

Case Study: High Potential Middle Manager Forums

Overview

Organisations face a difficulty in developing high potential middle managers. The needs of this population are every bit as complex as more senior leaders, but budgets available do not allow for individually-bespoke development such as an executive coach would provide. Training programmes, no matter how creative or how prominent the guest speakers are, do not result in lasting change.

To address this challenge, Talent Futures has created a number of bespoke Forums. A Forum is a bridge between small group learning and one-on-one coaching, and is for talented managers who are as yet too junior to have an external coach. Talent Futures has provided Forums for over 5 years.

Format

Each Forum is limited to a maximum of 6 people to ensure optimal learning. The Forum meets for a minimum of six sessions, once a month. Each session is 90 minutes of content training, and 2.5 hours of peer coaching. Specific topics are chosen based on the needs of the specific participants. The facilitator is an accredited executive coach who teaches participants to coach each other. This fundamental leadership skill then benefits the direct reports and colleagues of the participants long after the Forum has completed.

Content

The host organisation of a Forum can specify the focus of the content. Past Forums have focused on a variety of topics such as career management, managing change, or gravitas and influence. The underlying theme of every Talent Futures Forum is to equip managers to embrace their identity as leaders, while fostering a cross-organisation network of peer-coaching colleagues.

Coaching Components

Similar to beginning coaching, participants consider their development goals and discuss them in a one-on-one meeting with the Facilitating Coach prior to the start of the Forum. Each participant's manager also provides input on the participant's goals via a separate phone call with the Facilitating Coach. Goal plans are determined jointly. During the six months of the Forum, each Participant is also entitled to two private one-hour coaching sessions with the Facilitating Coach.

Benefits

The benefits of Talent Futures Forums as a learning solution are:

- The workshops cover **topics specifically chosen** to meet the needs of the six participants.
- Participants receive **private feedback** from the Facilitating Coach on their group interaction.
- Forum meetings develop each leader's **effectiveness in meetings at work**.
- **Savings of up to 80%** per person in comparison to the price of an individual coaching package.
- A typical one-to-one coaching programme gives an executive 9-12 hours of the coach's time. An organisation-based forum provides **5½ hours of one-to-one coaching**, up to 12 hours of **group training**, and a **network that can last a lifetime**.

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Forum Participant Comments

Here's what participants have to say:

"The Forum provides the opportunity to explore various challenges and opportunities, build confidence to be mindful of what's important, and to think broadly about the possibilities."

"...provides a fabulously facilitated and responsive team of individuals for listening, feedback and co-coaching. It is a great support and network."

"It's more than doing things differently; it's thinking differently."

"We leave the sessions with positive actions to follow which we can share our progress on in the next session. The group is welcoming and open, and I look forward to each session."

"The coach's insights, guidance and facilitation have been invaluable...particularly the unintentional teachings through her own behaviour. The way she can accommodate strong personalities...was eye-opening to me. She reminded me, through this patient interaction, to look for the strengths and positives of each person—and of course there are plenty of those in each one of us!"

"...a safe space for me to acknowledge my doubts and concerns and then confront them in a pragmatic way... I now have a greater level of self-awareness and am far more committed to and confident in achieving my career goals."

"The Coach had a good understanding and feel for where everyone was, and what they could offer and get back."