

# DEVELOPING COACHING CAPABILITY IN MANAGERS: FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

How can you effectively cultivate coaching capability in your managers? In this article, we will explore the importance of coaching capability, outline some of the options for developing it, and suggest some key questions that will help you choose the approach that works for your organisation.

## WHY COACHING CAPABILITY MATTERS

Developing coaching capability in managers is a pivotal strategy for any organisation seeking to shift to a more empowering culture. Supporting managers to understand and practice coaching-style conversations in which they listen, ask good questions, and provide their reports with helpful feedback, will foster personal and professional development in the people they manage. It will enhance employee engagement and satisfaction, boost individual and team performance, encourage talent development, create the conditions for greater autonomy and initiative, and ultimately drive better results.

Giving them the ability to empower their teams effectively and efficiently will free your managers from the 'tyranny of doing', enabling them to both equip and trust their reports to deliver and to begin to focus management time and attention on more strategic issues. The simple shift from "telling" to "asking" in their everyday conversations with teams will transform managers into leaders.

### **It takes a shift in mindset for managers to adopt new behaviours and habits**

We are recognised and rewarded in our professional lives for being decisive and authoritative, making quick decisions, providing direction and problem solving. And of course, there is a time and place for all these things. The problem arises when they become our default, when we limit our leadership bandwidth to one end of the spectrum of possible approaches, thereby limiting the people we lead by removing their responsibility for thinking and acting appropriately in their context.

It often takes experiencing the power of a coaching style of management for managers to understand the value of adopting the approach. This shift is unlikely, however, to happen as the result of a one-off intervention and will often need support for managers to apply their learning in practice, to reflect on the impact of their actions, and then to adapt their approach accordingly.

## KEY QUESTIONS TO SHAPE YOUR DECISION

If you decide that this is a shift you want to make in your organisation, the next step is to decide what kind of training intervention is going to make it happen.

To guide your decision making, ask yourself these essential questions:

- 1 -** What is the contribution we want this to make to our organisational strategy? And, within this, to our people strategy – to talent management and learning and development?
- 2 -** What is the scale of impact we want to create? Determine the scope of coaching capability development – is it for select managers and teams, entire departments. Or, as in the case of a culture change initiative, the entire organisation?
- 3 -** How many managers would need to build this capability? Identify the number of managers requiring coaching skills, influencing the programme's scale and resource allocation. What might be a tipping point in terms of organisational culture change?
- 4 -** What sort of budget could be allocated to this initiative? Assess the financial and people resources available for coaching capability development.
- 5 -** How do our managers prefer to learn? Understand your managers' preferred learning styles: are they inclined toward online self-service, workshops, action learning, or a combination? How will this fit into their working lives?
- 6 -** Where is the cohort based? Consider the global or local nature of your organisation, as different locations may require tailored approaches.
- 7 -** Should we pilot something first? Evaluate the feasibility of a pilot programme to test the chosen coaching capability development method before full-scale implementation.



## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING COACHING CAPABILITY IN MANAGERS?

There are a range of options for developing the skills of managers to hold coaching-style conversations with the people they manage. These include:

### 1. Self-service online modules

There are many packages on the market for standalone, self-managed programmes that offer flexible self-paced learning. They are cost effective and easily accessible online, and can be scalable for a large number of managers. However, this style of learning offers limited interactivity and requires commitment and self-discipline from learners, and upon course completion cannot guarantee sustained change.

### 2. Online foundational coaching skills qualification

At The OCM we have developed an online programme with the self-service modules above, but with the additional benefits of having expert coaches accompanying the process and providing learners with feedback. This leads to learners having a recognised qualification which fosters motivation and engagement, leading to more sustained impact.

### 3. Online foundational coaching skills qualification with Action Learning

Recognising the need for a multifaceted approach to coaching capability development, with consideration for costs. The OCM combines online webinars with additional support for reflective practice which can be delivered either online or face-to-face.

Additional learning methods include Action Learning Groups which provide a safe environment in which peer coaching approaches are used to support reflection on what has worked well and what needs further work.

Individual coaching can also be provided for managers seeking support to apply and reflect on their learning, which has the benefit of one-on-one personalised learning. This could be an option for organisations that already have an internal coaching programme and can use their own coaching resources to support managers developing coaching capabilities.

### 4. Face-to-face workshop-delivered foundational coaching skills qualification

This option involves expert facilitators delivering bespoke training workshops that are interactive with immediate feedback and peer learning and discussion. At The OCM we are seeing an increase in demand for face-to-face learning as more peer-group support and connections are lost in the culture of working from home.

Organisations will need to consider whether to offer a single intensive workshop or a series of workshops that will require weighing up factors such as budget and the depth of coaching capability needed.

## CONCLUSION

Coaching capability in managers is a cornerstone of organisational culture change. To determine the best approach for your organisation, consider your goals, resources, and the preferences of your managers.

At The OCM we design our coaching capability programmes around our clients, because every organisation is different. What is consistent is the use of our conversation framework, ELECTRIC, which is at the heart of all our coaching capability training.

You can find out more about ELECTRIC (Engage, Listen, Explore, Challenge, Target, Review, Insights, Conclude), and watch a demo on our website at [www.theocm.co.uk/electric](http://www.theocm.co.uk/electric).

