

5 developing coaching and mentoring

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Henley Cross is a rehabilitation unit based in Henley, Oxfordshire which provides rehabilitation treatment to injured patients from the 3 Counties. The Unit consists of approximately 400 permanent staff of which 180 are non-clinical personnel and provides care to over 200 patients each week.

For some time HC has lacked any suitable development programme for the Medical Officers and Other Professions at the Unit, which has had a significant impact on the clinical delivery of the Unit. To rectify this so that we have a workforce with the very best possible mix of existing and future talent, at every level, in every location, it is essential that the talent management approaches and systems we use HC to recruit, motivate and develop people are fully inclusive. Therefore as part of the overall management of talent strategy this paper looks at the role that can be played by the introduction of a coaching and mentoring scheme. CIPD defines talent management (TM) as:

‘ The systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organisation, either in view of their high potential” for the future or because they are fulfilling business/ operation-critical roles.’

There are a variety of methods in order to facilitate the above, and in particular there is coaching and mentoring. Both of these methods have been utilised in some form over last few thousand years as Garvey (1988) notes the first indirect mention of mentoring is in Homer’s epic poem The Odyssey; where ‘ the Goddess Athene in disguise, takes Odysseus’ son on a developmental journey in order to maintain the Kingdom of Ithaca and

develop a successor to the throne.’ Whilst coaching receives its first mention in English language in 1849 in Thackeray’s novel, Pendennis.

Again to use CIPDs definition C&M are:

‘ Development techniques based on the use of one-to-one discussions to enhance an individual’s skills, knowledge or work performance.’

However, whilst both are designed to have the same outcome they have slightly different methods to achieve their aim (Appendix 1 gives a brief glance at the differences between the two approaches).

Coaching

Coaching is an approach that is delivered in the workplace normally as a 1:1; although it can be used within a group setting. Its aim is to target a specific issue and get the individual to think through the problem, encouraging them to see it differently and empowering them to identify the solution for themselves. To achieve this Hallbom and Warrenton-Smith (2005) recommend the following coaching techniques:

- Ask high-impact questions – ‘ how’ and ‘ what’ open-ended questions that spur action rather than ‘ why’ questions that require explanations.
- Help people to develop their own answers and action plans.
- Identify what people are doing right and then make the most of it rather than just trying to fix problems – coaching is success driven.
- Build rapport and trust – make it safe for employees to express their concerns and ideas.

- Get employees to work out answers for themselves – people often resist being told what to do, or how to do it.

As noted above, key to any coaching is the need to understand that the coach is there to facilitate understanding; they are there to encourage the knowledge that is already within the individual. They are not there to provide the answers or advice. In the main most coaches will have a good working knowledge of the subject that they are there to coach the individual on, however that is not necessarily essential to achieving the outcome.

There are many frameworks out there for coaching however the most commonly used coaches is the GROW model developed by Whitmore (1988) (see Appendix 2).

Mentoring

Mentoring employs similar methods as coaching; however a more personal relationship is formed between the mentor and mentee. A mentor, as Zey (1984) writes, is ' a person who oversees the career and development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, counselling, providing psychological support, protecting and at times promoting or sponsoring'.

Mentoring relationships require mutual respect in order to be successful. The mentor's role is varied and includes amongst others being a guide, a role model, and a confidante. The relationship is a longer during a mentorship and requires a large amount of commitment from both parties, from the mentor as needs to be prepared to offer support when it is needed, therefore they need to remain flexible and accessible. Because it is likely to be longer

there can be no clearly defined outcome as in comparison to coaching the journey can be far longer and cover a range of subjects.

Line Management Involvement

Line manager's involvement is inevitable, as during the day to day running of the department they can be called upon by a member of their team. As Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005) wrote ' Line managers are crucial if coaching is to become ' the predominant style of managing and working together' However, as Howe (2008) notes ' there are a number of difficulties with the idea of the line manager as coach'. The reason for these 2 conflicting quotes is that on one hand the LM will be on hand to provide on the spot assistance, they will know their team, where their weaknesses lie and potentially how to empower that person to find the solution to the problem. However on the flip-side, the LM may be responsible for a large team, managing a large and difficult work load, sometimes it may be difficult for the LM to encourage a good working relationship where turnover is high or potentially there are other agendas afoot when having to deal with performance issues, operational outputs etc.

As mentioned above LMs invariably have a range of other duties to attend to and it can be difficult for them to find adequate time for coaching. The implications for organisations wishing to implement coaching to any meaningful degree are that they are probably best advised to create specific coaching roles.

However that is not to say that the use of LMs as coaches and mentors would not be of benefit to the organisation. The training department will need to

select and train sufficient numbers of people to be mentors and coaches. There should be an agreed procedure to screen applicants as not all will be suitable for such roles. All candidates must be able to be released from their own post to mentor or coach others. The skills that all successful candidates should be able to demonstrate are:

- Good verbal communication skills – They need to have the ability to listen, the ability to summarise information and have experience of giving feedback
- Good written communication skills – They need to have the ability to compose documents and produce summary notes.
- Good knowledge of mentoring and coaching subjects – assertiveness, conflict resolution, leadership, managing difficult people, negotiation, presentation skills).

In addition they will need to display a number of personal attributes including a warm personality that inspires confidence, be able to maintain a high level of confidentiality, remain impartial when dealing with different individuals.

It is also likely that the coach/mentor will require support themselves either through training or even their own emotional support depending on how difficult a case they may have.