

## **Systemic Team Coaching; A Case Study by Sue Coyne and Vicki Masters**

### **The Client**

The Human Resource Leadership Team of a UK Airport Group recognized that they were a group of high performing experts delivering their individual services, and knew they could operate more effectively as a team; 'Working together and across functions wasn't valued. We had several plans, but they weren't aligned, and commitments were being given that we would deliver on things we hadn't bought into as a team.' They agreed they needed to engage differently because they had a People Strategy for which they were mutually accountable which could only be delivered jointly.

Additionally the Airport Group comprised of a number of airports and was divided into business units. At this time the team was only one of two teams reporting into the Executive Team which operated across the whole system, and it was important that they provided leadership to the rest of the organisation by demonstrating effective team working.

### **The Coaching Team**

A Coaching Team of Vicki Masters and Sue Coyne, both qualified and experienced executive coaches with extensive experience of delivering team development programmes, came together as part of a Team Coaching Training Programme delivered by the Academy of Executive Coaching (AoEC) & Bath Consultancy Group. They worked with the Client Team over a 9 month period.

### **The Approach**

Sue and Vicki offered a systemic approach to team coaching because they believe that for team coaching to have an impact it needs to focus both on how the team members relate to one another and on how the team connects with the wider system. Based on the work of Peter Hawkins, Systemic Team Coaching supports the team to focus on what they are being commissioned to deliver by the organisation; gaining clarity on their vision, purpose and goals as a team; exploring how the team works together to co-create their agenda; connecting with stakeholders to agree what they need from the team; and reflecting on core learning for the team on how effectively they are delivering their shared agenda.

Essentially, for the Coaching Team, team coaching involves coaching both the team as a whole and also as individuals. The individual coaching is in service of the agreed team coaching outcomes and is an integral part of the process. This approach offers the team support over an agreed period of time, and is sustainable in that a team member, often the team leader, is encouraged to take on the role of team coach after the team coaches withdraw.

### **The Contract**

The Coaching Team met with the Client Team to build rapport, explain what team coaching involves and get the team's agreement to taking the first steps. It was important from the start that the Coaching Team and Client Team worked collaboratively to jointly create the team coaching journey by identifying the outcomes the team wanted to achieve. The outcomes they agreed were to build a high performing team through developing a collective endeavour which reflects stakeholder needs; can only be delivered collectively as a team and to which everyone commits. They also needed to ensure the collective endeavour was aligned with strategy, objectives, goals, roles and values. Fundamental to achieving the agreed outcomes was to build trust between team members. Team members received a written contract for the team coaching outlining the agreement made at the initial meeting, including the process and confidentiality.

## Why choose the AoEC?

### The Process

#### Inquiry & Diagnosis

The Coaching Team, in discussion with the Client Team, conducted an inquiry into what stakeholders needed from the client team and how they currently experienced them. Interviews were carried out with 18 stakeholders. In addition each member of the client team had a one to one interview and completed a team performance questionnaire. The collated results were fed back to the team and confirmed that stakeholders needed them to be working more collectively as a team and to have clarity about their key priorities.

#### Whole Team Coaching

A programme of half day sessions was delivered over a number of months which included:-

- Building trust to help with working effectively together
- Developing an understanding of each others' styles and preferences through using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Developing a collective endeavour to enable the team to fulfill its purpose
- Focusing on the stakeholder needs and how the team would meet these different needs whilst working as an integrated team

#### Real Time Coaching

Real time coaching was offered at team meetings to support the Client Team to reflect on how they were working together, the effectiveness of the meeting and how to make sure their meetings are energising and contribute to achieving their common purpose.

#### Individual Coaching

Alongside the whole team sessions each team member engaged in one to one coaching with a member of the Coaching Team. This supported the team member in focusing on what they contributed to the team and in overcoming any challenges they had as a team member. 'The one to ones were massively important for me in considering what type leader I needed to be and in developing collective leadership'.

#### The Impact

During the final session the Client Team reviewed the team coaching journey and evaluated its impact. They re-did the team performance questionnaire and scored themselves higher across all areas. Overall the team considered there had been a significant shift:-

'The team work as demonstrated now is at a completely different level to where it was before.'

Just after the team coaching programme ended the organisation conducted their annual Employee Engagement Survey. The HRLT was delighted that their department experienced the biggest improvement amongst the Group functions going from 71% to 80% engagement. Their view is that this is in no small part due to their development as a team during the team coaching programme. According to the Group HR Director the organisation has benefitted from the investment in coaching the HRLT in many ways:-  
"The Commercial benefits are many - better customer service to our internal customers, higher productivity and preparedness to move to more efficient ways of working. What's more we are seen as a role model for the rest of the organisation."

If you would like to comment on this case study or would like any further information please contact:  
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