



JSB helping your law firm to develop a Coaching Culture

A well-embedded coaching culture has been shown to increase employee performance and motivation, productivity, innovation and retention levels.

'People leave managers not companies' - You might be wondering about the relevance of this quote to a law firm. You might even be thinking, "we don't have managers". And that may be the problem. The Law Society's recently published "Quality of Life Debate" research supports previous findings that a poor relationship with one's "supervisor" is still one of the critical factors in why people leave their job, and is just as relevant in Law Firms.

In the current war for talent, firms need to do everything they can to retain their great people. Lots of attention might be given to your real stars - the top 5%. Yet it is often the 10 - 50% beneath that really drives your business and has the commitment to stay the course. They may be the ones on whom your key clients rely and who form the backbone of successful succession planning.

Talented people need challenge and opportunities for growth. And they need support in equal measure. They need feedback, guidance, a sounding board. Yet often what they experience is either micro-management or being thrown in the deep end. Law firms rely on self starters who take responsibility and who are demonstrably confident. These skills and abilities can be most effectively developed through a culture of coaching. The essence of coaching is precisely about developing awareness and responsibility. It is about encouraging people to think for themselves and to learn from their experience. This is best achieved through dialogue with someone whose role is to develop you and your career.

Equipping those with supervisory responsibilities with the skills to coach their colleagues is a perfect cultural fit for Law Firms, where the financial model is all about effective delegation. We can help your people differentiate delegation from dumping. We can help you to integrate a culture of coaching and development which is pragmatic and practical.

We have successfully worked with Law firms for over 25 years. We have a proven track record of working with partners and associates in this key aspect of their own development. Here's an example on how this could work in practice, based on a modular format:

Research and Familiarisation Phase

We believe it is extremely helpful to gain a perspective from a representative sample of existing employees. This is usually approximately a 1.5 hour meeting with a group, a series of short meetings with 5/6 individuals, or telephone conversations.

Customised Modules:

Module 1 - Introduction

- Making the link between development and retention
- Understanding the perception gap between partner/associate/ Getting the best from your regular meetings/interactions assistant/trainee
- What is coaching?

Module 2 – Developing Coaching skills

- Matching your style to suit the situation and the person
- How to give effective and timely feedback
- Linking feedback to coaching opportunities and ongoing development

Module 3 – Using sophisticated coaching models

- Developing your key people
- Getting the best from your regular meetings/interactions
- Listening for the message behind the words
- Asking the right questions
- Planning for development

Module 4 - Handling difficult conversations

- Planning and preparation
- The need for challenge and support – getting the balance right
- Identifying measurable next steps
- Making tough decisions

This approach can be supported with individual coaching, for example to address

- Developing high achievers
- Planning and preparing for specific challenging conversations
- integrating coaching with formal training/planning for specific coaching with team members

Follow Up Phase:

We suggest providing a follow up session some 3/6 months into the programme. This will usually increase commitment to integrating the skills, as well as ensuring that any individual or firm-wide concerns are picked up and addressed. The session would introduce some additional tools for maintaining momentum and for how to undertake individual and ongoing evaluation of progress.

Interested in further information? If your employees could benefit from a programme like this, give us a call on **020 8371 7017** for more information or a 'no obligation' consultation with one of our training specialists.