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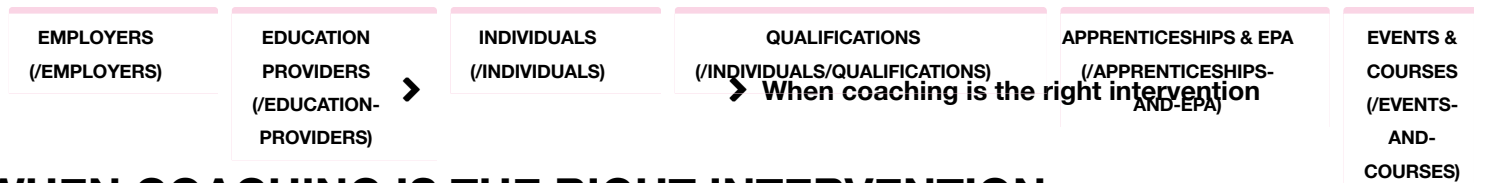

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WHEN COACHING IS THE RIGHT INTERVENTION

07 October 2014

Findings from the CIPD's 2014 Learning and Talent Development Survey highlight that coaching is still one of the most supported learning interventions now used in organisations with three-quarters of organisations currently offering coaching or mentoring and an additional 12% planning to offer it in the next year. There is a danger however, that coaching can be seen as the panacea for all learning needs and as such, it's important not to forget to think about whether this is the most appropriate way of dealing with the issue to hand.

Coaching seems to work best...

- As part of a change management process.
- To develop an individual's potential as a contribution to career development.
- When a flexible, 'just in time' response is needed to a development need.
- To develop 'soft skills'.
- When cultural or behavioural change is needed.
- To support strategic managers in their decision-making.

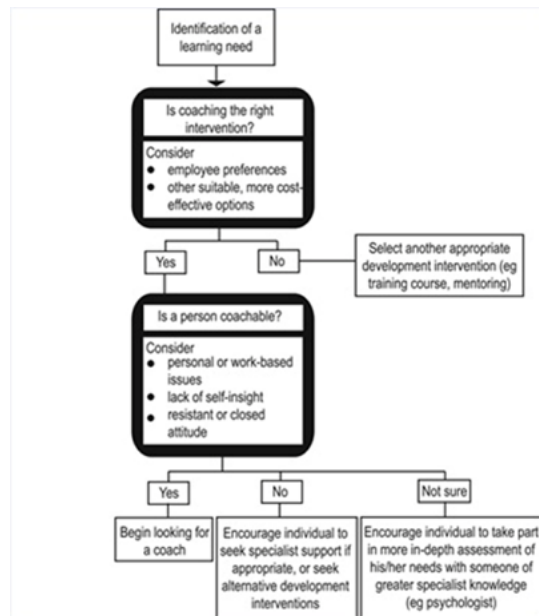
There are however, a number of individual and organisational factors that should be taken into account in determining whether to introduce coaching as an intervention within your own organisation.

For example...

- Whether the individual is likely to respond well to coaching. Does it suit their learning style? Do they have the right attitude and level of self-awareness?
- Whether the nature of the individual's development need is best addressed through coaching, rather than an alternative approach such as job shadowing.
- Whether the organisational climate and culture suits a coaching approach.

It can be useful to think about a model called the Decision Tree (Jarvis, 2004), to help identify whether coaching is the right intervention:

Decision Tree – Is Coaching the Right Intervention?



Jarvis (2004)

I think this is a really straight forward reminder of the thought processes to identify if coaching is right for the individual, but it is important also that you look at your organisation as a whole and whether coaching is the right investment for the business. Can the culture and management style support coaching? What are the benefits to the organisation as well as the individual? Will coaching drive up performance and the bottom line?

Also vital is making sure that appropriately trained and experienced coaches are used and given supervision support.

Whilst coaching continues to grow in popularity as a timely, reasonably cost-effective and person-centred approach to development, it is early days in terms of understanding its benefits in different organisational and individual situations and as such, as HR and Learning and Development professionals we have a role to play in making sure that the right environment for coaching exists, that objectives are clear and measures for evaluation are put in place.

Julie Gordon heads up the team at cHRysos HR Solutions, an organisation specialising in the delivery of HR and Leadership-related training, professional qualifications, as well as HR and business consultancy services. With over 20 years' experience in learning and development within the private and public sector, Julie's key strengths are now in the management of the learning and development process and in work-based learning. As well as working in industry, Julie has held various academic teaching posts and has published journal papers in the field of learning and development.

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