

Increasing business benefits from in-house coaching schemes

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Supported by the IES Research Network, Alison undertook one of the first UK exploratory studies into coaching, published in 2001 '*Executive Coaching: Inspiring Performance at Work*'. This led to other studies on topics such as building organisational coaching capability in 2003 and how companies evaluate their coaching programmes in 2006, '*Practical Methods for Evaluating Coaching*'. She has presented on measuring the value of coaching at two US Academy of Management conferences, in 2003 and 2008.

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Much of Linda's other research over the past 15 years has been conducted within the health service. She has recently completed projects for the Society and College of Radiographers on the current scope of radiographic practice within the UK and is currently part of a team investigating career progression opportunities for radiographers.

Contents

1	Introduction and context	1
1.1	Growth of internal coaching programmes	1
1.2	Individuals are clearly benefiting from coaching	1
1.3	Evidence from IES research and programme evaluations	4
2	Getting the ‘right’ clients	5
2.1	Client marketing and selection	5
3	Clients working on the ‘right’ issues	7
3.1	Objective setting	7
3.2	Role of line managers/sponsors	8
3.3	Support for coaches	10
3.4	Three-way and four-way contracting	11
4	Introduce key metrics	14
4.1	A conceptual model for managing internal coaching schemes	14
4.2	Client sign-up targets	16
4.3	Coach utilisation	17
5	Summary of key points	18
	References	21
	Appendix	23

1 Introduction and context

1.1 Growth of internal coaching programmes

The last three CIPD Annual Training and Development surveys have shown an increase in coaching activity within the workplace. IES research indicates the biggest growth area for coaching programmes within large employing organisations has been investment in internal coaching schemes, whereby managers and sometimes HR specialists are specially trained and supervised to operate as internal coaches. Typically, internal coaches offer coaching to people from outside of their own teams, and being an internal coach is an additional responsibility to fit into their normal working day. The coaching provided by internal coaches is usually free at the point of use.

As these schemes become more embedded, and the outcomes subject to evaluation, some organisations may become disappointed that not all of the promised business benefits are being realised.

This paper briefly summarises what we know about coaching outcomes and then makes some suggestions for possible ways in which businesses can ensure that their coaching delivers all the benefits they anticipate.

1.2 Individuals are clearly benefiting from coaching

As coaching increases, so too does the amount of coaching research literature, although the bulk of the research on coaching outcomes to date has been based on theoretical, review and discussion papers (eg Baek-Kyoo, 2005; Feldman and Landau, 2005; and Carter et al., 2005). Empirical studies by academics are also starting to come through although, according to a review by Grant and Kavanagh (2007), of the 69 outcome studies published, only eight studies involved randomised control studies, indicating that the study of coaching outcomes is *'still in the early stages of development'*.

Reports from practitioners consistently identify cognitive and behavioural benefits for individuals and sometimes business benefits are also identified. In-house and independent evaluations of internal coaching programmes often indicate that clients perceive the coaching they have received to be effective and of high quality. They also indicate that the coaching led to major improvements in the ways that coaching clients worked (eg Sinclair et al., 2008; Macann, 2008). The most common areas of positive impact are:

- self-awareness and understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses
- understanding the impact of their behaviour on others, including positive impact on their people management skills and their relationships with those more junior and more senior
- greater clarity about the role they need to play in their organisations and motivation to step forward
- improved skills in dealing with difficult situations and in leading change in uncertain times, including engaging others in transition
- specific skills eg developing strategy, long term planning, goal setting and workload prioritisation
- confidence and belief in their own ability to manage upwards.

Coachees themselves consistently report that their experience of coaching compares extremely favourably to other forms of learning and development.

Business benefits identified by in-house or external programme evaluations are more diverse than the benefits for individuals. This is logical, since the anticipated outcomes often are very different, depending on the organisational context and the rationale for selecting an internal coaching scheme as the best intervention in the first place. Some examples of business benefits claimed by practitioners and observed by evaluators include:

- income generation and sales performance increases
- cost savings or increases in capacity/output for same cost
- service quality improvements
- non-productive induction time minimised by accelerating transitions into executive roles
- retention of key people in the organisation who might otherwise have left through being demoralised
- sickness absence reduced during change, such as a merger
- more people using their initiative.

1.2.1 Why can't every coaching scheme identify concrete business benefits?

During the last eight years we have seen a move towards greater professionalisation of coaching, standards setting and certification which has pushed organisational schemes towards an individual-centred coaching philosophy. The growth in coaching psychology, we argue, has further pushed the organisational coaching agenda towards dealing with the person and the personal. The principle of 'following the coachee's agenda' in a confidential setting has become paramount. According to John Blakey, President-elect of the UK International Coach Federation, 'following the coachee's agenda' did create the promised openness, trust and facilitated self awareness. However, in some situations, as coaching sessions departed from their original business intent, there was '*a lurch into indulgent self pre-occupation and a worrying lack of accountability*' (Blakey, 2009).

As a result, most work-based coaching initiatives have grappled at some stage with the central question of quite what the coaching provided should focus on: business benefits explicitly, or person-centred development (and assume that this feeds through to business benefits). We are not saying that person-centred development is a bad thing; but if the business is paying, we argue, it shouldn't be afraid to say what the expected business benefits are, and to be clear about success criteria from a business perspective.

We are fans of coaching, and believe that the business benefits and value of coaching will allow it to remain a robust and transformative tool in these challenging times, but we perceive some changes may be required in the way coaching schemes are managed in order for this to happen.

It seems likely that concerns over the economic and environmental agendas will predominate for a few more years to come. Internal coaching schemes may be under threat themselves as budgets are cut. The BBC estimates that the cost of the coaching provided through its established in-house coaching network is only £50 per hour (Macann, 2008). Companies who can match that figure should have a good chance of demonstrating why their schemes are excellent value. Where internal coaching schemes continue we may now see a shift in focus from personal development and talent management, towards improving the performance and productivity of the survivors of organisation contraction.

1.3 Evidence from IES research and programme evaluations

As part of multi-stakeholder evaluations of ongoing coaching programmes, IES has been gathering data on the perceptions and experiences of clients' line managers and senior managers. In particular, we asked them about the individual and business outcomes and benefits arising from internal coaching programmes. In total we have talked to:

- 97 coaching clients/coachees
- 49 internal coaches
- 64 line managers of clients/coachees
- 10 other senior managers or sponsors.

In addition, we have analysed the written coaching objectives of 163 clients/coachees.

With IES colleagues, we have been reflecting on why all these evaluations have identified numerous and significant benefits for the individuals being coached, but the full range of expected business benefits was only achieved by half the organisations' coaching programmes.

While there may be many reasons why fewer business benefits have emerged than expected, one main reason in our view is that there were insufficiently clear links between the coaching schemes and business needs at the very outset. Particular problem areas include selection of the 'wrong' clients, clients working on the 'wrong' issues, and insufficient involvement of line managers.

The remainder of this paper outlines some of the problem areas and shares some ideas which might help organisations improve this 'missing' link between coaching programmes and business needs. In the final section we suggest some metrics that might be useful in managing your coaching scheme.

2 Getting the 'right' clients

2.1 Client marketing and selection

2.1.1 What's the problem

Some schemes keep a low profile for fear of being swamped with potential clients and as a consequence end up with insufficient client numbers to justify the initial investment in set-up and coach training. Occasionally we encounter schemes so low on client numbers that almost any employee who applies gets access, whatever their purpose in applying. A no-barriers to access approach is a sure-fire means to a lack of business focus within the coaching relationship. Sometimes it also leads to demoralised internal coaches when they perceive that the quality of the coachees they are allocated is going downhill.

2.1.2 Possible improvement factors

The potential benefits of encouraging clients to share their experiences of being coached on a voluntary basis could be explored further in many organisations.

Using an in-house newsletter/magazine to demonstrate the impact of coaching to a wider audience can make a big difference to the status attached to coaching programmes. The NHS went further, producing a special 24-page supplement (NHS Institute, 2008) on coaching which was distributed with its journal for all senior leaders. The supplement gave managers insight into what coaching was, who it can help and in what circumstances, and how individuals who had already been coached and the organisations they worked for had benefited.

In addition to inspiring other employees to step forward to apply for/take-up the offer of coaching, personal client stories (particularly if the client is a senior manager or well regarded as role model) can also re-assure line managers that your coaching programme is worth supporting and encourage them to identify/nominate further people for coaching.

How coaching is perceived is very important as is having the right key message understood 'out there'. If the 'success stories' of your programme so far are mainly about people securing new jobs, then you'll get even more people signing up who want help with their career development. If you want them to think of coaching as being about fine tuning excellent performance then make sure all the formal and informal promotion reinforce that message. The hope is that people who sign up for performance reasons are more likely to set performance related objectives.

On the other hand, if you are oversubscribed with potential clients, why not review your selection criteria to ensure priority (or at least a percentage of acceptances) is given to employees in circumstances where they and the business are likely to gain most benefit? Employees working in contexts of great change or transition, or those who are either newly appointed or about to move into a new role report gaining great benefit from the support and challenge that coaching offers. Coaching can be particularly helpful:

- during times of merger and acquisitions
- when working with process re-engineering/improvement managers or change managers
- during co-option onto cross-functional working team
- when moving into a first supervisory or people management role
- when newly appointed to a senior or unfamiliar role.

There is nothing to stop a company reserving a proportion of the client 'spaces' for supporting people working on new or business critical projects and promoting coaching for their team members directly to the managers and leaders of new projects. This should ensure a closer alignment between the coaching and project /business objectives.

3 Clients working on the 'right' issues

3.1 Objective setting

US-based research on executive coaching engagements found that support by others in the coaching process (in addition to the coach and client) is a key element that is essential for effectiveness (Bush, 2004). Coaching is therefore best viewed as a shared responsibility between the executive, the coach and the organisation (Michelman, 2005). Michelman suggests that this three-way partnership needs to agree specific objectives and parameters for the coaching engagement at the outset in order to help make coaching in organisations more effective.

3.1.1 What's the problem?

IES' practice-based research suggests that issues of confidentiality are often cited as barriers to the organisation being involved in the negotiation, or subsequently monitoring, of the objectives that are agreed by individuals with their coaches. But if the business is paying, shouldn't it have at least some say in what the objectives are?

To give you an idea of the potential scale of the problem, consider the following example. In one coaching programme evaluation for managers at a large public sector employer we undertook an analysis of 88 anonymised coachee action plans which had been completed by coachees in consultation with their coaches during the first or second coaching session. Two hundred and twenty development objectives were listed, an average of 2.5 objectives per coachee. We categorised the objectives by primary outcome expected – individual or organisational. As you will see from Table 3.1 only 37 objectives (17 per cent) were directly aligned to organisational outcomes.

Table 3.1: Coaching objectives by primary outcome expected

Individual	No.	%	Organisational	No.	%
Self awareness	10	5	Corporate leadership	11	5
Motivation	6	3	Culture change	9	4
Personal effectiveness	72	33	Reputation/credibility	9	4
Own career	12	5	Service delivery	8	4
Job specific	11	5			
Team development	52	24			
Strategic skills	20	9			
<i>Total</i>	<i>183</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>17</i>

Source: IES, 2004

A relatively low level of organisation-relevant objectives being set is a cause for concern if coaching is intended to be an OD or performance improvement tool, as well as a personal development activity.

3.1.2 Possible improvement factors

It's worth taking a moment to reflect on your own organisation's coaching programme and the advice you give your coaches and clients about objective setting. Do you have any idea what is the nature of the objectives coachees are working on? And how serious or worthwhile their issues are?

It is important to recognise that individuals may prefer that negotiations between themselves and their coaches remain confidential. However, in setting in managing a coaching programme, and in contracting with any individual coach, organisations might consider that there is nothing to prevent a company identifying, ahead of brokering the coaching, any specific, business-oriented benefits that the company expects to achieve as a result of the work ahead of brokering the coaching.

If you prefer to leave the actual nature of the business benefit for the coachee to identify, perhaps you might brief coaches and coachees that at least one of the 'public' objectives should explicitly link to supporting customers, product/service improvement, organisational change, a key business plan goal, or whatever is a current corporate priority (eg environment, diversity).

3.2 Role of line managers/sponsors

Over the last few years, in the evaluations that IES has conducted, it has emerged that, even where a three-way contracting approach is adopted to setting client objectives for the coaching, often the line manager or sponsor often does not play an active role.

3.2.1 What's the problem?

Uninvolved line managers can be a point of real weakness for coaching, for several reasons:

- Without the manager's involvement there is little way of ensuring that the coaching will have any real relationship to the business needs.
- If the manager is not involved it is possible that the coachee may not identify the same areas for development that the organisation would necessarily select. In such circumstances the responsibility for making connections to organisational or team objectives is left up to the individual employee/client individually.
- With no real knowledge of what the coaching objectives are, managers are not able to identify the best development opportunities to support the individual's development, or indeed to provide such development support at the best time.

Many of the managers of coaching clients interviewed by IES only heard about the progress of coaching during one-to-ones, which (unsurprisingly) often were not timed to coincide with the phases of coaching and development. Given that line managers also feel that to ask too many searching questions would transgress upon coach-coachee confidentiality, it is not surprising that conversations about coaching engagements are sometimes actively avoided.

However, when line managers are involved as active and engaged sponsors it can make a real difference to coachees. For instance, in a local government coaching programme evaluation Carter and Connage (2007) found significantly higher levels of coachee satisfaction with their achievements amongst coachee survey respondents who had active line manager/sponsor involvement, when compared to those without an active sponsor. This was the case even for coachees at director level. In addition, an independent qualitative evaluation of two NHS coaching programmes found that coachees with an active line manager/sponsor were much more likely to have set organisation-related objectives, when compared to coachees with no active line manager involvement (Sinclair et al., 2008).

Practitioners writing in the press also report that '*coaching works best when the manager is in the loop*' (Boanas K, 2006). As in other forms of development, line managers have a crucial role, and not just in ensuring expectations are explicit and that there is a line of sight with organisational aims and business results. They are also invaluable in motivating employee/clients to make the most of the development opportunity and in increasing their confidence in transferring their learning into the workplace.

It is possible, of course, that line managers may themselves need more help to support employees as coaching clients in situations where they may not have had coaching themselves.

3.2.2 Possible improvement factors

But what can managers actually do, and why? Support and guidance materials for line managers are likely to be needed. Sending out guidance to line managers (or a link via email to the website pages) once a client is registered might help get the message across. Guidance could include details such as:

- explanation of the role of all parties involved in the coaching programme so that line managers can better understand their role in the process
- how much time the coachee will need away from their desk in order to attend coaching, and when
- helping the coachee identify broad issues to bring to the first coaching session, together with an articulation of the anticipated benefits
- the areas of development to be tackled, and the sorts of work experiences that would be helpful for the coachee to be exposed to in order to allow them to try out their developing skills or developing behavioural repertoire
- the manager may need to negotiate work assignments on the coachee's behalf so they can put their coaching outcomes into practice
- the ways in which the coachee and/or her/his manager could review and assess the success of the coaching and how this will be guided by the nature of the development aims identified and the work context experienced.

3.3 Support for coaches

Coaches are of course the critical link in ensuring that the objectives set relate to business goals – and never more so than when there is no line manager or sponsor involvement.

3.3.1 What's the problem?

Most internal coaches we have encountered in our evaluations do appear to receive good training, and indeed the great majority of the coachees to whom we spoke had found their coaches motivational and supportive. The up-front level of investment in your internal coaching capability is, however, significant. Keeping coaches engaged with your scheme is therefore critical to maximising their utilisation and minimising coach drop-out/turnover rates. As the front-line providers of your coaching service, it is worth considering whether coaches themselves need any further support and also whether your current process and timing of deployment and matching is optimal.

3.3.2 Possible areas for improvement

Where organisations are training their own coaches to develop in-house coaching capability, it can be helpful to provide trainee coaches with coachees from the early days. This may seem counter-intuitive – shouldn't coaches wait until they are fully trained before starting to practise their skills? But without a coachee, it can be difficult for the novice coach to retain the training that they are receiving. Some coach training providers already include using 'guinea pig' coachees as part of their coach training programmes, especially where certification by an external body is involved, as they may require a minimum number of hours coaching prior to certification, eg ILM (Institute of Leadership & Management). These guinea pig coachees are also a great source of early feedback about the benefits of being coached and some good quotes from them can help with early marketing campaigns addressed at 'real' clients.

In addition, where an organisation has provided coaching services with an intention for business benefits to be seen (even if these are not expected to be seen for some time), then the organisation needs to think about how they can ensure that coaches are kept up to date about how the objectives of the coaching programme may develop and change over time.

A forum for bringing coaches together can be beneficial so that they can feed back their views to the organisation. Although coaches often meet in small groups for supervision of their practice and workshops to keep their coaching skills up to date, we have been told by many coaches that they lack a forum for sharing organisational issues and practical coaching programme improvements.

3.4 Three-way and four-way contracting

3.4.1 Why might we need to consider a different way of 'contracting'?

The current economic situation may serve to focus the attention of organisations increasingly on the need to ensure that any development initiatives show real impact. The intense focus on value for money may well also challenge our ideas about coaching 'best practice'. As previously stated, the first 'sacred cow' to fall may well be the concept of 'following the coachee's agenda', ie the idea that contracting and objective setting is purely a two-way discussion between coach and coachee. Aligning the personal perspective with the organisational perspective will ensure that coaching schemes serve the collective as well as the individual agenda.

In practice, this will require a much more thorough contracting process both initially and throughout a coaching assignment. HR and line management are likely to be far more visibly involved. Consultants such as Alex Poppleton, formerly of Ashridge Centre for Coaching, say that best practice is already

heading towards three or four-way contracting, with line managers and/or Learning and Development/HR becoming involved, in order for the organisational perspective to be reflected in the coaching relationship early on (Poppleton, 2008).

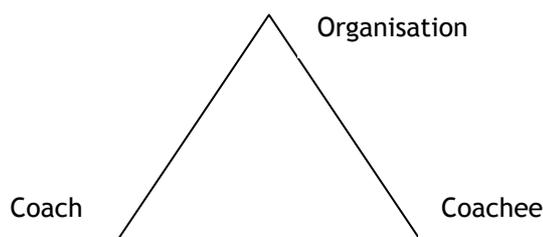
3.4.2 How might we do contracting differently?

Although not all coach training companies recommend this approach, some internal coaches are already trained in three-way contracting. In three-way contracting the coachee's line manager (or other 'sponsor' within their organisation who can support their development) is invited to join a part of an early coaching session (usually the first session) during which the 'public' objectives for the coaching and success criteria are discussed.

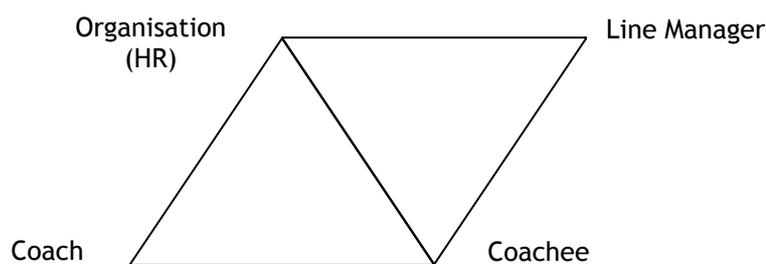
Katherine Tulpa, Chair and founder of Association for Coaching presents the different types of contracting arrangements in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Types of contracting arrangements

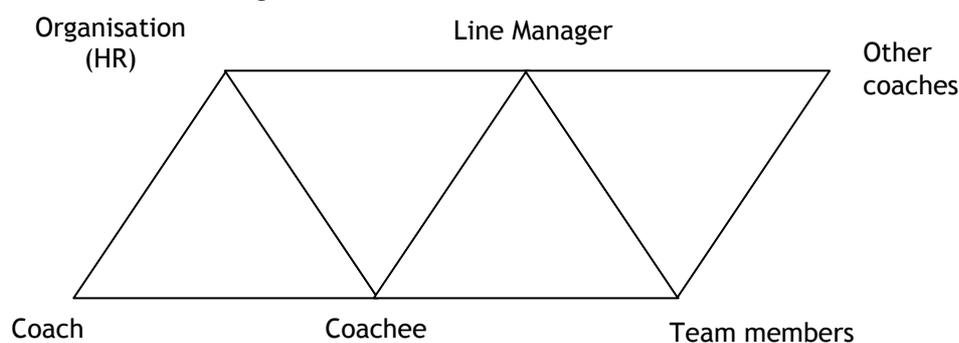
(a) Three-way contracting



(b) Four-way contracting



(c) Multi-tiered contracting



Source: Adapted from Tulpa, (2008)

Whilst we believe that the issues surrounding 'coachee confidentiality' will become less 'black and white' as business perspectives shift in the current economic climate, it is clear that three-way and four-way contracting arrangements require sensitive negotiation with all stakeholders, if individuals are not to be put off entering into coaching engagements.

In addition, even where three-way contracting is already recommended, it does not always happen in practice. Line managers may be disinterested or may not even be aware that the coaching is taking place. In some cases they may turn up to the session but be confused about what their role is meant to be. As we indicated earlier in Section 3.2.2, you may find it helpful to provide managers with guidance on their role.

Coachees and their managers might want to think about the ways in which they will judge the impact the coaching is having. Where a specific business benefit is anticipated, then the manager and coachee could think about the sorts of changes that would serve as an indicator of progress. Ideally the coach would also be involved in this process – in other words, a three-way or four-way contracting process could underpin agreement of the types of change that will prove the value of the coaching process – thus providing persuasive evidence for using the coaching scheme again.

4 Introduce key metrics

What's the problem?

The need to balance the number of coaches and clients is one of the biggest challenges facing an internal coaching programme's management team, and one that it seems it is difficult to get right. If you don't get it right the initial start-up costs (including coach training) are not perceived as being recouped sufficiently quickly through a much lower on-going cost of coaching per client/employee by internal coaches (when compared to per client cost of using external coaches).

In the early days, the focus of activity among programme co-ordinators is usually on selecting and training internal coaches, and establishing support for them through supervision arrangements and possibly CPD workshops or other mechanisms. For fear of being swamped by potential clients before the coaches are fully trained and ready, in some schemes we have encountered they have left it rather late to complete the activities associated with recruiting and selecting the clients. Most potential clients don't mind being on a short waiting list for free coaching, whereas coaches do mind a long gap before using their new skills. A gap between completing your coach training/qualification and getting to use your coaching skills on real clients/coachees risks losing commitment and motivation from coaches and increases the likelihood of drop outs from your programme. There is also the risk of coaches needing refresher training if the gap is more than six months.

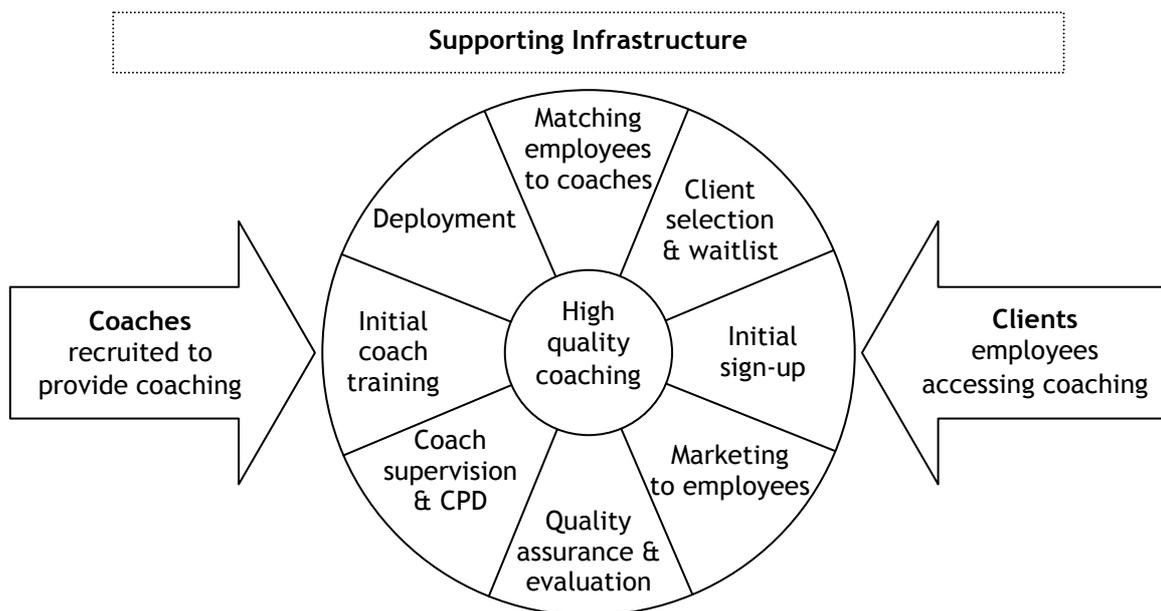
4.1 A conceptual model for managing internal coaching schemes

Many organisations known to us do have some kind of model or diagram of the main back office support processes needed for them to get their schemes up and running and then managed efficiently. However, some of these models are developed at an early stage of project implementation and then not updated. In our opinion, they usually illustrate a supply-side support infrastructure, ie

coaches are the key focus. This is unsurprising to us since coach selection, recruitment, training, deployment and support are, collectively, the first big challenge in establishing a coaching scheme.

However, as the schemes move out of their start-up, development and testing project phases and into a fully operational phase, it is more appropriate for the support infrastructure to increase focus on to the demand-side, ie where employees/potential clients are equally important. There needs to be an equal balance between employees as potential clients and coaches in order to manage costs effectively. We suggest a model similar to the one in Figure 4.1 might be useful:

Figure 4.1: IES model of key operational processes for internal coaching schemes



Source: IES, 2009

Many organisations already have outcome measures in place, and sometimes return on investment formulae are also used. These can provide good information for senior managers. However, the figures often only come out well when the programmes are well established and embedded in the organisation. They also rely on historical data. In order for programme managers to have a more current view of what is happening, lead indicators of developments on the ground are necessary, so that corrective or pre-emptive action can be taken.

There are two areas where metrics might be particularly useful:

- Client sign-up rate is a key measure for newly established programmes. When client sign-up rates approach capacity available, most coaches will be engaged and the 'pay back' on your investment in their training/qualification will be growing.

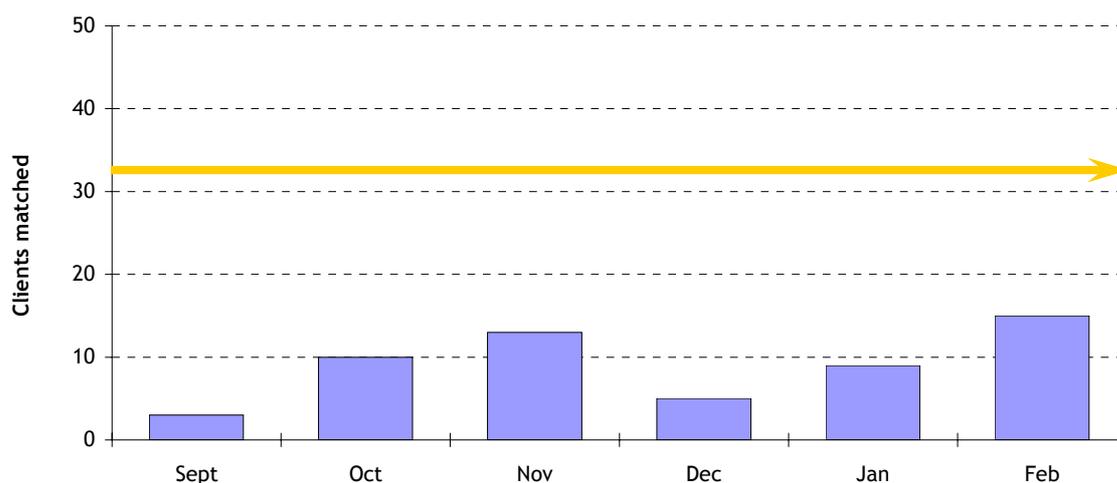
- Coach utilisation could be a key measure for established programmes during recessionary times. When coach utilisation is high then the fixed costs of managing the infrastructure seem better value to senior managers looking to cut costs compared with when coach utilisation is low.

4.2 Client sign-up targets

Do you know your realistic maximum capacity? And the number of new clients you can accommodate per month or per cohort to get the most out of the investment of training the coaches? To give you an idea of how illuminating it can be to work out what level of client recruitment you may want to aim for as you move forward, consider the following analysis compiled as part of an IES evaluation of a newly established coaching programme, based on data supplied by the project team.

IES suggested that stakeholders set a target for client sign-up, which was near to total capacity, and monitor the position monthly. Client sign-up is a good lead indicator of clients who will have been coached later during the year. Figure 4.2 demonstrates how far below average monthly capacity (the yellow line) the coaching was operating at the time of the evaluation and the scale of the shortfall of clients against capacity. Monthly client sign-up figures (however you choose to calculate them) would seem to be a key monitoring tool over the next year as the organisation sought to make a step change increase in the number of clients being coached.

Figure 4.2: Clients matched per month, against target



Source: IES analysis, based on client data

4.3 Coach utilisation

So what benefit are organisations getting from the coaches since they completed their training and is it sustainable? Do you know how many hours of coaching they have done and how many clients they had worked with? This can vary quite widely between different organisations. In companies known to us, sampling 'active' coaches indicated a variation in averages of between 1.38 coaching relationships per year to 10.4 per year.

Companies usually ask their volunteer coaches to commit to a maximum number of hours per year, somewhere in the region of 45-60 hours per year, but current coach utilisation is often considerably lower than the capacity available. The lower the number of hours available, the greater the importance of aiming for a high level of coach utilisation. What is required is a sustainable number of hours/days which balances various needs:

- Maximising access to employees.
- Getting a return from the cost of coach training, supervision, CPD, and training replacement coaches (a percentage of coaches will be lost to the programme every year).
- Enabling coaches to remain productive in their 'day jobs'.

Utilisation is usually expressed as a percentage of a coach's commitment where the time is actually spent coaching clients. Utilisation is not usually 100 per cent as time is required for supervision, CPD and liaison.

5 Summary of key points

The evidence suggests that coaching can play a valuable role in individual and organisational development. However, some organisations are failing to maximise the benefits that could be realised from their coaching programmes. One of the reasons for this is the belief that as coaching is a person-centred process, then the coachee's agenda should be paramount. While this has benefits in helping to create openness and trust, there can be a tendency for programmes focused entirely on the individual's needs to have a lack of business accountability.

IES suggests a range of actions that could be taken by organisations to increase the business benefits they gain from investment in coaching:

Before your programme goes 'live'

- Be clear about the business needs and the anticipated benefits of the coaching programme.
- Be clear about the financing.
- Be clear how and when you will measure the benefits to gauge success.

Pay as much attention to client selection as to coach selection

- Consider the way in which potential clients/coachee are selected. A no-barriers approach to access can lead to a lack of business focus within the coaching relationship.
- Considering the situations in which having a coach can be particularly useful can help you prioritise coachees:
 - during times of merger and acquisitions
 - during co-option onto a cross-functional working team

- when working with process re-engineering/improvement managers or change managers
- when moving into a first supervisory or people management role
- when newly appointed to a senior or unfamiliar role.

Get line managers involved wherever possible

- The full and active involvement of line managers is key to ensuring the business benefits of coaching are fully realised. Uninvolved line managers can be a point of real weakness for coaching, for several reasons:
 - Without the manager's involvement there is little way of ensuring that the coaching will have any real relationship to the business needs.
 - The coachee may not identify the same areas for development that the organisation would necessarily select.
 - With no real knowledge of the coaching objectives, managers are not able to identify the best development opportunities to support the individual's development.
- It is not just the organisation that is likely to benefit more from managers' closer involvement. Coachees report more satisfaction with their achievements when they have active line manager support, too.
- Managers themselves may need help in understanding how best to support coachees.
- Encouraging successful clients to share their experiences of being coached on a voluntary basis can help demonstrate the impact of coaching to the wider organisation and assure line managers that the coaching programme is worth supporting.

Provide on-going support and guidance

- Support and guidance materials for line managers may be helpful. This can include explanation of:
 - the role of all parties involved in the coaching programme
 - the amount of time the coaching will involve, and timings
 - how to help coachees identify the areas of development/ issues to address during objective setting, the sorts of work experiences needed to develop their skills or behavioural repertoire, and the expected benefits to be gained

- the ways in which the coachee and/or her/his manager will review and assess the success of the coaching.
- Consider whether coaches will need any further support as the scheme matures and reviewing whether your processes for, and timing of, deployment and matching of coaches and coachees are optimal.

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Appendix

Line managers/sponsors role in coaching

Assistance with setting objectives for the coaching

Would it be useful for you to carry out a SWOT analysis to help identify the areas that the coaching should focus on (there is nothing to prevent the coachee setting additional personal goals for themselves), or to identify the types of situations that the coachee needs support in developing the confidence and competence to deal with?

Organisational leverage

While they are receiving coaching, the coachee may need to gain exposure to various situations and activities to use and test out their developing skills repertoire. Can you provide access to the required activities? Do you need to negotiate with other departments to provide access to developmental experience outside the reach of your own department?

Assessing impact

Where managers are involved in the objective setting they will be better-placed to spot the potential and actual business benefits. As part of the objective setting process, it is a good idea to discuss the sorts of evidence you would look for to demonstrate the value of the coaching for your employee. Discussing the ways in which you will be able to tell whether the coaching is a success may lead you to pen in some future dates for review of the coaching for that individual. Depending on the specific timings already arranged within your organisation, this review might be as part of a future one-to-one, perhaps as part of the annual appraisal, or, possibly, a date set aside purely for discussing the coaching outcomes.

Accelerating the bedding-in process

Where an internal coaching capacity is being developed, is there a way that managers of coachees could feed into the developmental support for the coaches? Is there scope for managers of coachees to meet as a group with the coaches as a group to discuss what is going well, or any areas in which they do not see business benefits feeding through? In addition, this will allow coaches to identify any barriers to providing coachees with the necessary development activities during the coaching programme.