

Project Management Coaching.....

Providing practical “on the job” support that combines elements of coaching, observation, mentoring, business advice and training to fit individual needs.



Background

The ability to manage projects well is becoming critical to almost every business. This is partly driven by the increasing business tempo and also by the increasing complexity of product or service. In addition, terms like “programme” and “portfolio of projects” are becoming more common as organisations attempt to manage complex interdependencies.

More and more businesses realise that the sheer complexity of management requires project management skills. A key area where this is being applied more and more is in change management programmes.

As the necessity to manage complexity pushes down through organisations, the risk associated with using junior/middle ranking project managers increases. However, ‘old hands’ are not always easy to find. Further, using very experienced (and often therefore very expensive) project managers, disempowers their juniors and can create career blocks resulting in expensive departures. Using “old hands” also means that others do not develop the skills the organisation needs.

All of this is in an environment where what the project manager has to be able to do has changed dramatically. They now have to often build effective teams to deal with risk management in its widest sense and often manage complex commercial and political issues.

How to make it happen

TRAINING:

There are some excellent training programmes available – these can be good for imparting basic processes and the use of tools. However, the vast majority of training is too generic, not dealing with the real issues your project faces.

LEARNING ON THE JOB:

When it works this delivers the best results. However, the big challenge is getting this to work. The best project managers are not always the best trainers and if they are any good at helping others they’re seldom able to invest the necessary time.

BRINGING IN OUTSIDE HELP:

Getting a consultant or contractor to come in and do it for you is an option that many organisations go for and is one that if the right person is selected delivers good results. The disadvantage of this approach is there is unlikely to be much transfer of skills – the consultant is brought in to do a specific job and their contract seldom focuses on developing your own people.

Project management coaching is a realistic alternative which combines the positives from all of the above and is an innovative approach.

How does it work in practice?

A project management coach (or in some cases coaches) is assigned to either the project or an individual project manager.

That person’s role is to help the project be successful. The first step in the process is to define the type and frequency of support that will be needed. Typically that means some fairly intensive support, perhaps seven or eight days in the first month.

That is then normally followed up with a weekly review. The support is a pragmatic mixture of challenges, working very closely to solve specific issues, process mapping, planning and reviewing, coupled with regular “what am I learning” type reviews.

The coach required will vary accordingly.



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turning good ideas into operational reality

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The Challenge

Almost by definition, there is a need to optimise the approach for the delivery of complex projects. How does an organisation empower its staff whilst minimising its risk and delivering complex projects without becoming top heavy and constraining progression?

The development needs of individuals can be diverse and in smaller organisations there are often too few individuals with specific development needs to warrant the design of a formal training programme.

Coaching is the process of improving individual performance, generally for a short period and focuses on specific skills and goals. We pride ourselves on delivering coaching which is tailored to an individual's needs but which is set in the context of the organisational needs. Project Management Coaching uses a variety of tools and techniques from a wide range of backgrounds focused on delivering a step change in the coachee's ability and confidence - enabling the organisational goals to be achieved.

We pride ourselves on an ability to take a holistic view of problems rather than concentrating on niche aspects. So we spend time establishing the business objectives and then work with each individual and develop an approach providing practical "on the job" support that combines elements of coaching, observation, mentoring, business advice and training to fit their individual needs.

What does it look like in practice?

Working at an individual approach means that we can focus on what really matters to that individual as well as ensuring the sessions move in the direction the business needs as a whole. Coaching can be delivered confidentially or openly – but generally a combination of both works well – with leaders being briefed on the focus of the coaching rather than the individual specifics.

Individual timescales vary – some with high intensity over a short period – others with a more gradual "nudging" style.

Activities typically include:

- ❖ Helping each individual create and achieve a development "road map"
- ❖ Practical observation of real life situations
- ❖ Challenging and rehearsing approaches
- ❖ Training in specific methods and practices
- ❖ Scenario planning and role playing
- ❖ Developing bespoke practical tools to help each individual in their role

The JAC Proposition

JA Consulting have delivered project coaching across a range of business environments – from the Defence industry to professional services – from projects worth a few million to projects worth a few billion – and at all levels in industry.

Coachees say they feel a momentum was achieved and that the coaching had acted as a catalyst allowing their development to accelerate whilst building on their confidence.

WANT TO KNOW MORE? CALL +44(0)1737 642000

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JAC/R-PMC/0823-v1



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