



Submission Details

Organisation or individual to which this submission relates (if different from above):	Same as above
Approximate size of organisation (number of employees) if applicable:	1700
Number of employees covered by the initiative if applicable:	1700

Coaching for Excellence

In 2006 Southend Borough Council's (SBC) new Chief Executive enabled an Organisational Development (OD) Team to address what was viewed as a 'failing council'. Creating an award winning 'Inspiring' culture change programme a critical component that helped the organisation to sustainably transform was introducing coaching into Southend.

Inquiry workshops had generated hundreds of suggestions of how the organisation needed to change.

Leadership and management behaviours were critical to moving culture and performance forward. The council was not working in a collaborative way, strategic goals and outcomes were rarely achieved and many projects or initiatives were stalled, delayed or not completing to timescales.

Our people were disaffected, divided and demoralised.

Managers and leaders designed a new competency framework to improve the consistency and quality of their management and leadership behaviours. This key framework formed a template for their ongoing development, featuring coaching as a key component.

The strong potential benefits that coaching behaviours would provide: employee engagement; innovation; and increased transformational capability were desperately needed. Balancing improved results **with the development of the individual** was a critical 'win-win' that coaching would bring.

Partnering with Go MAD Thinking Ltd. for their award winning, high quality, solution focused framework improved personal effectiveness, and also enabled people to coach. Avoiding the commitment of a more traditional coaching qualification encouraged busy leaders to engage.

Learning objectives were encapsulated in the new leadership competency framework:

-  Coaching & developing others
-  Being personally effective
-  Increased innovation and problem solving
-  Delivering results
-  Leading change
-  Providing a compelling vision
-  Communicating with impact
-  Building the team

In procuring the programme it was identified that internal facilitation would be more affordable in the longer run. Over the first three purchased cohorts two SBC facilitators (*already Go MAD accredited coaches themselves*) were trained to deliver the licenced programme content.

A quality assurance methodology and licencing arrangement supported this ensuring Go MAD could feel comfortable that SBC's quality of delivery, would match their own high standards.

Once coaching delegates were skilled in the techniques they would then go on to coach three other people in SBC, so each cohort would potentially influence 36 others. With cohorts taking place quarterly momentum and impact was soon being felt. Coachees often felt interested enough to become a coach.

Frontline employees were strongly encouraged to apply, demonstrating that coaching is a critical organisational behaviour and shouldn't be considered as only for managers and leaders.

On reflection this was a very good decision, it was quickly clear coaching was a great asset **at every level**. Trainee coaches were sponsored from our OD budgets (saving their operational budgets) **as long as they went on to coach three others**.

Those successfully submitting evaluation forms (from coachees) were 'accredited' receiving signed certificates from Go MAD's founder, Andy Gilbert. Coaches were further encouraged by presenting them with recognition badges to have visual artifacts recognising their expertise and commitment to developing others.

The coaching and Go MAD framework align very strongly to our organisational values:

-  'We **support** trust and develop each other'
-  'We are all **responsible** for performance' '
-  We work **as one**'.
-  and 'We aspire for **excellence**' in our work.

Avoiding overly cumbersome governance of the programme reduced the risk of undermining or complicating our potential coaches engagement with it.

Accredited coaches used their new skills in their teams, projects and programmes, without a constant barrage of evaluation or monitoring, 'corridor coaching' becomes part of 'the day job'. *Even those coaches who didn't complete the accreditation programme confirmed they'd adopted the behaviours, used the tools and benefited from applying the knowledge they received, happily paying for their place too!*

Two coaching surveys explored ongoing impact and benefits, comments received included:

'I found the time with my coach invaluable. She helped me develop some insight into my hindering thoughts. I was able to deliver on my objective and received a letter of commendation from my Director.'

'The coaching opportunity helped me clarify in my own mind where I was going with my career at SBC. It helped me think more widely about the options and best way forward and the result was that I have now taken a different career path and I'm thoroughly enjoying the challenge and feel re-energised.'

'I am now in a different role which I enjoy very much and which has improved my work/life balance considerably. Now working with a different group of people has allowed me to regain my enthusiasm for my work.'

*'I think SBC has really benefitted from the behavioural changes that introducing coaching has encouraged, there are no 'silver bullets' to problems that work for everyone but coaching has shown that it rightfully needs to be part of our organisations development offer. **I certainly have seen projects that were floundering or not starting get underway as a result of being having been coached.**'*

A detailed review of coaches noted:

- 60% reported their thinking, behaviours and attitudes had all improved positively
- 65% stated the programme had changed how they think and plan a project
- 53% of coaches stated **their own self belief and effectiveness** had increased from using the framework

Coachees reported the coaching benefitted them by:

- 100% of those sampled completed the goals they had focused upon – 100%!
- 50% confirmed without the coaching they would not have achieved their goal as successfully as they did
- 50% noted their self belief increased significantly on saying *'it shot up!*
- 63% stated this had encouraged them to change the way they thought.
- 25% following their coaching reported savings had been achieved – one saving alone was of £25k (**more than the initial cost of £16k in creating this programme!**).

A community of practice was created supported by our team this encourage continual professional development, supports standards and offers new opportunities. Some of our most enthusiastic coaches are now sponsored on qualification and continue to develop their skills and offer coaching to other in SBC and beyond.

When reviewed by the CIPD *'Driving innovation in local government'* our coaching programme **'particularly impressed the research team'**.

SBC has been recognised as the Most Improved Council in the UK, then Council of the year 2012, we have RoSPA Platinum Level 5 status for health & safety, are a Stonewall top 100 employer and achieved Investors In People Gold status in 2015.

A recent Local Government Association peer review our employees engagement was noted as **'second to none'** with the inspecting Chief Executive saying *'they were blown away by our people's passion and commitment to the town'*.

SBC now offers this development to other organisations a very useful commercial opportunity.

SBC is a coaching champion for our LGA Region, encouraging and promoting other councils to utilise coaching for their improvement.

SBC recently jointly commissioned an ILM Coaching programme with Essex Fire & Rescue supporting those coaches now ready for a qualification. SBC also adopted a 360 degree leadership development feedback programme also supported by coaching, progressing coaching in an even wider context.

Our coaching programme has made a significant impact in the organisational performance improvement journey in Southend.

I am very proud to submit this on behalf of my team, our fantastic coaches, dedicated employees and the excellent organisation that we all work for that supported this to occur.