

SPECIAL FEATURE: Executive Coaching – Did you know?

Managing your Self Development in Industry

By Alison Griffiths, Success Coaching & Development



THERE WAS A TIME WHEN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COULD BE LEFT ON THE SHELF WITH THE 'SELF HELP/SELF MOTIVATIONAL' BOOKS AND A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CYNICISM SURROUNDED THE WHOLE TOPIC. MANY THOUGHT SUCH LITERATURE AND NAVAL GAZING WAS INTENDED PURELY FOR THOSE WHO DIDN'T REALLY KNOW WHAT THEY WERE DOING IN LIFE, WHERE THEY WERE GOING OR INDEED HAD THE CONFIDENCE TO TRY AND SORT IT ALL OUT.



Alison Griffiths

FOR THOSE PREPARED to spend the time, adapt their attitude and take responsibility for their part in changing their destiny, amazing results were often achieved. Many gained a great deal from the experience, regardless of their status and this was especially true when facing times of great change and uncertainty – specifically around their career.

Whatever our view, times have changed and so too has the emphasis on self awareness and self management, how it fits with technical development and where the responsibility for personal development actually lies. Some may regard this to be the role of Human Resources or Line Managers to define our needs at our yearly (or intended) performance review meeting. For what reason would we put our development in the hands of another? Who indeed is going to be spending the rest of their lives with us? Instead, professionals who are really getting noticed are the ones who are recognising in themselves their development needs through their own experience of the impact they have on those they manage and interact with. Armed with this recognition, they are actively seeking Coaching as a way to hone or adapt such qualities in order to build their career and grow as managers and leaders, whilst in parallel enhancing the performance of others and the business. This article aims to give insight into how Executive and Career Coaching acts as a powerful learning and development intervention. In particular, it considers what Pharmaceutical Physicians, whether new into industry or well established can accomplish with this resource, as well as what we can be doing for ourselves

to enhance our offerings personally and professionally.

Increasingly (to my relief) industry is recognising the importance of investing in personal development alongside the fundamental development of technical expertise. Combined they produce (in my mind) 'professional development' in its truest sense and I have passionately championed this for the past fifteen years! Considering this from a personal perspective, without real self awareness and the opportunity to develop authentically in a way that balances the needs of ourselves, our teams, the organisation and the business, how can we be truly differentiated from the next person with very similar qualifications, knowledge and experience when we need to be? How can the business truly get from us the potential that is available if our development only taps into our technical enhancement?

Differentiating ourselves may perhaps be easier to achieve as a qualified and experienced pharmaceutical physician who has spent a few years in industry and is progressing through considered development plans, building on current performance and deliverables. At this stage of development many of the training courses available tap into the personal (eg Assertiveness, Effective Communication, Presentation Skills, Management Skills etc) and will enhance that offering. However, how do we make an impact and the right impression quickly when we are new into industry or moving into a new role or organisation? How too, could development resources be best utilised for those who have served many years in industry, completed and implemented

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all the usual courses and don't believe attending any more will make much of a difference? For this group the measure of success tends to shift. It is not so much on medical, therapeutic or clinical experience and knowledge, operations management or the Key Opinion Leaders they know – this is already recognised and a given expectation of the role they are undertaking. Instead, this group are often measured by something slightly different and less tangible which usually falls under the categories of maturity, accountability and leadership. How truly ready are we for this or indeed clear on what exactly is required at this level? How much do we assume and wonder why it's not working?

It is in both these instances that Coaching can provide the relevant

SO WHAT IS COACHING?

This is not the easiest of questions to answer. The term is used in so many different contexts. For me, within the context of Executive or Career Coaching, Downey (1999) keeps it succinct as 'the art of facilitating the learning, development and performance of another'. The art of Coaching has of course been around for centuries BC and is nothing new. However, it is only in the past couple of decades that it has been given a structure and more recently a place within the Learning and Development (L&D) corridors of industry. This is thanks arguably to the Business Coach, Tim Gallwey whose follow up publication of the 'The Inner Game of Work' explains his success of Coaching within business after applying his alternative approach to tennis coaching ('The Inner Game of Tennis') -

“ COACHING...BROADENS AWARENESS AND CONSTRUCTIVELY QUESTIONS ATTITUDES...”

intervention that broadens awareness and constructively questions attitudes, emotions and behaviours that help us achieve what we need to. For the new starter, Coaching speeds up their ability to settle into and be productive with new processes, systems, structure, personalities, perceptions, culture etc (this is often referred to as 'On-Boarding'). For those expected to step up to the increasingly challenging expectations of Leadership it provides a safe space to explore aspects of our selves that may be hidden and need discovering, or may no longer be serving us in the way they were doing when we were climbing towards the dizzy heights at the top of the corporate ladder.

both of which are well worth a read at what ever stage of management you may be.

Coaching ultimately brings into our lives a confidential place in which to develop ourselves through the professional activity of exploration, curiosity and action using the art of Socratic questioning. It therefore turns on its head the idea of being taught or trained and instead works on the philosophy that we have the answers ourselves when asked the right questions, focusing on the most valuable aspect of the situation and giving ourselves time to broaden our awareness and our thinking to get to where we want to be. When we broaden our awareness we give

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ourselves greater choices in a situation which in turn helps us to maintain an element of control within it. Coaching is therefore goal or objective oriented and suited to those who have an idea of what they want to achieve from it (even if this is as vague as 'to develop myself as one client defined it).

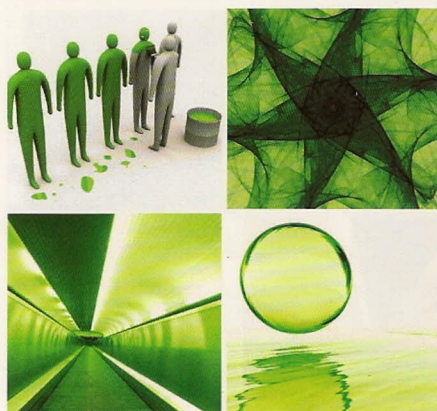
Coaching seeks to help the Coachee (or Client) get from A to B. However, this may at times be via C or D and may require some time spent at E! The role of the Coach is to ensure you stay on track and that any deviations within the Coaching session are necessary to the ultimate aim. In taking this journey, the buried knowledge of the Client is uncovered which brings deeper insight whilst making more conscious the Client's ability to progress in a situation with the appropriate state of mind, emotion and behaviour.

It is fair to say that some people believe that they can do this naturally themselves and question the concept or value of Coaching. This is understandable. However, with the intervention of a third party (a Coach) who is trained and experienced in this activity, perceptions, interpretations,

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attitudes etc move from being one dimensional to multi dimensional. In parallel a realisation of the Client's own contribution (helpful or otherwise) to a situation becomes more apparent. The benefit of this insight is that the Client begins to see and experience alternative ways for moving forward that were otherwise invisible to them. As a psychological Coach I often use Johari's Window (see Figure 1), to demonstrate how Coaching appropriately taps into the complex dimensions of our persona:

SELECTING THE RIGHT COACH

The Coaching industry has grown at a phenomenal rate over the past few years and to select the right Coach can be a huge challenge in itself. You can

find Coaches with extensive to little qualifications, experience, effectiveness, ethical practice etc and the debate over regulating Coaching is currently underway. Be cautious. Ideally, it is best to choose a Coach who is accredited with a professional body (e.g. Association for Coaching, European Mentoring & Coaching Council, International Coaching Federation) and is recommended by other colleagues or professionals within your network. HR or L&D can often recommend Coaches and many have preferred supplier lists of professional Coaches suitably accredited, qualified and practiced in Executive and Career Coaching whether for On-boarding or Leadership.

Rapport is essential when choosing a

| FIGURE 1: Johari Window

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Public	Blind
Not known to others	Hidden	Unknown

Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, 1955

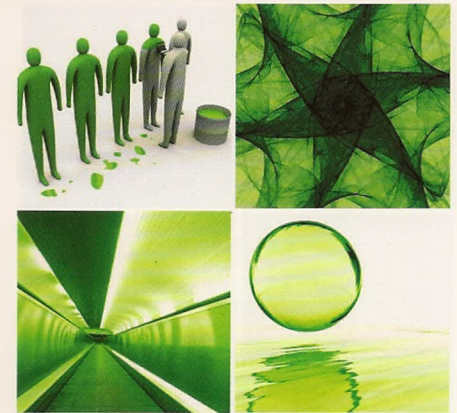
- Our 'Blind Spot' where we discover the elements of our selves that others experience in a way that we may not have realised help or hinder us.
- Our 'Unknown' or higher potential – which is less tapped into and yet holds a wealth of Phronesis when we get in touch with our authentic Self.
- Our 'Public' face – the masks we wear that may no longer serve us in the role we now find ourselves in.
- Our 'Hidden' place – which usually gives greater insight into the habits, barriers, obstacles that we may experience consciously or sub-consciously from an emotional, cognitive and physiological place that we would prefer not to share openly. When starting in a new role, organisation or stepping up to the challenges of organisational leadership, this is paradoxically, exactly when aspects of our 'hidden' place seem to express themselves most fiercely! The experienced Coach is there to help you manage these safely and confidentially.

Coach. If possible gather information on 3 or 4 Coaches and request at least a 30 minute meeting to get a sense of how credible they are and how comfortable you feel with each one (keeping in mind you will potentially experience discomfort through the Coaching process as you develop). They may not be a technical expert in your field (and at times it may be preferable if they are not - remember it is the role of the Coach to ask the questions not provide the answers!) However, industry experience and an appreciation of the environment you are performing within can be highly valuable in keeping the Coaching flowing. From feedback I have received, this has often been welcomed.

transition into the role overcoming some of the obstacles commonly faced much faster.

If working in an uncertain environment which has been the situation for many over the past 18 months, companies are seeking ways to better engage their people and retain motivation and commitment. Relatively speaking, investing in you to help you through uncertainty and increased pressure may be something they are willing to do – particularly if you are responsible for a team.

If faced with the possibility of redundancy – the role of a Career



generally willing to invest in Executive Coaching as part of a leader's development plan:

Whether self funding or asking your employer to invest, be as clear as you can on what you want to achieve from the Coaching and your commitment to it. Keep in mind, as you would with any proposal for funds, the needs of the business and what return it will gain from the investment, define with a sponsor in the business what your measures of success will be. Align your objectives with identified development needs. A demonstration of mutual responsibility and personal commitment is going to give you that first step!

Alison Griffiths is a professional Psychological Coach who has over 20 years experience in the pharmaceutical industry and 7+ years as a professional Executive and Career Coach. A regular designer and facilitator of bespoke leadership team events and workshops, she has her own coaching practice – Success Coaching & Development Ltd www.successc-d.co.uk. Contact: a.griffiths@successc-d.co.uk.

“...BE AS CLEAR AS YOU CAN ON WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE FROM THE COACHING”

HOW CAN I TAKE RESPONSIBILITY?

If the emphasis is for us to take mutual responsibility for our development then the obvious answer is to 'Ask' or 'Seek'. Ask for investment or seek a Coach yourself.

If you are starting a new role express at the final stages of interview the importance of making a difference as quickly as possible and ask whether the company is willing to invest in a few sessions with a professional Coach to help you 'On-Board'. This can be made easier if you have taken a psychometric test as part of the interview process and they are aware of development needs when hiring you. Recruitment is an expensive business and companies are looking for a swift return on investment. Coaching in comparison is relatively inexpensive and will enhance your

Coach would give you that neutral third party to help you truly define where you are, where you want to be and how best to get there. I have coached clients who have specifically asked HR if the money allocated to them for outplacement could be transferred to hiring a Career Coach and they have been successful.

As is often the case, at the Senior Executive level, corporate investment for Coaching is more forthcoming because a huge emphasis across industry is being put on the value of leadership within business. At this stage of development the emphasis is more around the need to know and understand oneself as a leader, being able to perform at a more critical level, in an appropriate capacity and making a specific impact which can only be achieved through a one-to-one intervention. Organisations are therefore