

## Developing an Effective Coaching Strategy

**Professor Peter Hawkins, President of APECS, Founder and Chairman of Bath Consultancy Group**

The growth in knowledge is one of the defining characteristics of the modern age. We have created a complex environment – none more so than the business environments in which we all operate.

Peter's question to the 2008 APECS conference was how we find wisdom through this growth in knowledge. Take for example a large organisation that might be having a thousand coaching conversations every week. Who is capturing this knowledge and who is connecting the dots so that we can make wiser choices on the basis of this learning?



**"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" T.S. Eliot**

Peter challenged attendees on their personal contribution to the world. How do we as coaches and receivers of coaching raise our contribution to make a difference in the world? The session proceeded to ask attendees about what was the edge of their personal learning. Some questions that people were struggling with included:

- How can I remain engaged and motivated in coaching with organisational systems when I feel alienated from the short-term decision-making?
- Where can joined-up change come from on a global scale?
- Where does wisdom come from?
- How can I share my wisdom from coaching with the organisation?
- How do you get an executive to stop looking at objectives long enough to looking at developing wisdom in the organisation?
- How could we better hold senior leaders to account on some of these questions?
- How do we move people from receiving coaching to living coaching?
- How do you shift the measures of excellence within organisations to drive lasting effectiveness?
- Why am I assuming I'm part of the solution?

Peter reflected on words of internationally renowned economist Jeffrey Sachs who said that what we're good at doing is creating insight and analysis. We're very good at coming up with mission statements, protocols and principles but we don't know how to shift insight into transformational awareness.

Peter introduced a new term – TransformACTION. He believes that as coaches our role is not to just create transformation but to turn that into commitment to action in the room.

There was also a warning in this session. Peter believes that we've been riding a wave of enthusiasm about coaching. Senior leaders have been benefiting because they do not know how to manage people. Coaching in many organisations has begun to equal outsourced people management. Unless coaching begins to connect the personal benefit to organisational benefit, the wave will lose its power and coaching will become a past flavour of the month.

Harvesting the learning to derive organisational benefit has five key steps:

1. Build a community of internal and external coaches committed to the organisation learning as well as the individuals.
2. At regular intervals bring the community together to hear the challenges the organisation is experiencing and questions it has about the organisation's people/culture and development.
3. Facilitate supervision trios on key coaching relationships with managed confidentiality.
4. Work with the coaches on structured pattern identification.
5. Facilitate a dialogue with senior executives and the coaches on the key themes emerging and the recommendations for both coaching and organisation development next stages.

As we look to the future, coaching is entering a new stage in its own professional development. Accreditation and supervision now underpin quality coaching. Organisations are taking greater control of the coaching experience and focusing on the organisational benefit.

Peter gave the conference seven key trends that the coaching profession will face in the coming year:

1. Greater scrutiny on cost of coaching – and the return on investment.
  - Ensure there is a focus on organisational as well as personal benefit.
2. Expectation that coaching leads directly to a shift in performance.
  - Need to focus on transformational coaching.
3. A greater focus on quality and expectation that coaches are registered and receiving supervision.
  - Collaboration between professional bodies and training of coach supervisors.
4. Skill and performance coaching will be expected to be done by line management.
  - Need to train line management in coaching skills.
5. Development of internal coaching resource for coaching of everybody except the most senior.
  - External coaches need to focus on coaching senior executives.
6. Growth in Team and Organisational Coaching.
  - Need to build these skills into coaching training and development.
7. Developing a Coaching Culture.
  - Question the assertion of why a coaching culture is needed. A coaching culture in order to do what?

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