

ACCELERATED COACHING

THE ALTRIS APPROACH TO REAL COACHING RESULTS

ACCELERATED
COACHING

AT ALTRIS WE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN COACHING FOR MANY YEARS. OVER THAT TIME WE HAVE SEEN THE INCREASED ACCEPTANCE OF COACHING AS A VALUED DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY AS WELL AS THE COMING AND GOING OF MANY DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT AND COACHING 'FADS'.

Through our work and study as coaches we have also become aware of the strengths and weaknesses of what might be termed a 'standard' coaching approach, and have sought to develop a method that goes beyond that standard – in the interest of providing the best possible outcomes to our

coachees. This paper provides an insight into the approach we use as well as explaining what that means for you as a coachee or as an organisation looking to get the best return from your developmental spend.

As someone receiving coaching, or a 'buyer' of coaching services for your organisation, you are likely to be investing significant time and/or money in coaching. It may be that past experience has shown you that while many of the coaching sessions and engagements seem to work well, there have been times where you may have felt that you aren't quite getting to the real issue, or where the results from the coaching are not what you are hoping for?

Let's look at some of the challenges of coaching we observe from both a coachee and coach-buyer perspective:

COACHEES

As a coachee you may have a feeling that there are some things that you should be working on, but you can't quite put your finger on what they are, and your coach isn't able to identify these either. You sometimes feel that the coach and you are operating on two different wavelengths. You get on ok; the rapport seems to be there; but the techniques the coach has used in the past successfully with other coachees don't seem to work for you.

While you may be getting some positive results, you

often feel that you are being coached on a surface level and that there is undiscovered ground where you sense you should be going. You may even sense that the coach would like to get deeper but does not seem sure where to go or how to get there.

There may be a recurring issue that keeps coming up for you. You know it's there but can't get clear on the root cause. As a result you are unable to identify and apply effective strategies to deal with it. This might relate to the way you deal with particular situations or a recognition that there are certain aspects of your role that you are drawn to and find easy, and others that are 'hard' and that you avoid as a result. You don't understand why this is, or how to use this knowledge to your advantage.

The combined result of situations such as these can be a feeling of frustration and lack of 'completeness' from the coaching intervention.

COACH-BUYERS

As a buyer of coaching for your organisation, you may recognise some of the following issues:

Sometimes, it seems to take quite a number of sessions

before the coach and the coachee get to the 'real' issues (if they ever get there). If you've talked this through with the coaches you engage, you may find that they often say something like "if there was a way of getting to the important areas sooner, I would be adding value more quickly and achieving better results for you".

In some cases there does not seem to be any appreciable difference in performance at the end of the coaching programme. The coaching programme begins well but, after a period, sessions are cancelled and in the end, the coachee does not finish the coaching programme. When you ask the coachee about this they report that there was a lack of connection with the coach who did not seem able to describe things in a way the coachee could understand and act on.

If you can relate to any or all of the above points, you're not alone. The above issues are those that many coachees and organisations that use coaching seem to face on a regular basis.

COACHING CHALLENGES

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

ACCELERATED
COACHING

'Traditional' coaching works from a basis that the coach establishes the conditions and processes for the coachee to come up with their own solutions to the areas they want to work on i.e. the coachee has the answers and just needs the right environment and support to work these through.

In our experience, one problem with this approach is that the 'coachee only knows what the coachee knows'. We each see things through our own lenses and understand things based on our own unique way of thinking and areas where we choose to focus. As a result, there are areas where the coachee is effectively 'blind' i.e they can see some things really well (where they perform)

and in other areas they will just not see the issue or the options (often the focus of coaching). So working on the traditional coaching assumption that they will always be able to come up with their own solutions doesn't necessarily deliver. How can you solve a problem where you can't even see that one exists, or where you have limited access to solutions because it's not the way you think? It is in these situations that the coachee will struggle to come up with new ideas, or where they will keep coming back to the same issue and not be able to resolve it. It is often these situations that you, as the buyer or coachee, reach out to coaching, but exactly where the traditional approach to coaching has limited results.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

We believe a better way to coach comes from understanding more about how people think; what they focus on, i.e what they pay most and least attention to; and how they use that combination of thinking and attention to make decisions. If we add that to the more widely understood models of behavioural style the coachee has a deeper understanding of their natural modus operandi.

Armed with this knowledge and awareness, coachees can be better equipped to understand their thinking preferences and how that influences their performance, for good and for bad. With the coach's help, they can use this understanding of thinking to identify key areas that justify their focus and attention but which, without this knowledge, they would otherwise be blind to. In addition they can use this new knowledge to design alternative strategies to solve their performance gaps, by accessing approaches that would not usually come to them automatically.

Using this approach the Altris accelerated coaching process allows our coaches to deliver greater value to coachees; produce faster results; and to identify and focus on the 'real' areas that the coachee can use to design success for themselves. Coaching becomes a more self-reflective and collaborative process through which the coachee understands their thinking style better and as a result builds more sustainable outcomes.

Welcome to the world of Accelerated Coaching, grounded in the science of Axiology.

The science of axiology was developed by Dr Robert S. Hartman as the basis for his research work into answering the question: “How can one define **good**?” from which he defined the concept of ‘relative value’.

Hartman’s work in this area led to an ability to measure the mechanism of valuation in the human being. He then made the connection between what we value and how we think, which feeds the choices we make.

Every human thought, from the complex to the mundane, (e.g. the nature of the universe to “what shall I cook for dinner?”) is comprised of the interplay of three dimensions of the Structure of Value. Altris call these the ‘meta-system’:

1. **INTRINSIC (PEOPLE)** – How one values the people and relationships in one’s life
2. **EXTRINSIC (PROCESS)** – How one values the practical work in one’s life
3. **SYSTEMIC (PURPOSE)** – How one values the systems or rules in one’s life

Despite the fact that every choice we make is influenced by a combination of these three dimensions, each of us favours and is clearer on these values in a combination that is unique.

ACCELERATED COACHING – THE SCIENCE

USING THE SCIENCE

Once a coachee knows their relative strength and preference in each of the three value dimensions, they are able to harness the power that comes with understanding how their brain actually works. What will I favour? What kind of decisions will I tend to make? How can I access the dimensions I least favour? How can I make better choices?

The coach is able to educate the coachee so that they can understand more about the areas in which they will be naturally strong or where they will have some 'blocks'. Given this understanding, the coachee can be supported by the coach to identify the work situations they face that are likely to cause difficulties (as a result of their thinking style/preferences) and to build strategies that will allow them to deal with these. Equally, knowing about the areas they will naturally be strong in, allows them to look for additional opportunities to use these strengths.

THE ACCELERATED COACHING PROCESS

ACCELERATED COACHING

Our approach uses tailored Accelerator© Coaching reports to highlight the coachee's natural preferences / thinking styles / levels of clarity and biases. The reports are available in combinations that can be tailored to meet the coachee's requirements.



Using the reports the coach is able to follow a framework in which they adjust their natural style to accommodate the preferences of each coachee.

The overall intention is to expedite the coaching process and help the coachee to:

- Understand themselves better in respect of how they think and make decisions
- Gain insight into how they might use this knowledge to design success for themselves in a way that still allows them to be who they are
- Leverage their strengths, and design strategies to deal with their performance blockers in a work or life setting
- Create more sustainable results.

AN EXAMPLE OF ACCELERATED COACHING IN ACTION

Francis has been working with his coach for a couple of months and is feeling that he's just not making progress. He is getting frustrated, as is the coach, who is following a solid coaching process that has worked with many coachees before. The coach has tried to help Francis to set and work towards a number of goals but something is just not working in the way the coach and Francis are interacting.

As a result of a review of (lack of) progress, the HR manager for Francis' organisation asks an Altris coach to try our approach and use our Accelerator suite to help Francis understand his thinking style.

What these results show is that Francis' thinking style is very focused on the Intrinsic and Extrinsic dimension (which often translates into a sense of him 'feeling' what needs to be 'done'). He is less inclined to think at a future/strategic (Systemic) level and more likely to focus on the here and now, and how things and people 'feel' (using his instincts and intuition).

Because of this, Francis finds it difficult to relate to the traditional concept of 'goals' as a way of establishing what he should be doing. His natural way of thinking doesn't focus easily on the longer term due to his 'now' focus, and the concept of goals is the kind of strategic thinking he does not have a 'feel' for. In addition his previous coach kept asking him 'what he thought' instead of how he 'felt' so he found it hard to answer the coach's questions (which gives an insight into the coach's thinking preferences perhaps)

Once the Altris coach understands Francis' thinking style, he is able to adapt his style so that his questions are more pragmatic and priority-oriented (moving away from questions about Francis' goals and towards questions about what does Francis 'feel' would be the right thing to do to move forward). Francis is better able to relate to this way of looking at things and as a result, progress starts to be made.

In addition, through the Accelerated Coaching Process, Francis becomes aware of the elements of his role that he will tend to favour and to come up with strategies to deal with the other areas where he is less clear in his thinking, but which are nevertheless important for his success. He is able to leverage the areas of strength, and notice and deal with the potential performance blockers that result from his thinking style.

The process helps Francis to make sense of things that have happened in the past as a result of his thinking style and focus. Knowledge of the areas he will naturally be strong in, as well as those where he will be weaker, allows him to create and apply more effective strategies in his day to day operations.

In this example, there was nothing wrong with what the previous coach was doing. Most coach training focuses on the establishment of goals as a key part of the coaching process. However, given Francis' natural thinking style and preferences, the 'goal' language was not something he could relate to, and so he did not make the progress that a more 'goal-oriented' coachee would have.

Adopting the Accelerated coaching approach, including the style of questioning and language to something more in tune with Francis' thinking style paid dividends for both the relationship and the coaching outcomes. Isn't that what great coaching is all about?

BENEFITS

Significant benefits result from this approach in terms of:

- The coachee begins to understand more about the way they think and how they make decisions
- The coachee is more aware of the areas in which they have thinking blockers and can identify strategies to deal with these when they arise
- The coaching delivers faster and more targeted results
- More satisfied coach and coachee as a result of achieving deeper and longer-lasting impacts
- Better Return on Investment (ROI) for the coachee/sponsor organisation through the delivery of quicker and more sustainable changes in the coachee.

CONCLUSION

ACCELERATED
COACHING

We fully acknowledge that the Accelerated coaching approach rubs up against some of the more 'purist' views on how coaching should operate. However, we also believe that the 'pure' model of coaching does not always result in the coachee gaining the insight or sustained results that they want. Too often both coach and coachee come away from a coaching programme feeling that something has been missed; or 'there must be more'. We do not believe that this is necessarily a result of bad coaching practice, but perhaps more a case that the coachee does not always know what they need to focus on. The Accelerator© Coaching reports and associated coaching process can provide this insight and empower the coachee to make the decisions that the traditional coaching process is really looking for; successful ones.

e-mail: info@altris.co.nz
www.altris.co.nz