Coaching at Work

RIDLER REPORT: GROUP COACHING ON THE AGENDA FOR 47 PER CENT OF ORGANISATIONS

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Group coaching is gaining in popularity. In the third in a series of articles highlighting themes emerging from the *6th Ridler Report*, Clive Mann explores the reasons why

A growing number of organisations plan to introduce group coaching, according to findings from the *6th Ridler Report*. Some 47 per cent are considering introducing group coaching in the next three years, while 32 per cent already offer it.

Group coaching involves a group of individuals, not members of the same team at work, being coached together at the same time. It differs from team coaching, where the individuals being coached together are already a team.

Benefits

Respondent organisations highlighted the following benefits of group coaching for clients:

- Gaining access to the perspectives of their fellow group members, as well as that of the coach
- Realising that others in their group are experiencing developmental challenges, too
- Learning from understanding each other's approaches to addressing business and leadership issues
- Developing their capability to coach each other
- Increasing their network in different parts of the organisation.

Increased interest in group coaching does not mean it is always seen as a substitute for individual coaching. Indeed, the *6th Ridler Report* survey revealed four important advantages of individual over group coaching:

- More time to explore individual issues
- More flexibility to meet the individual client's needs, for example, in the duration and frequency of the coaching
- Easier for the client to disclose important personal and professional issues
- More scope to explore issues in depth in a one-to-one coaching relationship

Case study: Rentokil Initial

FTSE 250 company Rentokil Initial has used group coaching for many years in one of its key leadership development programmes, Living Leadership, which has just celebrated its 10th iteration. Its use of group coaching is featured in one of seven case studies in the Ridler Report.

The Living Leadership programme includes four group coaching sessions over six months. This is seen as an intensive personal growth experience, deepening delegates' emotional and psychological development and building their coaching capability through working with colleagues on real, practical business challenges.

The group coaching is designed to create a sense of a management community and a forum for managers to network and share experiences and ways of working with each other, as well as driving the development of a culture based on a coaching style of leadership.

The group coaching has received very strong positive feedback and is highly valued by the board as a way of shifting the corporate culture.

Brigid Garvey, group director of talent at Rentokil Initial, said, "The appetite for group coaching has been both surprising and exciting. Managers have deeply appreciated the high levels of trust they have developed with their peers and the resulting relationships have been sustained beyond the life of the programme. The managers really value working in this way and have taken their learning back into their work teams."

Rentokil Initial is currently seeing its best business performance of the past 10 years. There is a firm belief that the programme, with its central group coaching component, is an important and integral part of the success story.

At a glance

In group coaching members can:

- *learn from each other as well as the group coach*
- *learn how to coach each other*
- *find out that they are not alone in having developmental challenges*

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