

Case Study: Metropolitan Police



Working together for a safer London

Background

Following the recommendations of the Morris Inquiry into police standards in the Metropolitan Police service (MPS), reporting in 2004, and to achieve the Commissioner's vision that a core value of team working became totally integrated into the everyday practise of all individuals in the organisation, the force created its own Leadership Academy to help drive forward change.



The strong potential value for using coaching as a development aid was recognised early on in the life of the Academy, and a programme was established following an extensive review of coaching practise across the MPS and discussions with other organisations. The intended benefit for introducing coaching was set against expected organisation benefits for the MPS, to create better leaders and police officers, who in turn would deliver a better service for London.

Piloting and reviewing training materials allowed a highly informed syllabus for coach training aimed at developing core coaching competencies and knowledge to be designed. A pilot learning and development initiative to up-skill individuals as in-house coaches was completed in early 2006. The scope of training and level of mentor-coach supervision offered to coach trainees was no less rigorous and comprehensive than might be expected of an external accrediting body.

An enhanced programme was subsequently launched, incorporating a wide mix of training modules, coach networking, master-classes and reviews, paced over a 6-month period. Recruits to the programme were carefully selected and required to gain significant practical experience of coaching before being eligible for graduating as in-house coaches, capable of coaching any individual within the Service.

Programme objective

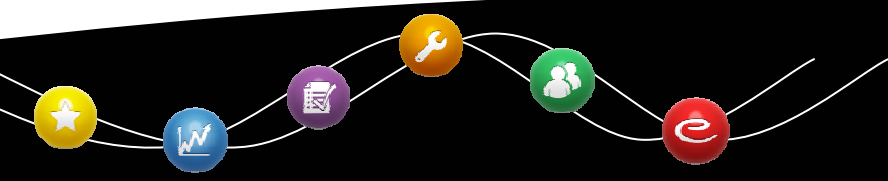
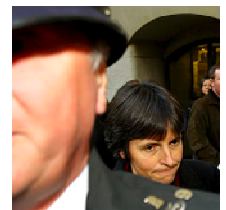
Soon after launching the first run of the enhanced programme, the MPS commissioned Clive Johnson to evaluate and moderate the programme's effectiveness, continuity in quality and proficiency of in-house coaches. The study was intended to assess the success or otherwise of the programme in producing committed, skilled and suitable coaches, capable of fulfilling the MPS's in-house coaching needs.

The evaluation project considered many aspects of the programme, including the programme's strategy, scope and effectiveness of coach training, support and supervision for coaches, levels of coach proficiency and provision for their continued professional development, as well as coachee experiences of coaching (in other words, the outcomes).

The project also sought to determine the relative effectiveness of alternative training, networking and support methods, with a view to identifying priorities for focusing coach development in future.

A holistic view of the scope of the programme was taken in moderating the programme, to ensure the adequacy, relevance, completeness and consistency of all its aspects where the potential for variation in delivery might exist.

The evaluation and moderation findings were also required to support the force's application for the programme to be accredited by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), as well as to ensure that adequate quality control processes were in place to ensure that the programme's achievements would be sustained and developed.



Approach

Evaluation was carried out throughout a large part of the initial programme, commencing in October 2007, shortly after the running of the training course for the first coach cohort, and ending just after this programme's completion in April 2008.

A variety of approaches were used to observe and discern capability, including:

- A brief on-line survey for coaches, used to inform discussion topics for a focus group
- A focus group workshop, involving most coaches (but deliberately excluding course facilitators)
- Desk reviews of programme documentation
- Observation of learning day, master-class and supervision circle activities
- Interviews with a sample of coaches, coachees, course observers/future trainers, coach supervisors, the author of the study recommending the programme and multiple interviews with the programme leader and course co-facilitator
- Informal discussions with many coaches.

The programme leader did not participate in the focus group workshop, with the intention that coaches would feel encouraged to express open views in the knowledge that these would not be attributed to any named individual.



The approach looked at what the programme sought to achieve, what had actually resulted and what has been learned. Whilst a secondary objective for the study, some insight was also gained on the impacts coaching had already, both for coachees and for the MPS as an organisation.

(i) Analysis

More than 350 separate anecdotes were collected by the study, mainly through focus group workshops and interviews,



alongside perception ratings considering various aspects of the programme's and coaches' performance. All but 4 of the coaches who participated in the programme (alongside a random sample of their coachees) were consulted; including coaches operating in headquarter offices and local stations, police officers and staff. This allowed strong, universally-relevant evidence to be presented to support the study's objective.

(ii) Reporting

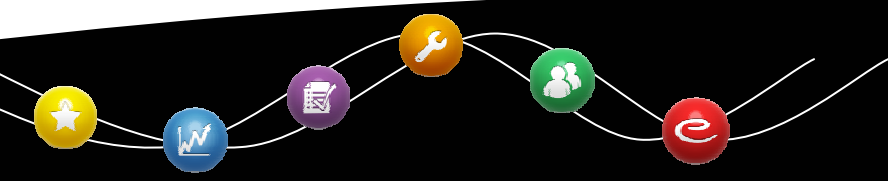
Both graphical and narrative reporting was used to present the findings of the project, including a mapping of evidence to core coaching competencies / knowledge requirements and a SWOT analysis. Anonymised anecdotal data was reported in detail, along-side abstracted summaries in support of the report's key conclusions.

Project Outcomes

The study offered a strong insight into achievements of the programme and ways in which coaching was being applied, highlighting the value being delivered across ranks, locations and roles.

The study showed that the programme had delivered a high level of competency, participation and knowledge amongst coaches, as well as indicating informed thought and empathy with 'pure' coaching principles. Live demonstration, co-coaching and peer/observer feedback were revealed as being the most popular means for coach development.

The report presented strong evidence of co-operation and support amongst the coaches: a common desire to share knowledge and learn from each other, and actively engaging with supervisors.



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A wide range of early success 'impact' stories for coachees were identified, including transformational change after only a few sessions, in some cases supported by claims that their objectives for coaching have already been achieved where previous training and other support interventions had failed.

For the MPS, the study provided a strong endorsement for the careful consultation, piloting and readiness to learn which had preceded the programme. The report explained how each intervention had had impact, not just what the outcomes were, and the effectiveness of processes for sustaining the achievements of the programme were validated.

An ultimate accolade for the programme was achieved when the MPS was awarded the prestigious 'European Quality Award' by the EMCC in recognition of the high standard of accreditation it had achieved, the first not-for-profit public sector organisation to do so. The programme leader was subsequently also named as recipient of the Association for Coaching's award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Business (2009)', as well as being voted runner-up in 'Coaching at Work' magazine's 2008 readers' survey.

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