



theOCM | LEADERS IN COACH MENTORING

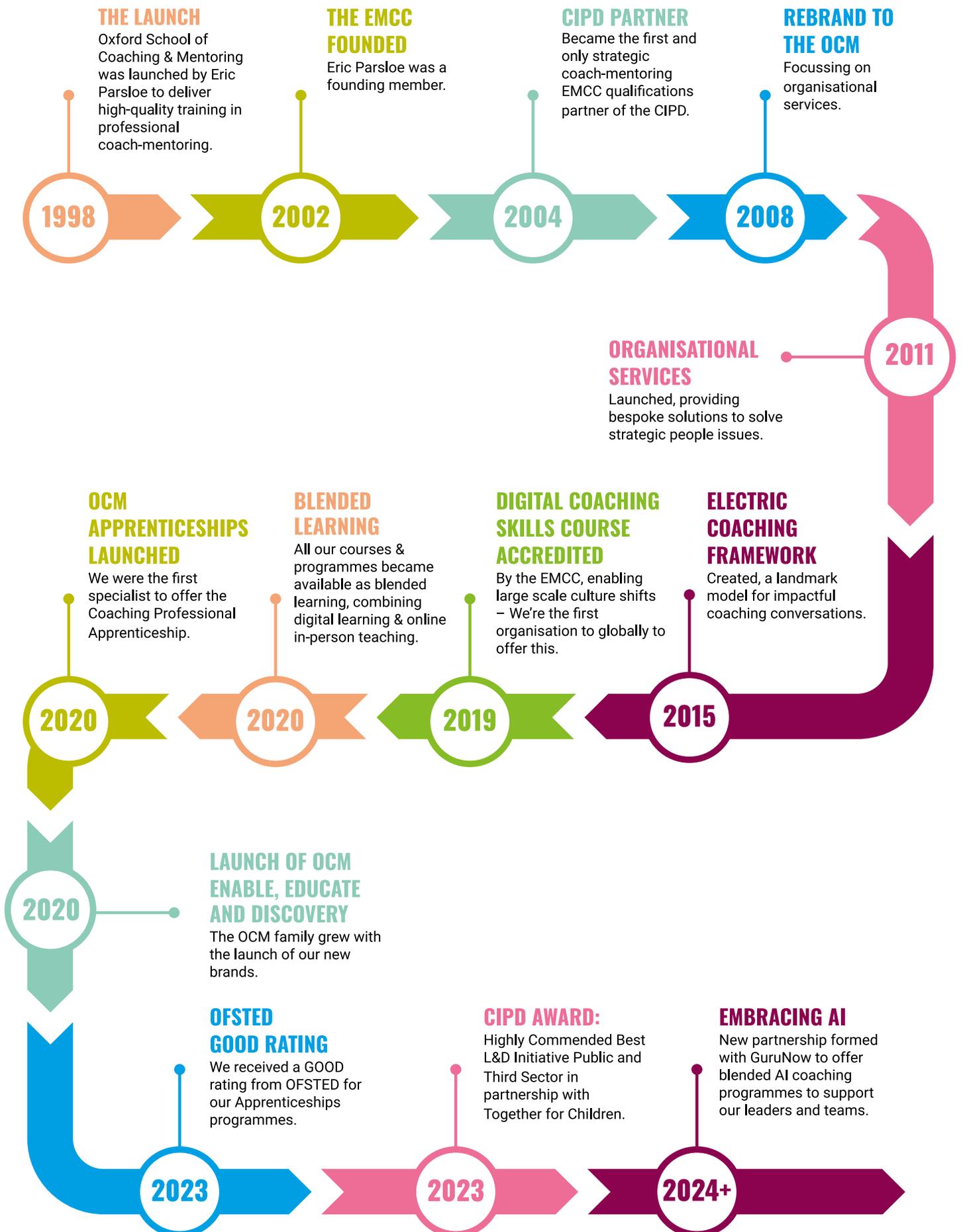
The OCM Annual 2024



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The OCM Timeline



TOP TIPS FOR NAVIGATING CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

FROM AN EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL COACH

Clients often approach us during their coaching sessions for support in having a challenging conversation. This could be a line report with whom they need to have a performance discussion, a peer they want to give some confronting feedback to, or a superior to challenge their decision.

Being prepared

In nearly all cases, the idea of 'being prepared rather than having prepared' is helpful. Simply lining up all the reasons why your perspective is right is unlikely to prove influential or get you the outcome you want from the conversation. It is much more likely to lead to resistance, conflict and entrenched positions, whether these are spoken or unspoken.



'Being prepared' consists of going into the conversation with the right mindset or stance. The Human Systems Dynamics Institute¹ has some useful thoughts on this:

- **Shift from Judgement to Curiosity:** try to adopt a curious mindset when approaching difficult conversations. Explore the other party's perspective with genuine interest and empathy. Hold off judging them for their sins or what you might believe to be their wilful ignorance of the facts.
- **Turn assumptions into questions:** instead of making assumptions about where the other person is coming from or what they want or believe, engage in genuine enquiry as to their wishes and motivations. It's difficult to argue with a question!
- **Turn defensiveness into self-reflection:** catching yourself being triggered or caught on the back foot, and being curious inwardly as to why that might be, is a great way to get a handle on your emotions and therefore manage them appropriately rather than letting them take over.
- **Move from conflict into shared enquiry:** try to imagine coming alongside the other party and enquiring together about the issue at hand, rather than facing off with them, toe-to-toe over the issue between you.

¹ <https://www.hsdinstitute.org/index.html>



In addition, you can learn some simple somatic techniques for centring and grounding yourself if you feel yourself being knocked off-balance in a challenging conversation. For example, SOS stands for Self, Other, and Situation. It also stands for:

- Sense the earth beneath your feet.
- Observe their eyes.
- Slowly breathe out.

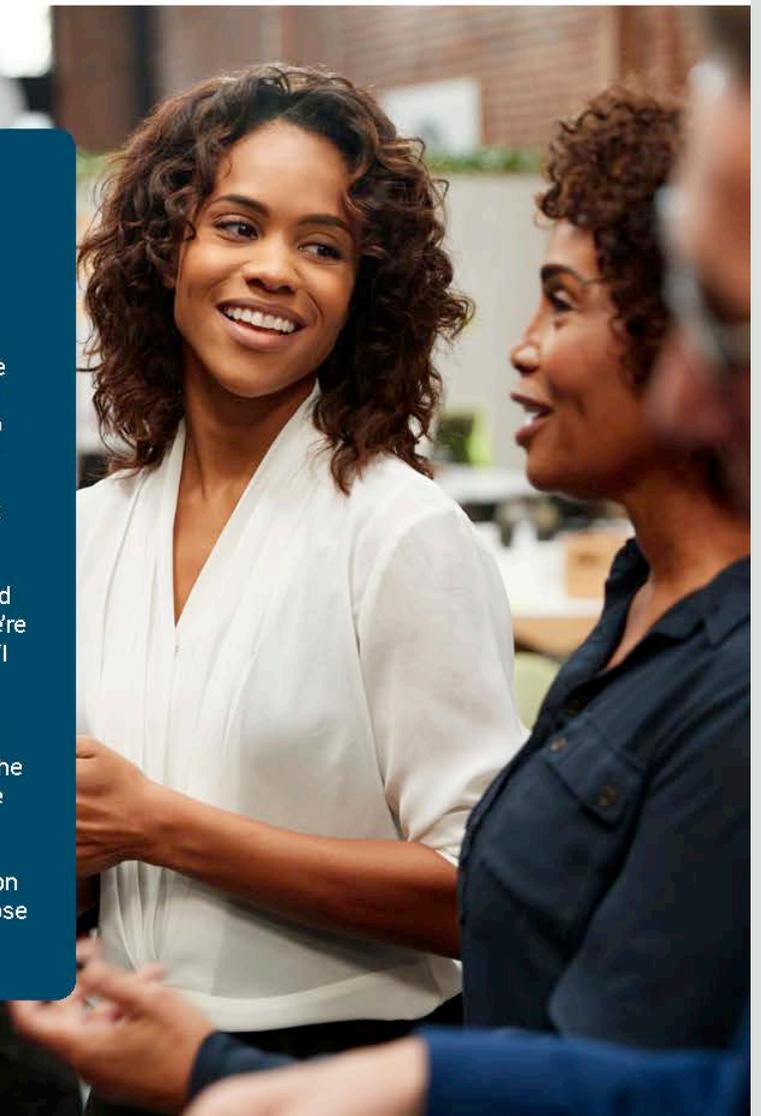
By doing this, you actively pay attention to the situation (noticing your feet on the ground), the other (by looking at the other party's eyes), and to self (by becoming aware of your breathing). This can be done unobtrusively, in the moment, and serves to restore a certain equanimity².

Acknowledge Emotions

As coaches, we create a supportive environment where clients feel comfortable expressing their feelings without fear of judgement and to honestly connect with how they feel about the conversation to come. All challenging conversations are fundamentally about feelings, but we like to pretend that we are somehow 'above all that'. If we don't acknowledge what's going on for us emotionally, at least to ourselves, it's highly likely to leak out in how we show up in the conversation. As Carl Jung put it, "until you make your unconscious conscious, it will direct you, and you will call it fate".

It's also important to realise that we are not our feelings and to create a little distance between who we are and what we're feeling. So, for example, to explore the difference between 'I am angry' and 'I am feeling angry'.

Finally, it can be helpful to understand that, whilst thoughts and feelings come and go like the weather, our values are the bedrock from which we can choose to act. By exploring the values at stake in a conversation, we, as coaches, support our clients to connect to the 'why' of the conversation and what it seeks to achieve. You are more likely to find common ground with the other person by speaking to a higher purpose than by wrangling over the petty details of who did what.



²Adapted from Field-relational coaching for Gestalt beginners: the PAIR model. Sally Denham-Vaughan and Mark Gawlinski - British Gestalt Journal 2012, Vol. 21, No. 1, 11-21

Focus on Interests, Not Positions

It's sometimes said that all conflict is the encounter of unmet needs. Consider reframing the upcoming challenging conversation as an exploration of underlying interests and needs, fostering empathy and collaboration around how they can be met. Seeking to defend your position may be understandable in the heat of the moment, but if winning means the other person losing, or vice versa, there will be very little room for compromise.

Disentangle Intentions and Impact³

One of the common causes of misunderstanding, confusion, and conflict in challenging conversations arises from the assumption that we know the other person's intentions. We attribute their intentions based on their impact on us. So, if you feel hurt by what someone has said or done, you might assume that the person intended to hurt you. As coaches we work with our clients to instead:

- Focus on actions – what did the other party actually say or do?
- Be clear on the impact of this on you.
- Reflect on the impact and the assumptions you're making about the other person's intention.
- Hold these assumptions lightly as a hypothesis and no more.
- Enquire about the other person's intentions.
- Share the impact you're experiencing and what you want instead.



Consider how valuable coaching skills can be for successful conversations:

As you will have probably guessed by now, the core skills of coaching - active listening, asking effective questions and providing feedback or reflecting back what you have heard, are all valuable skills in effectively navigating challenging conversations. Learn the art of active listening to understand emotions, intentions, and underlying messages rather than listening to formulate the next statement of your position.

As noted above, using genuine curiosity to shape questions that will reveal the other person's unmet needs can lay the foundation for agreement. Provide feedback on the impact of the other's behaviour in a respectful and non-confrontational way. The Centre for Non-Violent Communication's⁴ framing of this can be helpful:

- Observation: a description of "what's actually happening" as reported by our senses. The behaviour we are challenging.
- Feeling: physical sensations and emotions. The impact of the behaviour on us.
- Need: the alternative impact we are seeking.
- Request: what we want the other person to do or change.

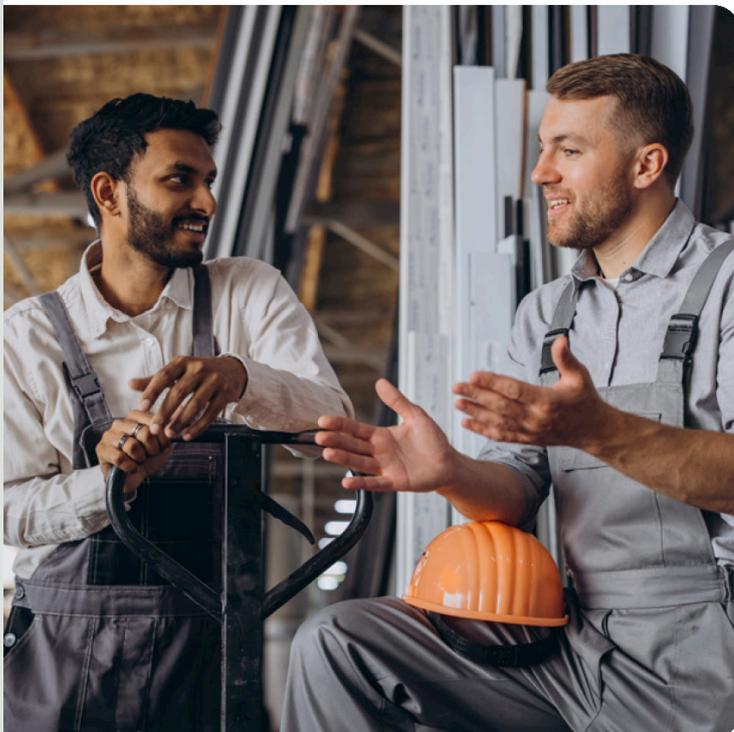
³ This is only one of many excellent insights into the topic to be found in *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* by Bruce Patton, Douglas Stone, Sheila Heen, 2011

⁴ *Nonviolent Communication - A Language of Life*. Marshall B. Rosenberg, 2015

Work on assertive communication⁵

Clarity about impact, intentions and needs requires clear, concise and assertive communication. We can work on:

- Minimising to establishing importance: not downplaying what is important to you and why.
- Taking ownership: using a strong personal "I" rather than a vague "we" or "you".
- Making explicit requests.
- Clearly framing intention from the outset: not beating about the bush concerning the purpose of the conversation.



Finally, you can work with a coach or colleague to practice technique and tone and to get a feel for what having a challenging conversation actually feels like. This can help you prepare for the conversation to come and perhaps dispel the fear that the relationship with the other person will be irreparably damaged by it.

Author

Jon Horsley,

Consultant Coach-Mentor for The OCM

If you're interested in finding out more about improving your coaching-style conversation skills or the benefits of executive coaching, please contact us: enquiry@theocm.co.uk

⁵ I am indebted to Peter Young's article on difficult conversations for the OCM for these insights.

<https://www.theocm.co.uk/ocm-enable/insights/helping-managers-and-leaders-prepare-difficult-conversations>

TOO BUSY TO LEAD WITH PURPOSE?

Being a purposeful leader, and creating a purposeful team, seems like an obvious requirement of the role. What's the point of leadership if it is not leadership to a purpose? How can a team be high performing if it doesn't know what it's for? But the reality of many leaders' working lives is days so full of activity that it is easy to lose track of what is really important.

When your week consists of back-to-back virtual meetings and you have urgent presentations and reports that you must prepare, when reporting on performance is taking up too much time to allow you to debate how to create performance, when communicating with stakeholders around the world is stretching your working day and your e-mail box fills up faster than you can empty it, it can be difficult to carve out the time to reflect on why you are doing what you are doing, and how to regain your balance to focus on what is really key.



The impact of this for organisations is a loss of strategic focus and sub-optimal delivery on purpose. Strategic outcomes, and the transformational changes that might be needed to deliver the future, get buried under the weight of transactional 'urgent today' issues.

The impact for individuals is often a sense that for all their effort they're not achieving anything that is meaningful to them or that will have a real and sustainable impact for the organisation.

The impact for teams can be a sense of dissolution. When we don't know what we're a team for, when we lack a shared sense of commitment to purpose, the motivation to come together and the strength of the bonds that keep us together are weakened.

When we are working with individuals and teams as coaches and mentors our clients are often very well able to articulate their lack of time to focus on what is really important, and the problems it causes. But finding a way out of it can seem impossible, a catch 22 situation in which they don't have the time or the energy to work out how to create space and regain focus.

Traditional time management techniques fall down when everything appears to be urgent and everything is important to someone somewhere. Clients often hope that changes expected at some future point will cause the level of activity and 'busyness' to decline; the reality is that unless individuals and teams break the cycle it might continue indefinitely. So the first step has to be to create space.

How you spend your time is a choice. It may not feel like it, but experience tells me that you have more agency than you have space to realise. It will not be an easy choice, but it is a choice. Try turning the question around - instead of asking 'how do I find time to fit in space for me, and for reflection without overextending an already long working day?' Ask yourself the question 'having made time for me, and time for reflection what time is left and what do I choose to do with it?' That does mean confronting reality – making decisions about what you are NOT going to do and about how you need to communicate and negotiate with others about that choice. And if senior stakeholders don't want to hear about the choices that must be made it can take real courage to have those conversations.

This isn't a problem that you can pass down the line, but it is also not one you need to solve alone for your team. There's little point creating space to become a purposeful leader without ensuring that you also have a purposeful team. But you can really build the purposefulness, performance and cohesion of your team when you work together to really understand the context and systems that you operate in and figure out to how best to deliver on your joint purpose.

Einstein is reputed to have defined Insanity as continuing to do the same thing and expecting a different result. But sometimes the action that has to be taken to get out of an insane situation is uncomfortable, difficult, or feels risky. It's your choice. Carry on as you are or take action to make a purposeful difference.



- 1 Start by making the space to make space – ideally 45 minutes a day, at minimum 2 hours a week. Schedule it, defend it, use it to:
 - a Reflect on what you need to do to really deliver on your purpose as a leader, and what you are going to have to not do to make time for it.
 - b Identify the resources that you have which will help you to deliver on your aim to be more purposeful, and add to them. Whether it's your EA, your spouse, a trusted team member, a team coach or a mentor engage others to support you.
 - c Check your clarity on the purpose of your team, talk to stakeholders about how they see it and what their priorities are.
- 2 Set up time to work with your team to identify purpose – get clarity about
 - a Priorities and goals
 - b Ways of working and culture
 - c Roles and responsibilities
 - b Resources and capabilities
 - e Context – the stakeholders, systems that you work with and in

Once you have your sense of clarity there may be difficult conversations to be had with senior stakeholders. You will need to tackle those thoughtfully, working with your team, your coaches, mentors and advisors to prepare. Remember that your stakeholders too may be caught in their own busyness trap, how can you work with them to help you both deliver more purposefully? By working with your team and your stakeholders to face into the conflicts of priority, you can negotiate ways of working that allow you all the space to work with purpose.

Like a lot of the important things in life being a truly purposeful leader isn't complex theoretically, but it isn't easy to do consistently and with skill. It can take courage, and it will take humility and resolve. You won't get it right every day, but if you make the space to reflect and use the resources you have to learn you can get it better every day.

Talk to Diane about how she can help you to take action now, and make a purposeful difference.
Email her today diane.newell@theocm.co.uk

DEVELOPING COACHING CAPABILITY IN MANAGERS: FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

How can you effectively cultivate coaching capability in your managers? In this article, we will explore the importance of coaching capability, outline some of the options for developing it, and suggest some key questions that will help you choose the approach that works for your organisation.

WHY COACHING CAPABILITY MATTERS

Developing coaching capability in managers is a pivotal strategy for any organisation seeking to shift to a more empowering culture. Supporting managers to understand and practice coaching-style conversations in which they listen, ask good questions, and provide their reports with helpful feedback, will foster personal and professional development in the people they manage. It will enhance employee engagement and satisfaction, boost individual and team performance, encourage talent development, create the conditions for greater autonomy and initiative, and ultimately drive better results.

Giving them the ability to empower their teams effectively and efficiently will free your managers from the 'tyranny of doing', enabling them to both equip and trust their reports to deliver and to begin to focus management time and attention on more strategic issues. The simple shift from "telling" to "asking" in their everyday conversations with teams will transform managers into leaders.

It takes a shift in mindset for managers to adopt new behaviours and habits

We are recognised and rewarded in our professional lives for being decisive and authoritative, making quick decisions, providing direction and problem solving. And of course, there is a time and place for all these things. The problem arises when they become our default, when we limit our leadership bandwidth to one end of the spectrum of possible approaches, thereby limiting the people we lead by removing their responsibility for thinking and acting appropriately in their context.

It often takes experiencing the power of a coaching style of management for managers to understand the value of adopting the approach. This shift is unlikely, however, to happen as the result of a one-off intervention and will often need support for managers to apply their learning in practice, to reflect on the impact of their actions, and then to adapt their approach accordingly.

KEY QUESTIONS TO SHAPE YOUR DECISION

If you decide that this is a shift you want to make in your organisation, the next step is to decide what kind of training intervention is going to make it happen.

To guide your decision making, ask yourself these essential questions:

- 1 - What is the contribution we want this to make to our organisational strategy? And, within this, to our people strategy – to talent management and learning and development?
- 2 - What is the scale of impact we want to create? Determine the scope of coaching capability development – is it for select managers and teams, entire departments. Or, as in the case of a culture change initiative, the entire organisation?
- 3 - How many managers would need to build this capability? Identify the number of managers requiring coaching skills, influencing the programme's scale and resource allocation. What might be a tipping point in terms of organisational culture change?
- 4 - What sort of budget could be allocated to this initiative? Assess the financial and people resources available for coaching capability development.
- 5 - How do our managers prefer to learn? Understand your managers' preferred learning styles: are they inclined toward online self-service, workshops, action learning, or a combination? How will this fit into their working lives?
- 6 - Where is the cohort based? Consider the global or local nature of your organisation, as different locations may require tailored approaches.
- 7 - Should we pilot something first? Evaluate the feasibility of a pilot programme to test the chosen coaching capability development method before full-scale implementation.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING COACHING CAPABILITY IN MANAGERS?

There are a range of options for developing the skills of managers to hold coaching-style conversations with the people they manage. These include:

1. Self-service online modules

There are many packages on the market for standalone, self-managed programmes that offer flexible self-paced learning. They are cost effective and easily accessible online, and can be scalable for a large number of managers. However, this style of learning offers limited interactivity and requires commitment and self-discipline from learners, and upon course completion cannot guarantee sustained change.

2. Online foundational coaching skills qualification

At The OCM we have developed an online programme with the self-service modules above, but with the additional benefits of having expert coaches accompanying the process and providing learners with feedback. This leads to learners having a recognised qualification which fosters motivation and engagement, leading to more sustained impact.

3. Online foundational coaching skills qualification with Action Learning

Recognising the need for a multifaceted approach to coaching capability development, with consideration for costs. The OCM combines online webinars with additional support for reflective practice which can be delivered either online or face-to-face.

Additional learning methods include Action Learning Groups which provide a safe environment in which peer coaching approaches are used to support reflection on what has worked well and what needs further work.

Individual coaching can also be provided for managers seeking support to apply and reflect on their learning, which has the benefit of one-on-one personalised learning. This could be an option for organisations that already have an internal coaching programme and can use their own coaching resources to support managers developing coaching capabilities.

4. Face-to-face workshop-delivered foundational coaching skills qualification

This option involves expert facilitators delivering bespoke training workshops that are interactive with immediate feedback and peer learning and discussion. At The OCM we are seeing an increase in demand for face-to-face learning as more peer-group support and connections are lost in the culture of working from home.

Organisations will need to consider whether to offer a single intensive workshop or a series of workshops that will require weighing up factors such as budget and the depth of coaching capability needed.

CONCLUSION

Coaching capability in managers is a cornerstone of organisational culture change. To determine the best approach for your organisation, consider your goals, resources, and the preferences of your managers.

At The OCM we design our coaching capability programmes around our clients, because every organisation is different. What is consistent is the use of our conversation framework, ELECTRIC, which is at the heart of all our coaching capability training.

You can find out more about ELECTRIC (Engage, Listen, Explore, Challenge, Target, Review, Insights, Conclude), and watch a live demonstration at our free webinar on 22nd November 2023.



Join over 13,000 trained professionals and unlock your potential with The OCM!

Since 1998, The OCM has been the market leader in coaching qualifications and training. We are proud co-founders of the European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC) and helped set the professional standards and codes of ethics adopted by organisations like the ILM.

From EMCC Accredited Foundation Level to Practitioner Level Supervision, we offer a comprehensive range of programs to elevate your coaching and mentoring expertise.

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- A **proven track record** of delivering apprenticeships that develop impactful coaches and mentors.
- **Ofsted rated 'Good' provider** with constantly high standards.
- **Rated 'Excellent' by Employers** with a 4/4-star review on Gov.uk.
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STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND STRATEGIC TALENT MANAGEMENT WITH



THE CLIENT

Henry Boot PLC have been successfully operating in land, property and development for over 135 years. With their uniquely sustainable business model they have built a market-leading Group of Companies that source, develop and deliver across the whole property value-chain.

“ Henry Boot have been working with The OCM for the last three years both on individual coaching to support Leaders and with the designing and delivery of a brand-new suite of virtual personal development workshops. The team at The OCM have worked really hard to understand our business and get to know our people. Their partnership with us has added real value to our business; the quality and calibre of the coaching team has definitely helped us strengthen our leadership bench.

Samantha Jessop,
Learning & Development Manager, Henry Boot PLC

THE CHALLENGE

To create a strategic talent management coaching process that supports their leaders with personal development and creates lasting change. Implemented by a team of expert coaches whose values and approach aligned well with the client’s culture and working environment.



WHAT WE DID

Henry Boot originally approached The OCM to provide support to their High Potential Talent who had been invited to participate in their newly developed Leadership Programmes. Several years later, The OCM has now provided 1:1 coaching for both their High Potential staff and Senior Leaders from across their business. To date we have coached more than 60 leaders at different stages of their career, including members of the group’s Executive team.

We have delivered training and development, both face to face and virtually, in coaching and mentoring skills, and broader leadership development including conflict management, effective influencing and negotiation, leading with impact and managing difficult conversations. The OCM has also recently been invited to support Henry Boot leadership teams with team coaching to help senior teams deliver sustained high performance to realise their strategic objectives. We have worked with both the Executive Committee and the leadership teams of two of Henry Boot’s subsidiary organisations.

We ensure that we partner with our key contacts in HR and L&D at all stages of our programmes, as well as to undertake regular reviews of the coaching impact. Every person coached is interviewed on completion of their coaching contract to assess the changes they have been able to make, and the impact that the coach had on them. At The OCM we undertake regular group supervision with our coaches and we share overall themes and insights that we are seeing in our coaching – useful information that can help L&D to better understand the challenges that Henry Boot leaders



THE IMPACT

The 1:1 coaching has received universally positive feedback from our coaching clients, who have credited it with enabling change to the business that would not have happened without the coaching. Using coaching in partnership with the leadership programmes has enabled many of the required behavioural changes identified through the programmes to be successfully embedded. Many of the people we have coached have since gone on to larger roles within the business.

“ With a focus on developing my leadership skills, my OCM Coach was a great listener and was able to quickly help me raise my levels of self awareness, teaching me new skills and pushing me to reflect deeper on my personal experiences by using reflection notes. My OCM Coach gave me some great advice on how to build my personal brand, and introduced cross sector knowledge and insight into our discussions which all had a significant part to play in helping me to secure my new role as Managing Director.

Tony Shaw,
Managing Director, Henry Boot Construction Limited ”

Our close partnership approach has enabled us to work with Henry Boot to offer insight both from the coaching relationships, as well as from the leadership development workshops and the team interventions.

OCM’s long term partnership with Henry Boot has allowed coaching to develop beyond the individual and team and to have a transformational, systemic impact within the organisation. Working with Henry Boot over a number of years has allowed the OCM to help them to evolve their business and their culture, creating a platform for future growth, while retaining the strong foundations and ethos of the company



TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN: CASE STUDY

USING COACHING AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

In August 2021, The OCM partnered with Sunderland-based not-for profit organisation, Together for Children (TfC), to deliver an ambitious organisation-wide coaching programme focused on sustaining a cultural transformation through improved leadership capability.

TfC provides a range of services to improve the lives of children, young people, and families on behalf of Sunderland City Council. TfC's vision is to keep children safe from harm and ensure they are allowed to fulfil their potential.

In 2017, Sunderland Council Children's Services received an 'inadequate' Ofsted rating and Together for Children was established in response.

The OCM is a UK-based, global coaching and mentoring organisation, that provides coaching services and consultancy, as well as accredited qualifications and training.



WHAT WERE THE KEY CHALLENGES FOR TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN?

The challenge was to sustain a transformation Jill Colbert OBE, Chief Executive, and Director of Children's Services, and her team had started, and catalyse a continued shift in their culture to one where coaching was at the heart. Designing a holistic coaching programme which embedded coaching skills broadly across the organisation would act as an enabler for their new performance management strategy and support the cultural shift that they were looking for.



Annual employee surveys and ongoing exit interviews revealed that Tfc's management and leadership behaviours, particularly when it came to conversations and performance management, were a major issue. There were also many grievances raised by employees, each taking an average of 120 management hours to resolve.



An organisation-wide cultural shift was needed, including the improvement of relationships between individuals and departments, as there were many fractured relationships and tensions between functions.



Tfc wanted to put coaching at the core of their cultural transformation. They wanted to improve performance and lift colleague engagement by enabling leaders to have the skills and confidence to engage in supportive and challenging conversations.



It was the aim of Tfc's CEO, Jill Colbert to use the development of coaching skills to sustain much-needed behaviour change and to improve the organisation for the sake of employees, and the children and their families of Sunderland. It was the cornerstone of an entirely new approach for TFC, but also one that could be adopted more broadly across children's services in the UK

HOW DID THE PARTNERSHIP START?

Ed Parsloe, CEO of The OCM, had been looking for a not-for-profit organisation to partner with and in conversation with Tfc's Learning and Development Manager, it became clear that Tfc would be an ideal organisation for The OCM to support.



The OCM's ambition for coaching is huge and we passionately believe in its power to transform the lives of individuals, teams, and organisations. We had been searching for a client with social impact at its core to demonstrate this transformative potential through a pro-bono and not-for-profit project where they could unleash the full range of coaching services.

This is why, when we learned about the work of Together for Children and the journey they had been on, we knew we'd found the perfect partner.

- Ed Parsloe, Chief Executive, The OCM



HOW DID WE DELIVER THE CULTURAL SHIFT?

The OCM's approach started with coaching the Senior Leadership Team (both individually and collectively) to help create clarity on what a coaching culture would look like at TFC and how they could collectively deliver the desired transformation.

Something many of the Senior Leadership Team found beneficial was the one-to-one coaching which, combined with the team coaching, ensured a shared clarity of the overall destination for the organisation, and improved the Senior Leadership Team's understanding and commitment to their roles in leading the changes needed.

As the organisation moved forward on a journey of improvement, personal coaching provided an opportunity much of the team needed to refresh and challenge some of their thinking.

The next phase in delivering the cultural shift focused on developing the coaching skills of all leaders and managers within TFC including Jill as the CEO. This gave leaders throughout the organisation an increased awareness of coaching's potential to solve strategic issues. Enabling them to use a coaching approach to improve individual and team performance and have quality performance management conversations. Altogether we trained over 120 people using our innovative, digital ELECTRIC online programme.



We wanted the philosophy and culture to be underpinned by those crucial coaching conversations we had had. This included principles around speaking to each other differently and understanding each other and what improvements we could still be making and working on.

- Jill Colbert OBE, Chief Executive, and Director of Children's Services



We work in a highly regulated environment where we were constantly being externally moderated, assessed and measured, we didn't have the time not to be doing our day job. What the team coaching allowed was for us to take a breath and step back from things and to collectively review where we were at, and challenge some of the behaviours we had just learnt to accept.

- Senior Leader, TFC



OUR PLAN FOR MEASURING SUCCESS

Throughout the partnership the focus was on how to achieve the greatest impact for TfC, so identifying and measuring relevant success criteria was crucial.

The teams agreed to focus on some key metrics where increasing leadership capability and improving the quality of conversations through coaching, would significantly contribute to shifts in the staff survey scores.

If the project could evidence increases in staff engagement; in morale; improve retention rates; increase well-being; and reduce grievances over the long term, they'd know they had achieved their goals.



Coaching hasn't been a quick fix, it has taken a lot of time, effort, and investment from everybody across the company. But the feeling of being invested in, being challenged, and pushed to think differently about how we can achieve success has changed our way of thinking.

- Senior Leader, TfC



WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE?

In 2020 there were five live disciplinary investigations and three live grievances. Today there is currently only one live grievance. Through the ELECTRIC coaching programme, The OCM are delighted that TfC has achieved its aspirations to be able to attract and retain talent and most importantly, be rated by Ofsted as Outstanding and to maintain that rating.

TfC can now ensure that children's services across Sunderland are supported by a management population who both qualified coaches and significantly improved leaders.

Completion surveys from everyone who had undertaken the training included some extremely positive feedback from leaders with comments such as.

"As a manager, I feel I have a more supportive and beneficial approach to conversations with colleagues", "I feel better equipped to help colleagues to help themselves to find the solution and be more autonomous", and "I listen better, don't leap in with my own solutions and ask more open questions. I feel like a better manager."

As leaders began to take a coaching approach as their preferred way of engaging with teams, they started to notice that their team members were also adopting that approach with the families they were working with, creating a real sense of empowerment.

Improved leadership communication
up 39% from June 2019 to June 2023

Morale has increased by 28%

Career development and career
progression opportunities up 20%

17% rise in employees stating they see
themselves remaining in their role in the
next year.



To get everyone through this programme was a real achievement and showed that there was a willingness and a commitment to improve.

- Jill Colbert, CEO, TfC

IN SUMMARY

In summary, The OCM delivered a bold organisational-wide coaching programme which involved one-to-one coaching, team coaching for the Senior Leadership Team, as well as the development of coaching skills in over 120 leaders. As a result, all TfC leaders are now externally trained coaches, which is believed to be unprecedented in UK children's services.

Other councils and children's services are now learning how TfC made the leap from a rating of 'inadequate' for five years, to 'outstanding' using coaching and mentoring as a catalyst for change. The OCM also helped TfC to clarify their strategic priorities and reconnect with their purpose.

TfC now has an internal coaching pool that has helped to foster a "listening" culture, improve team dynamics as well as be able to take the temperature with the workforce and act accordingly.

TfC wanted the philosophy and culture to be underpinned by those crucial coaching conversations they had had. This focused on principles around speaking to each other differently and understanding each other, and what improvements they could still be making and working on. As a result, it is felt that conversations became of real value.

Working with The OCM has allowed for a rapid development of new practices at TfC which within a year, introduced a whole new performance process while TfC were being externally moderated and inspected by Ofsted.

The coaching training programme also taught managers how to use their leadership and listening skills to empower their teams to find the answers to problems themselves.



We are consistently using the language of coaching as part of our everyday practice

- Jill Colbert, CEO, TfC

Leaders in Coach Mentoring

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