

## **Essent ...a case study on Team Coaching**

We have been thinking hard about how to do more to support and strengthen the capability of teams as part of our change leadership practice. Not just individual teams, but all teams across an organisation that might seek support during change.

One of our clients is one of Europe's largest utilities, Essent, with whom we have been running a company-wide Change Leadership Programme since 2009 and 350 people have so far completed the programme. The programme was launched to support their stretching strategic ambitions as a company under new ownership and in a rapidly changing market. Much has been accomplished with significant and positive changes in individual leadership, development of teams attending the programme, as well as significant business results.

A strong and respected cadre of internal coaches (who coach individuals participating in the Change Leadership Programme) has been trained and continues to be supervised. As part of a periodic account review with our client, we all felt proud of the progress and impact. However, we weren't yet convinced that a solid, sustainable platform had yet been achieved. Essent wanted to move and embed the learning even more "into the DNA of the organisation". And to do so we all believed that the consultancy support that had been given should move beyond the "programme" into more accessible, trained, internal coaching support for teams involved in leading change across the organisation.

In considering options, we identified an approach to team coaching that seems to have produced results over the longer term. In this approach the team coach takes a role more as a team member than an occasional facilitator. The team coach sits in on 50% or more of team meetings. Financially for most clients this is unsustainable in the longer term.

We worked on a solution to help the client build their own, internal and sustainable capacity and capability to coach teams themselves. As we had trained internal coaches the client was able to draw extensively from those previously trained as individual coaches (see above). This enabled them to get going quickly. This autumn we were delighted to trial this approach to team coaching with our client. We co-designed the training with a mixed group from Organisational Development, High Performance Organisation and Human Resources all with a responsibility for supporting leaders in their strategic change programme. They are all already familiar with our change approaches and change leadership practices, which they themselves had been embedding into the organisation for the past year.

It was an ideal group to work with, we were all very pleased in particular with the second workshop that helped make more explicit the link between the coaching skills the groups already had and interventions useful in team coaching. We now have an approach to support teams! More importantly it means that there has been a strengthening of our systemic work making connections between all three levels of individual, team and organisation through an expansion of coaching from the level of the individual to that of the team using the capability of the client organisation.

Transcend continues to work with Essent where the focus of our resource is on coaching supervision. In addition to providing supervision for individuals within groups we will extend this to include supervision for team coaches. The purpose of supervision is to provide a professional framework in which to maintain professional standards, an opportunity to create a network where there is mutual support, to provide an opportunity for development through exploration of

alternative approaches to coaching, and to raise an awareness to the wider organisational issues that will inevitably play out in the teams that call on their support.

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