



Business Development Coaching for Fee Earners – Adding Real Value

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP

10 Things to Consider

- 1 Effective, sustained, skilled and motivational coaching has a greater impact than anything else on the business development success (and sustained motivation) of fee earners – even on the ‘best’ ones. When it comes to generating business, it is the most important thing a team leader can do with his or her time!
- 2 A one-off intervention, comment, criticism, idea, piece of advice, opinion, demonstration or ‘helpful’ tip has little or no impact. Sometimes it does more harm than good.
- 3 A good coach does not need to be the best at business development. He or she however does need to know in detail what good looks like. This should be based upon sound thinking and not just the opinion and/or experience of the coach. A good coach studies his or her subject (in this case business development and client management) and is an ‘expert’ in it.
- 4 One key attribute in a coach is obvious and genuine interest in the success of the people receiving the coaching. His / her focus is as much on the benefits to the individual as on the success of the business. This interest is continually demonstrated by the effort invested by the coach in the people being coached, even when the coach is busy.
- 5 Building confidence and motivation is as important as building knowledge and skills. High confidence and motivation will help to ensure that a fee earner invests as much as he or she can in business development (taking into account other responsibilities). Low confidence and / or motivation will mean the coach having to become a ‘nag’! The need to maintain confidence should influence the content and style of all coaching input.
- 6 Every individual, like every client, is unique. Delivering the most productive coaching ‘service’ to each person requires an accurate understanding of what makes him or her tick and the flexibility to deliver different coaching differently to different people in different situations and at different times. As with clients – one size does not fit all and it’s not about ‘telling’ them to do it ‘our way’.
- 7 A coach needs to observe a fee earner in action regularly and over time, in client meetings and other situations. The coach needs the skills to identify strengths and weaknesses from these observations, the focus to make each client interaction a productive coaching (rather than just a joint selling) opportunity and the skills to facilitate a coaching discussion and to deliver honest, valuable, insightful feedback in a way that will make a difference to the fee earner being coached.
- 8 Coaching input should contribute to an overall plan of development for each fee earner – even for the very experienced ones. The plan should be agreed in a regular (quarterly?) planning meeting that connects desired results to agreed actions to knowledge, skills, confidence and motivation. This planning meeting must deliver value and be seen by both sides as a productive meeting. The plan must be agreed by both sides, be a real priority for both and should be at the forefront of both people’s minds. Too often these plans fester in a draw until resurrected a year later at appraisal time!
- 9 While the best coaches are happy to provide guidance when appropriate, most of their time is spent in asking great questions, listening, building self-awareness and helping their team members to learn. Every coach should understand and be capable of using best practice coaching tools and methods such as GROW and PESOS.
- 10 The effects of business development coaching should be measured at four levels: 1) immediate reaction; 2) improved capability and confidence; 3) changes in behaviour / activity and 4) results achieved - including relationships initiated and strengthened, opportunities developed, business generated etc.



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