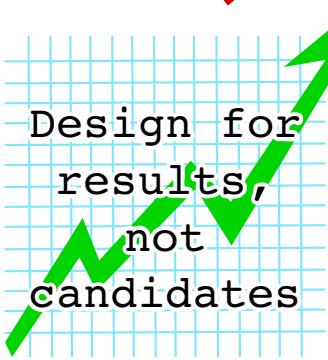
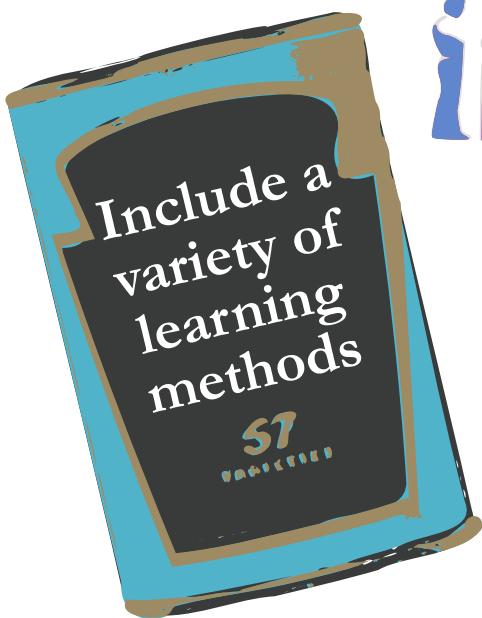
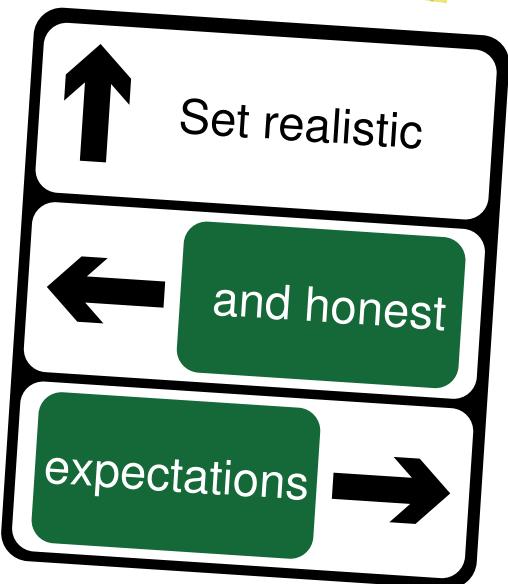




Don't turn managers  
into coaches



Make it  
part of  
'business'  
as usual'



Generative,  
not remedial

The first point that we have to consider is an obvious one; does coaching actually ‘work’? And doesn’t that depend on what we mean by ‘work’?

For most people in the corporate environment, ‘work’ means an increase in performance, or retention, or engagement, or job satisfaction. In other words, ‘work’ means that coaching solves the problem that you were trying to solve. However, engaging a coach to solve a problem is a remedial focus, and that’s not what coaching is designed for. From the very start, we have a misalignment of purpose, and that’s going to affect your results.

The CIPD did some research in 2004 and found the following:

- 99% of respondents said coaching produces tangible benefits
- 93% of respondents said coaching helps transfer learning from training courses to the workplace
- 92% of respondents said coaching can have a positive impact on the bottom line
- 96% of respondents said coaching promotes workplace learning

From this, we can conclude that coaching is great!

Similarly, according to the ILM (2011), 95% of respondents said that coaching benefits the organisation. However, only 39% of respondents said that they undertake specific evaluation of coaching interventions. So coaching is great, just don’t ask us to prove it.

There’s very little objective data on this. Deviney (2000) researched line management coaches and found that there was no change in the employees’ rating of their managers’ skills after the coaching. Duijts (2008) researched coaching as a means to reduce stress-related absence. After the coaching, there was no change in self-reported sickness absence.

However, these are remedial situations, and coaching is not a remedial learning method. Of course, coaching might also mean one to one training, mentoring, even counselling.

Coaching does not solve performance management problems – managers do! Coaches are often used as surrogate managers, which doesn’t solve the problem, it just moves it somewhere else. The coach can’t stay on the payroll for ever. Coaching does accelerate step change, even if we can’t predict where that will lead.

When you plant a tree in your garden, you have an idea of how that tree might grow, but in reality it will grow where it wants to grow, based on its environment and how you treat it.

Fundamentally, coaching is most effective when you use it for the purpose it was designed, as a generative, developmental learning method. When you want to give people opportunities to be challenged, to learn and to develop through high quality feedback, you know that there will be a measurable result, so figuring out how to measure that is far more important. Through measurement, you can check that the coaching process is delivering the outcomes that you hoped for. If you link that measurement back to the reasons that you started the process, you are able to demonstrate that coaching ‘worked’ in relation to the event or situation that led you down that path.

And finally, the single most effective way to increase overall engagement in a coaching program is to deselect people who choose not to engage with it. When people don’t book sessions, or fail to turn up for sessions that they have booked, remove them from the process. It’s not a punishment, simply a way to respect the choice that they have freely made. It sends an important message to everyone else, that coaching is a choice, that it is not mandatory, and that the people who do commit to it will get benefits from that commitment, and the people who won’t or can’t commit at that time might have another opportunity later on.