

# To coach or not to coach

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When the business environment puts pressure on spending decisions, coaching may seem like a 'nice to have'. However, studies have repeatedly shown that coaching has a high return on investment. Alan Littlefield, accredited coach and consultant at CHPD, believes there is huge value in continuing to invest carefully at this time of budget strain.

According to Littlefield, investing in well targeted coaching during a recession will help ensure you are well placed for the upturn. There are a number of clear benefits to giving the right people coaching, especially now:

## 1. Think straight

When people have tough decisions to make and pressure to get it right, they can get caught up in the mass of data and delay decisions for fear of getting it wrong. Coaching conversations can give the space to reflect and lift the fog suppressing clear thinking. A more balanced view can be drawn out to help coachees make better decisions. Research shows that coaching produces its greatest financial benefit when used to clarify strategic thinking.

## 2. Focus activity

A downturn focuses on the need to deliver results, but as the environment continually changes, it can be difficult to see how to get a solid footing. Talking this through with a coach can stimulate a sense of purpose to overcome seemingly impossible challenges. Coaching creates a feeling of control so that coachees can extend their sphere of influence and spot quick wins. A renewed awareness of priorities can keep activity responsive to customers and enhance productivity.

## 3. Enhance capability

During rapid change people need to feel supported and they need help to learn new skills and behaviours. Coaching is a highly effective way to transfer learning into the workplace. Combining training with follow up coaching speeds up your productivity gains as people more easily apply their learning. Investing in coaching is also likely to ensure you keep your key talent and it is a highly effective development method for future leaders.

## 4. Promote well-being

Even during a growing economy, stress is often reported as the most significant reason for workplace absence. Now that we have to achieve more with less, this is likely to get more severe and our work-life will be unbalanced. Coaching can help to ease the pressure cooker and rebalance our working lives. If well targeted, it can act as an early warning system and link up with employee assistance programmes when necessary.

## 5. Engage people

Maintaining motivation is a huge challenge when the focus seems to be more on results than people. One of the most frequently cited intangible benefits of coaching is improved relationships and teamwork. By identifying and building on strengths, people can increase their impact and realign with the shifting networks of stakeholders. Coaching leaders can improve their engagement and spread it throughout their team and peers.

The return on coaching is repeatedly, and conservatively, estimated as around five times the investment made. The value of coaching during a recession is that it sustains leaders, teams and organisations through times of unpredictable change. Well targeted coaching will ensure your business survives and thrives as the upturn approaches. When the going gets tough, the tough get coaching!

For more information, contact Alan Littlefield at The [Centre for High Performance Development](#).