who do you need to engage in a conversation about where to focus improvement?

WE HAVE PARTNERED WITH CLIENTS TO:

- Build coaching policy and processes that supported a new talent strategy for an international energy company.
- Train several cohorts of internal coaches, for a FTSE100 manufacturing and engineering company. The programme gave the coaches a strong grounding in the fundamentals of coaching, tailored to the context of the company culture and the ways in which leaders there needed to grow and develop.
- Provide ongoing supervision to internal coaching groups, which includes group supervision, 1:1 conversations as needed, and continuous professional development. This ensures the internal coaches maintain good standards of coaching, that they work safely and that the business continues to benefit from its investment in creating a coaching cohort.

Wherever you are in your journey, whatever the challenges, contact Diane Newell
diane.newell@theoem.co.uk to start a conversation and find out more.