**Spark Coaching and Training**



by Julia Menaul

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CREATING A COACHING CULTURE: A guide to setting up a coaching programme in the workplace

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# Meet Julia Menaul And About This Guide

Hello, I’m Julia Menaul.

As an experienced executive coach, career coach and coach mentor supervisor, I specialise in L&D of people and the organisations they work for.

With over 25 years’ experience and a whole host of coaching and training qualifications, I base my success, and the success of my clients, on my ability to tap into people’s hidden potential and reveal it. Helping them to become confident and effective leaders, managers and coaches.

You can find out more about my career, formal qualifications and accreditations [here](http://www.sparkcoachingandtraining.co.uk/about-julia-menaul/).

**I’ve written this short guide** to assist for anyone who wants some background information on how to set up a coaching programme to develop a coaching culture within their workplace. It is specifically written for HR Managers, OD/L&D Managers and even line managers. It will show what else you need to consider as well the training to embed coaching in every facet of organisational life.

Please let me know if you found the guide helpful and/or if you have any questions about how Spark Coaching and Training can assist you in setting up a coaching programme and developing a coaching culture within *your* workplace.

You can get in touch by [email](mailto:julia@sparkcoachingandtraining.co.uk?subject=Creating%20a%20Coaching%20Culture)  or call01785 252112.

Best wishes

Julia

# introduction

Many organisations now appreciate the benefits that training their managers in coaching skills can bring.

Some organisations are training their managers purely in skills that they can use day-to-day with their own staff rather than as internal coaches.

However, in larger organisations it is very cost-effective to train up a pool of coaches to act as an internal resource to draw on.

**It is not the full story though for the road to a coaching culture!**

# The Benefits Of Using Coaching In The Workplace

Organisations adopting workplace coaching find benefits in both the strategic and the operational. At a strategic level coaching can:

* Streamline processes and procedures as individuals are guided to adopt better solutions
* Increase motivation and momentum throughout the organisation
* Promote greater inclusion of the workforce resulting in a broader base of information, ideas and solutions
* Increase accountability and responsibility at all levels
* Improve focus and monitoring of actions
* Improve customer service

Interpersonal and operational level benefits are also impressive:

* Greater potential and creativity tapped throughout the organisation
* Improved work/life balance with resultant reduction of stress and frustration
* People are more able to cope with change and transition (*Personnel Today*, 2003, published research showing 66% of HR professionals believed their managers had only poor or fair capacity for managing change)
* As concentration and confidence increase, performance fears and anxieties can be eliminated
* Decision making and problem solving abilities improve
* Employee retention improves and there is better use of resources
* Training spend is maximised as interventions become more targeted and relevant

# Evolution of A Coaching Culture

Many organisations are going through constant rounds of change and that looks likely to continue throughout the twenty-first century. It is often said that the only constant is change!

This often requires large scale strategic organisational change and a great deal of behaviour change at an individual level.

The requirement to give managers the tools and techniques to manage change and achieve business objectives over the short term is imperative. The long-term objective of changing the culture of the organisation to a coaching culture can take time and can feel overwhelming if you have been charged with the job. A good place to start is with a small group of managers at the operational level due to the influence of this level. Put simply, a coaching culture is developing the ‘ask not tell’ habit which encourages people to work things out for themselves and take more responsibility for their actions.

Stages in the evolution of a coaching culture can look like this (Hawkins & Smith, 2006):

1. The organisation employs coaches for some of its executives
2. The organisation develops its own coaching and mentoring capacity
3. The organisation actively supports coaching endeavours
4. Coaching becomes the norm for individuals, teams and the whole organisation
5. Coaching becomes embedded in HR and performance management processes of the organisation
6. Coaching become the predominate style of managing throughout the organisation
7. Coaching becomes how we do business with all our stakeholders

Many organisations take their first tentative steps with coaching by buying in external coaches for their top team. I did just that when I was the Training Manager at Greater Manchester Magistrates Courts in the early 2000s.

Doing this stage first will help to provide one of the essential elements of ensuring a coaching programme is a business issue rather than just another L&D initiative. The executive level must communicate their commitment to coaching by role modelling both coaching and mentoring in a consistent way.

You, of course, may be in the position where you have tried to introduce a small amount of coach training but it hasn’t led to any shifts and you are nowhere near having a coaching culture. Sometimes managers have received coaching training but have not used their skills due to lack of confidence. The emphasis may have been on using it in a very process driven way only, in one to one meetings and performance management scenarios.

**A key requirement for introducing a significant coaching programme is the need for a framework to market a coaching programme in such a way to encourage managers to sign up**.

The keen and enthusiastic ‘early adopters’ tend to volunteer first and if you get a good spread from across your organisation then they can be pockets of influence.

Okay, so it’s good to be able to sell the benefits of training to your stakeholders and those willing volunteers.

Some of the key problems identified that could be helped by managers being able to coach are:

* Doing more with less resources
* Reducing Staff turnover – having difficult conversations earlier
* Ability to manage absence assertively and confidently
* Feedback skills around performance issues
* Ability to manage a team of managers, eg managing of managers one level removed
* Managers needing to be empowered to make decisions and solve problems with the minimum of intervention from upper levels
* Managers being unsure or not having the skill to manage in a different way than the traditional command and control style of the past

The key, common development areas for coaching managers that we see most commonly are:

* Constructive performance management, eg confront issues of under-performance and developing the high performer
* Handling Conflict , eg managing and motivating team members who typically exhibit destructive or challenging behaviours
* Become solution focused rather than problem focussed and develop flexibility within operational day to day decision making, eg working flexibly with shift patterns or remote team management
* Develop a more consultative and developmental approach with staff by ‘coaching on the hoof’ to be more non directive and less command and control

# A Framework For Marketing Coaching Internally

A major consideration is how to encourage enthusiasm for coaching so that you get participants to sign up to any programme and become champions for coaching.

There are a number of options we recommend. All the options are best if fronted by executive level sponsors where possible:

1. An online presentation to include a video clip of coaching in action to be available if possible on a company intranet. Use of examples of coaching on manager’s key problem areas, benefits, etc.
2. A ‘lunch and learn’ presentation on coaching and its benefits. Focussing on what participants would get from taking part,eg new skills, career development, and other organisational benefits.
3. A half day coaching awareness workshop for people to see some coaching in action from the trainer using volunteers. Emphasis on what it is and isn’t, dispel the ‘remedial coachee’ label, see it used on personal topics, etc.

Managers from different parts of the organisation can effectively act as champions for the establishment of coaching. This will enable them to influence within their areas so that enthusiasm for coaching spreads out from this initial source.

As more attend follow up programmes then this will gain momentum and enable the pockets of coaching excellence to ‘join up’. Usually the most motivated and keen managers will volunteer first and help to create a groundswell of interest in coaching.

# the Training Programme

This is the type of programme we recommend as a minimum to ensure that the above outcomes are achievable.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **HOW?** | At least 4 days highly practical workshops spread over 3-4 months covering the foundations of coaching for managers. Use of real life issues and large percentage of coaching practise sessions. |
| **WHAT?** | Each workshop to be practical but themed to look at different aspects of coaching,eg how coaching came from sport, understanding human behaviour, emotional intelligence, leadership, teams, honest conversations, etc. |
| **WHEN?** | Each workshop should be held at regular intervals of between 4-6 weeks. Enough time to ensure practise in the workplace but close enough to keep momentum going. |
| **WHERE?** | For maximum benefits an external venue is recommended to avoid work distractions and to create a more relaxed atmosphere which is conducive to the practise sessions.  Syndicate rooms are often required for triad group work and practise – these can be quite small but need to be quiet and private. |
| **WHO?** | Anyone who has management responsibility at any level.  Mixed grades of people work as well as peer groups. Mixed learning styles and different departments also work well.  Important to ensure that wherever possible direct reports are not in the same group.  No more than twelve on a programme due to the practise sessions and need for individual feedback from the trainer(s).  Two coach/facilitators is a requirement in order to provide feedback as recommended by the Association for Coaching (1 coach: 6 participants). |

### **Some areas covered by coaching**

* Roles and responsibilities of leaders.
* Importance of challenging the status quo, creating positive vision and challenging stale thinking.
* What is a leader versus a manager?
* Emotionally intelligent leaders – why it is more important than IQ?
* Relationship building and management.
* Personal skills for dealing with people – deep listening techniques
* Non-verbal Communication: reading emotional tone, body language of self and others, perceptual maps, questioning techniques.
* Handling conflict and becoming comfortable in handling difficult behaviour.
* Giving and Receiving feedback.
* Using coaching skills to solve problems: developing and empowering staff to problem solve themselves.
* Coaching demonstrations using a volunteer and real life problem.
* Coaching practise by participants on real life problems to take back immediately.

# Coaching Others

The second element of introducing a coaching culture and as part of a rigorous training programme is to ensure that people are actually doing some coaching in the organisation!

One of the commitments as a participant on the Coaching Programme should be to coach at least two people. Ideally this means independently finding someone to coach internally and outside the company.

Our experience has shown this creates a greater commitment to gaining practise between workshops, rather than leaving to chance the manager’s ability to do this initially within his normal work environment. It also accelerates the process of becoming a competent coach.

Each participant must then take responsibility for contracting with their coachee and their coachee’s development plus there is the option of gaining written feedback from the coachee about the participant’s performance as a coach.

A Coaching record as part of the training programme can act as a log of the coaching (coachees do not need to be named) and can be used for evaluation purposes.

# One to One Coaching

To be a better coach, everyone needs to have some coaching themselves to really experience being on the receiving end. This would also build enthusiasm for coaching. It also helps a potential coach to personally develop as well as professionally develop as a manager and a coach. By this we mean that coaches should always be seeking to be developmentally ahead of their coachees; not perfect by any means, but be committed to seeking new insights, wisdom and greater emotional intelligence .This will lead to enhanced humility, patience and understanding when working with others who are challenged by their own changes.

*“Being an effective coachee is the first step to being an effective coach”*

Hawkins and Smith, 2006

One to One coaching is best run around the workshops so that trainee coaches can use and take some of the topics highlighted on the training to their coach. In this way the coaching also serves as tutorial support.

A minimum of 2 x 90 minutes sessions for each person is usually recommended although if budget allows, then 3-4 sessions will show greater returns. Coaching days can be set up to enable coaches to be available on a set day and up to four sessions could take place. For twelve participants this would require three days. This ensures cost effectiveness and commitment to appointments.

### **Focus of the One to One coaching would be:**

* Learning/insights that had arisen during workshops and how to take it further.
* Improving all major elements of emotional intelligence but especially self-awareness.
* New specific problems relating to leadership duties that could not/did not want to be coached on by colleagues in the workshop environment.
* Relationship issues and working out how to have an honest conversation with someone back at work.
* How to drive change in your own particular area.
* Personal development/change issues arising out of the coach practise sessions. Fore example, feedback received on the workshop about developing a specific area or skill to improve their own coaching, can be worked on in more detail during the personal coaching with an ‘expert’.

# After Support: Action Learning And Supervision

If all participants are actively coaching their two coachees as well as their own staff then it is ethical and good practice to provide a process of supervision. This is particularly so for the members who will be effectively coaching a level below them who may also be coaching in the future, ie coaching the coaches.

This can take the form of a one day interactive workshop to be run bi-monthly after the end of the coaching programme. Research suggests that application of learning to the workplace is greater when coaches are supported to try out their new skills tentatively and gain confidence by being able to return to the learning group to share ideas, swap stories and issues. By taking an action learning approach, it will encompass individuals bringing tricky coaching issues to be discussed within the group (confidentiality is to be contracted for closely). It is also an opportunity for each participant to gain peer feedback about how they are progressing with using coaching skills on a daily basis. The group facilitator can act as coaching supervisor to ensure ethical behaviour and give guidance on their coaching challenges.

The rest of the workshop will be given over for more opportunity to practise coaching in a similar format to the course, but allow participants to build on what they are learning through supervision and in the outside environment. This reflects the support-challenge balance aimed for in both coaching and performance management. Our experience has shown that new coaches still require a lot of practise and feedback on their actual coaching before they are skilled enough to be able to self-supervise or even when more experienced be able to spot and reflect on coaching dilemmas. (They don’t know what they don’t know yet!)

The purpose of using a professionally qualified and experienced supervisor to facilitate the ALS is that it:

* Helps the coach to develop their internal supervisor and become a better reflective practitioner – the supervisor is a sounding board but also helps them to plan how they can improve their next interventions with their coachee.
* Provides a supportive space for the coach to process what they have absorbed from their coachees and their coachees system – this prevents stress or burnout.
* Helps keep the coach honest and courageous, attending to what they are; not seeing, not hearing, not allowing themselves to feel, or not saying. It aids emotional intelligence development to continue and prevents collusion and delusion between coach and coachee.
* Looks at where and how the coach may need to refer the coachee on to more specialist help.

**The Association for Coaching advises 1 hour of supervision for every 10 hours for inexperienced coaches.**

We therefore recommend three action learning workshops spread out over the twelve months following a coach training programme.

The above outcomes described from coaching take about 12-18 months to have the fullest impact on business.

Here are some of the traditional issues brought to supervision:

* What should I be including in my contracting?
* How much structure must there be in the session?
* How do I end coaching with a coachee?
* Who should I be involving in a coaching contact?
* How do I deal with multi party contracting?
* What if the organisation wants me to help them dismiss a coachee via coaching?(but they are not admitting this explicitly)
* Can I coach everyone in the same team?
* Do I always follow the coachee’s agenda; what if what they want is not what they originally said they wanted at contracting or even what the company wants?
* Is my coachee dependent on me?
* What can I do about a coachee who is just playing along in the coaching?
* What if I know something about their situation at work that they don't know?
* I don't really like my coachee; can I work with them?
* How do I work with an extremely talkative coachee?
* What should I do with a flirtatious coachee?
* I am concerned about the mental/physical health of my coachee.
* I know my coachee’s wife; could that cause an issue for us both?
* How important is it to do mid-way reviews and how should I structure them?

# Evaluation

When introducing coaching into an organisation the evaluation methodology must show the contribution that the learning and knowledge is making to organisational success or it will wither on the vine.

We would suggest as a minimum:

* Pre- and post-programme questionnaires on coaching using self and team assessment and/or Emotional Intelligence testing using Bar-On EQI measure or TEIQ.
* Upon completion of training, all coaches required to capture the business benefits of their coaching practice or return on investment. This proves really useful in obtaining ongoing funding for a programme so that it extends beyond any pilot courses.
* Feedback from coachees outside of team.
* Reactions and application on the courses themselves. Feedback from participants after the workshop both verbally and via “evaluation forms”. Evaluation on workshops at the end of the programme to summarise benefits and results.
* Plus any other quantifiable data you may wish to use for evaluation purposes. E.g. absenteeism rates, attrition measures.
* ALS’s to process learning from coaching since programme and to refresh, reinvigorate motivation. Organisational themes can be harvested from these sessions to be feedback within the confidentiality guidelines but can provide excellent future training needs and information on ongoing operational issues.
* The business benefits presentations can be presented to senior management and also used to encourage others to join future programmes. These can then be followed up within 3 months of the end of the programme and again at the finish of the Action Learning Sets.

The above recommended training programme should produce outcomes that will lead to at least stage 3 on the Coaching culture evolution. (see Introduction section).

This is the biggest part of the financial commitment.

The next stages will require constant monitoring and changes to other processes/systems within the business.

# Other Steps To A Coaching Culture

### Coaching becomes the norm for individuals, teams and the whole organisation

At this stage an organisation has weaved coaching into appraisals, one to one reviews and meetings. It no longer goes on behind closed doors but out in the corridors. There is a coaching style to communications rather than telling. Team coaching happens and learning is harvested deliberately.

### Coaching becomes embedded in HR and performance management processes of the organisation

This is all about “What gets measured gets done!”.

At this point the performance review and management system should have a coaching style as well as rewarding people for using coaching in this way. Mentoring programmes also help to build on succession plans and future focus. A good idea is to instigate more development conversations rather than performance appraisal. People also benefit from having this type of conversation with their boss’s boss every two years to get away from too much short-term task focussed conversations with line managers.

### Coaching becomes the predominate style of managing throughout the organisation

In his book *Creating a Coaching Culture,* Peter Hawkins talks about the difference between two models of coaching characteristics in managers:

1. Primary coaching characteristics:

* A development orientation to staff
* A performance orientation
* The ability to provide effective feedback
* Skills in planning and goal setting

1. Mature coaching characteristics

* Powerful questioning and inquiry skills
* Using the ideas generated by others
* More shared decision making
* Encouraging problem solving in others

This means that a real coaching culture can only be developed if everyone is trained in coaching skills. Organisations do not necessarily need to have everyone operating as a coach in a traditional sense (sit down formal coaching sessions of 1-2 hours) but to be a leader as coach brings massive cultural change especially for senior managers who wield greater influence.

### Coaching becomes how we do business with all our stakeholders

Depending on your type of organisation this can mean coaching with and for:

* Investors
* Customers, eg patients, service users
* Suppliers and partner organisations
* Employees
* Communities outside the organisation

This can be in the way people interact with the above groups either face to face or virtually. It can show itself even in written communications.

# Watching Out For Problems Along The Way

Keep a handle on the following to ensure your coaching initiative stays on track:

1. **Not getting enough buy in from the top**-get more than one senior sponsor because if they leave the company then there may be less interest from others.
2. **Coaching is seen as something that HR is doing**- link it to be business strategy and the hard metrics.
3. **Coaching champions get trained and then leave**- ensure they get good CPD, supervision and regular development conversations on using their coaching skills internally as part of their career plan.
4. **Doing lots of coaching skills training and finding this is only part of the story**- the focus needs to be on delivering organisational learning, performance improvement and changed relationships.
5. **Lack of focus on quality of coaching rather than quantity**- good quality coaching supervision is needed and CPD plus excellent coach matching processes.
6. **No evaluation and therefore recognition of return on investment**-start at the beginning before any training takes place. What changes do you want to see in the organisation? Measure outputs as well as inputs.

*“When you create a culture of coaching, the result may not be directly measurable in pounds and pence. But we have yet to find a company that can’t benefit from more candour, less denial, richer communications, conscious development of talent and disciplined leaders who show compassion for people”* Sherman and Freas, 2004

# Summary

As we have seen above, the six stages of achieving a coaching culture is not quick and/or easy. However the benefits in the long term are huge. Training is the central linchpin but not the only consideration.

The challenge is for the coaching profession (whether HR Managers, external coaches, change champions, CEOs) to work together to join up all the dots so that the thousands of coaching initiatives that take place every year, really do make an impact. Also that they stay embedded long enough into the organisational DNA to make a significant difference to the success of organisations but also to become so unconsciously weaved into daily life that no one really notices that they are coaching anymore, even when they are!

[](mailto:support@sparkcoachingandtraining.co.uk)I’d Like To Help You ‘Find Your Fire’

Book an appointment with me for a complimentary, no obligation 30 minute meeting to discuss your own or your organisation’s coaching, training or coach supervision needs.

And don’t forget to check out our website [Spark Coaching and Training](http://www.sparkcoachingandtraining.co.uk/) where you’ll find insightful articles relating to coaching, training, coach supervision and productivity tips. You can also subscribe for our regular newsletters.

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