

# Achieving professional and personal development through coaching

By Vicki Espin, Director of the Corporate and Executive Coaching Organisation (CECO)

**t**raditionally business leaders are supposed to advise, motivate and train, but in today's working environment that role is diminishing as the knock on effects of a busy schedule take hold. Every time the phone rings, a meeting is called or another 10 emails appear, then any plans to efficiently organise the day ahead and make time for staff quickly disappear.

Over the last few years many businesses have been supporting their senior managers to achieve their own objectives and to maximise staff performance through coaching. Coaching is completely different from training, mentoring, counselling or consulting, in that it helps people achieve results by using their own skill, experience and know-how.

The power of coaching lies in the fact that it is an individual partnership between an experienced coach and a senior manager set up with the aim of working together to achieve objectives established at the outset of the relationship. A good coach will encourage people to raise their self awareness around their management style and working practices and to take responsibility in making changes for the better. This approach also works very effectively with senior teams.

Corporate and executive coaching is now the hottest thing in management and a recent survey of a number of US Fortune 1000 companies, showed that as a result of coaching, 53% reported an

increase in productivity, 39% reported an improvement in customer service, 32% reported better retention of senior people, 23% showed cost reductions and 22% reported an increase in bottom line profitability. In the same organisations, 77% of the recipients of coaching reported improvements in working relationships with direct reports, 71% noted improvements in working relationships with the boss, 67% reported better teamwork, 37% said that working relationships with clients improved and 52% experienced a reduction in workplace conflict.

Closer to home organisations within the City are catching on and introducing a coaching culture within their workforce. Other sectors are also embracing coaching including retail and leisure companies.

In Jersey, there are a number of coaches working within local organisations. The initial response from Jersey companies about coaching was initially that of a remedial approach to solving problems. However as coaching becomes more common, especially in City firms that stigma is starting to fade and an increasing number of businesses are starting to take the method on board by introducing regular coaching sessions for senior people.

Jersey Dairy has recently introduced coaching for a number of key managers to help them through the enormous change the organisation is undergoing. The business goal is to provide higher returns for shareholders and lower prices for consumers but to achieve this objective they required full staff support and an



Any business seriously considering coaching should look out for the following five attributes in a coach

- Length of experience as a coach
- Where and when qualified as a coach
- What other CPD activities the coach is undertaking
- Client testimonials from clients who have been sponsored for coaching by their organisations
- Current numbers of clients.

understanding of the need for change. Managing Director, Kevin Keen said local CECO coach, Tracey Turmel provides him and his team with an independent ear to air concerns and any issues which could be difficult to discuss within the employee/boss relationship. The coaching discussions also included a work appraisal of Mr Keen by his team; this helped him identify his own development needs and helped him devise an action plan to improve his work performance. Mr Keen said the exercise also

made him realise how important it is to adapt his management style to get the best out of each person in the team.

A coach's role is not to offer advice but to encourage people to re-examine work goals and management style along with the underlying values and beliefs. This in turn can reclaim time and lighten stress loads. Indicators like the Fortune 1000 results are proof that coaching works and the results achieved mean a more motivated and focused workforce.