

INTERNAL COACHING DISCUSSION FORUM

Session 01

Why Do Coaching Skills Training Programmes Not Create a Coaching Culture?

Tom Battye

EMCC Global Master Practitioner | Accredited Supervisor



Many organisations have invested in coaching.

Far fewer believe they have created a coaching culture.

Two forms of investment

Manager-as-coach training

Programmes that equip leaders and managers to use a coaching style as part of their everyday leadership.

Internal coaching capacity

Selecting, training, and accrediting employees to coach colleagues outside their own line of command.

Both create coaching activity. Neither guarantees coaching culture.

What is a coaching culture?

A coaching culture exists in an organisation when a coaching approach is a key aspect of how the leaders, managers, and staff engage and develop all their people and engage their stakeholders, in ways that create increased individual, team, and organisational performance and shared value for all stakeholders.

Hawkins (2012)

Does this describe your organisation?

The five levels of culture

Artefacts

Strategy documents, competency frameworks, mission statements

Behaviours

What people actually do: conversations, meetings, performance discussions

Mindsets

What people believe about how to get the best from others

Most coaching investment stops here

Emotional ground

The prevailing mood: energy, engagement, challenge and support

Motivational roots

What ultimately drives people: learning, belief in potential

Where training operates

Training reaches levels one and two.

It changes what people can do.

It does not change:

What people believe

How they feel

What drives them

The failure patterns

St John-Brooks (2014): three recurring narratives

1 The advocate leaves

A passionate champion moves on. Their replacement lacks the energy, seniority, or personal experience of coaching to sustain the scheme.

2 The workload wall

Enthusiasm meets reality. Coaches have less time, feel unvalued, and lose motivation.

3 The champion departs without data

A senior sponsor provides cover, so evaluation feels unnecessary. When they leave, there is no evidence of value.

Coaching in the shadows

Robson (2020): doctoral research with internal coaches

Floodlights vs shadows

Internal coaches either work in organisations where coaching is visible and valued, or where it operates with little recognition.

The tacit agreement

Line managers and coaches had an unspoken agreement not to discuss the coaching role. The result was indifference, not hostility.

The conversion experience

Almost a quarter of coaches were motivated by a prior experience of being coached. Taster sessions can serve as a catalyst.

Three foundational pillars

Hawkins (2012)

1

Coaching strategy

Linked to the organisation's mission, business strategy, and people development policies.

2

Alignment

Coaching culture aligned with the wider organisational culture change.

3

Infrastructure

Steering group, management group, and community of practice.

Over-reliance on a single driving force is dangerous. A small, effective management group is far preferable to a single champion.

Evidence that it can work

GSK

\$66M reported ROI from Coaching Centre of Excellence

ICF Prism Award, 2016

HSE Ireland

8,200+ employees coached; two-thirds reported enhanced teamwork

ICF Prism Award, 2018

Southern Railway

Statistically significant correlation with engagement scores

Hawkins, 2012; St John-Brooks, 2014

DWP

Coaching strategy aligned to seven strategic priorities

Hawkins, 2012

FCO

Coaching linked to People Strategy and priority strategic goals

Hawkins, 2012

Self-assessment

Rate your organisation on each level: 1 (no evidence) to 5 (deeply embedded)

Artefacts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mindsets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivational roots	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where are you strongest? Where weakest?

Discussion

- 1 Which levels of culture has your coaching investment reached?
- 2 Which of the failure narratives most closely resembles your experience?
- 3 To what extent is coaching linked to business strategy in your organisation?
- 4 Which of Hawkins' three pillars would be hardest to establish, and why?
- 5 How might you create 'taster' experiences that build engagement with coaching?