

Changes and challenges

...is the name we give to our Coaching and Mentoring programme. Conducted on a confidential, one-to-one basis, we bring our coaching skills and unique experience of the professional services market to help partners, and those aspiring to partnership, meet the challenges of their different business development and management responsibilities as they rise in the firm.

We provide coaching and mentoring on an individual basis, or as part of a firm's business development or key client development training programme.

The best of the best

The professional services market attracts some of the most talented people in the country. Their technical skills and focused approach to solving clients' problems makes them stand out from the rest. Their energy and determination leave no doubt that they are headed for the very top of the organisations they work for.

But even the best face unexpected challenges as they progress. Organisations often look to give their rising stars increased managerial responsibility and, perhaps for the first time, they take on roles which are outside their normal comfort area of technical expertise. This is where we can help, with a programme of individual coaching or mentoring, two ways in which our intervention can improve personal development and performance management.

Coaching

Coaching offers the opportunity for people to really achieve their potential by helping them to formulate their issues or blockages clearly, and then discover and own the solutions. It is a powerful process that allows the client to move forward with confidence and a strong sense of self worth and achievement. In a coaching programme it is the client who sets the agenda because only the client knows all the factors which are influencing their current performance or behaviour.

Coaching is a totally confidential process that helps people work through change successfully. Coaching sessions normally last for about two hours and clients usually have four to six sessions, although some organisations like to have coaches on standby for their senior staff who can access them directly at any time.

Some clients also benefit from the use of psychometric or 360° evaluation in the course of the coaching. We are trained and licensed in the use of appropriate psychometric instruments for coaching and can introduce such techniques if appropriate.

A coaching example

We helped a property partner at the top of his firm's equity charged with developing the firm's business originating in North America.

Although immensely successful in the UK, he had never had to undertake such a project and was concerned firstly to achieve his target and secondly not to be perceived by his colleagues as lacking in the skills and techniques involved.

We helped him structure a process that suited him and, having created it, he owned it. He achieved his year one target in eight months and doubled it the following year.

Mentoring

Mentoring uses slightly different techniques from coaching: whilst both rely on expert questioning skills, a mentor will draw on his or her direct experience of the market sector, and management within it, to advise and guide the client through the issues they face as they rise through the firm. It follows that good mentors must have a demonstrable track record in the professional services sector in order to engender the trust and respect of the client for their advice. As in coaching, the client's confidentiality will always be respected and goals will be set by the mentor for the client to achieve between the sessions.

Mentoring sessions normally last no more than an hour and a half and because of the nature of the process, the number of sessions is not limited.

Our coaches and mentors

All the consultants at the Business Development Practice have held a leading position in a professional services firm or have worked with senior members of professional partnerships for many years.

Our consultants have a strong background in both coaching and mentoring, having been trained by recognised organisations and having accumulated considerable practical experience in a wide range of business situations. Additionally, James Hudson is an expert in the use of the psychometric instruments Myers Briggs Type Indicator and FIRO-B, both of which are helpful in a coaching programme.

Contact us

To find out more, contact James Hudson, Geoff Dodds or Larry Cattle at The Business Development Practice

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A mentoring case history

As part of a business development programme the clients had the opportunity for several one to one mentoring sessions.

One Senior Associate used the opportunity to develop her business plan for the department, an essential element of her route to partnership. With her mentor she explored all the elements of the plan, was prepared for the challenges of the Partnership Review Board and rehearsed her presentation skills to maximise its effective communication.

The impact she made has ensured that her route to partnership is now clear.