



Unlocking Cultural Gridlocks and Transforming Organisations

Deriving Strategic Business Value from Next Generation Coaching

By Lorna McDowell

Are you reaping enough value from Coaching?

Many organisations talk about “creating a coaching culture”, but do they actually know what they are trying to achieve?

Xenergie’s experience finds that an absence of strategy or management around coaching processes is holding companies in the very cultural gridlock they are attempting to address.



Coaching has the potential to deliver profound and widespread value and organisational improvement. The opportunity exists for coaching to be a key enabler of transformation, innovation, efficiency, improvement, learning, strategic risk management and cultural flexibility – essentials for surviving, adapting and thriving in the fast changing economic conditions.

Although the uptake of coaching has now reached a critical mass, approaches to managing coaching so that it reaps maximum business and strategic value are still, for the most, immature. The harvest for system-wide impact, therefore, has been minimal compared to what it could be.

On the buyers’ side, the reasons for this include lack of alignment to strategy, insufficient governance and measurement and uninformed procurement which has led to organisations recruiting panels of coaches of varying experiences, approaches and professional credentials, without a *clear* underpinning strategy that aligns coaching to business improvement.

Some key reasons for this include a poor awareness about what coaching could be and its value to business strategy both within HR and business functions, and also the long standing disconnect between HR and “the business”, which CIPD states as being a vital journey for HR practitioners to make if they are to drive the potential contribution to business efficiency that lies within aligning people to strategy.

Many organisations prefer that their people volunteer to be coached – a way of ensuring that the person receiving coaching is ready to be questioned. In such instances this means that growth of coaching within organisations is organic, often without properly thought through sponsorship, and so it remains on the sidelines as an optional dish to the main meal, that is not seen as necessary to the “real business”. As a result those who most need it usually avoid it and this frequently includes the CEO and the top leadership team, citing lack of time and needing to focus on “core issues” as reasons why it’s not relevant to them. This raises some important questions about accountability – embodied follow through from the very people who set the cultural tone of the company and whose involvement is necessary in order to oversee and authorise the necessary alignments to allow coaching to best serve the organisation’s overall goals and strategy, is often visibly missing.

This presents a real conundrum for those who can see how much more effective the organisation could be with more coaching.

How can progress, efficiencies and innovation be stimulated without proper alignment into the heart of the business and how can it even reach the boardroom agenda when those who make the decisions are too busy to stop and listen?

On the supply side, coaches still find it hard to articulate their value in hard business terms. This is often because the design of coaching approaches focus on delivering and justifying the benefits from 1 on 1 interventions; perhaps a tendency of over pre-occupation with the detail and territory where most coaches and managers feel comfortable

And so cultural gridlock continues....

As we step further into the age of social responsibility, complexity, radical change and sustainable business practices, there will be fewer hiding places and also less room for coaching that does not deliver and connect to business value.

A new horizon in coaching - more than the sum of the individual parts

At Xenergie we believe that a “systems” approach to designing a coaching function has to consider the emergent and collective benefits from the individual coaching interventions as well as how the function is integrated within the architecture, culture and strategy of the whole organisation. In doing so the function would serve as a catalyst for a learning organization, a conditioner and monitor of culture, and Facilitator in the management of strategic risk and organisational improvement.

Enhancing the strategic impact of your H.R. & Coaching function

Does your H.R. department have aspirations of market leadership? or a need to enhance its strategic contribution ?

Reviewing your coaching function, which of the following options would you consider?

Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
Do nothing	Refresh with new skills & new themes	Up or down Scale the volume of coaching	Expand the scope of coaching	Integrate with other improvement functions	Systems coaching



Xenergie Consulting provides support and advice to assess & develop your coaching function.

Our approach is an affordable, short duration, co- creational process, involving a series of workshops, review of existing coaching effectiveness, strategy exploration and development through scenario planning and strategic risk assessment.

Introducing the Xenergie Coaching function review team

Xenergie has been piloting systems coaching organisational improvement initiatives in the last ten years, notably in the public sector and in the medical, aviation and energy sectors within multinational private and semi-state companies.

One such progressive project resulted in Xenergie’s director, **Glyn Owen**, being finalist in the **UK National Business Awards in 2004** for developing “**Project Performance Coaching**”. **This work underpins the “Systems Coaching”** which is the basis of his professional doctorate with Oxford Brookes University.



Now is the time to spread this skills across organisations for wider usage in order to support the wide scale business, social, economic and community transformation that we face at this time.

Currently, Glyn is supporting public sector organisations assess how they can achieve 30% cuts through this approach, which will unlock cultural gridlock and open the way to realising efficiencies. In these projects, systems coaching supports ‘Cultural Revolution’ by producing a new set of vistas where seeing and operating from the whole becomes the norm, and acting from the silos and parts is consigned to the scrapheap of dangerous practices.



Lorna McDowell, managing director and founder of Xenergie, is an organisation culture analyst and culture transformation coach. Her strength lies in exploring cultural fit between collaborating partners or in customer journey analysis and in developing communication and leadership /influencing skills of internal change managers.

Ireland’s top 100 Entrepreneurs The strengths of female leaders in supporting change is a key opportunity that McDowell is exploring and is the subject of her forthcoming book.

Bernard Chanliu is a professional coach who brings expertise in team analysis, and a background of coaching and supporting CEOs within international environments. His strength lies in holding the space of accountability for change and chunking down complex models into practical business applications that can be taught simply to others.



Please contact Xenergie Consulting at info@xenergie.com for more information or visit our [website](http://www.xenergie.com) (www.xenergie.com).