

CASE  
STUDY

**BSI Group develop the coaching skills of 70% of their UK managers after considerable growth – and plan to make the initiative a long-term endeavor for continued positive cultural change.**

**BSI Group, or the British Standards Institution (BSI), is the UK's national standards body, and was founded in 1901.**

With approximately 3,500 employees globally and 1,300 employees in the U.K., BSI is a large organisation that serves companies large and small. They produce standards on a wide range of products and services, and provide certification and standards-related services, helping organisations in around 180 countries turn excellence into a habit.

#### **BSI's international growth**

In 1998, BSI Group adopted a policy of international growth, and acquired 14 companies between then and 2016, creating enormous growth and a lot of change within the organisation. As a result, new challenges presented themselves. BSI managers and executives were required to be more innovative, responsible and accountable to help them move gracefully through the transition. BSI wanted to empower their managers; more effectively support those staff that had new, more senior roles, larger teams and greater responsibility; and equip them to thrive in their working environment.

The four focus areas to build on became accountability, enablement, empowerment and innovation. With the growing awareness of what coaching is and how helpful coaching skills can be in a business context, managers were also already beginning to use coaching skills within BSI, but there was some confusion about what was expected from both coaching managers and those being coached by them.

#### **A catalyst for cultural change**

Once the developmental areas above had been identified, BSI was keen to find the solution that would have the most impact on their managers in those areas.



Coaching was an attractive option. The executives at BSI knew that coaching can involve a sizable time investment, but they also recognised that the long-term dividends could be great – after coaching, the person being coached can then not only respond more effectively to that challenge, but also similar challenges. They can also learn to self-coach, and deal with issues independently with increased confidence and skill.

So coaching was selected as the most appropriate catalyst for the initiative, with emphasis on actionable coaching skills like questioning, listening and probing skills that BSI staff could use in both informal and formal contexts.

#### **Searching for an influential, knowledgeable leader and a tailored service**

BSI began reaching out to a range of providers that were specialists in coaching, as well as general training providers that offered management, leadership and coaching skills programmes.

Helen Klarich, the Head of People Development for EMEA at BSI remembers the selection criteria and process:

'We were looking for someone who would really work with us, start to understand who we were as a business, and support us in a way that was more than just delivering a training program. Coaching can leverage performance both on an individual and an organisational level, and we wanted to be sure that the partner we worked with would really be able to relay that to our executive team.'

And that's predominantly why we went for Coaching Focus, and ultimately, Trayton. Trayton, specifically, came across as not only very knowledgeable, but very influential.'

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**It was also important for BSI to create a partnership through the initiative, says Helen.**

‘Coaching Focus are not a large organisation, and we did speak to large organisations. What we quickly recognised is that we would become a number. One of many, many customers.’

## WHAT WE DID

**An initial split-based Programme for managers and executives**

BSI began working with Coaching Focus in 2014, and started with a split-based Programme for both UK managers and executives. Their executives carried out the 3-day, Manager as Coach Programme and skills practice. Their managers either carried out a 1-day, Coaching Fundamentals Programme or a 3-day, Manager as Coach Programme, depending on their prior experience with coaching.

The 1-day Programme served to address the myths that very often surround coaching and underline the benefits it can bring into the daily lives of managers.

However, after the first wave of training, it was decided that BSI needed the ratio of classroom training to on-the-job practice to be modified slightly to better meet the organisation’s goals.

In addition to the training, a number of other activities were put in place by BSI to support its delegates.

Firstly, coaching mentors, individuals who had been through the Programme and really excelled, were allocated to each and every delegate that subsequently carried out the coaching training Programme for added support and encouragement, and to underline the importance of skills practice. The coaching mentors met with each delegate privately after the face-to-face training. Secondly, BSI created an intranet area dedicated 100% to coaching. On the site, delegates can download and view resources provided by Coaching Focus, including coaching tutorials and helpful videos. Thirdly, guides were created to help those attending a coaching Programme and being coached, to address concepts such as what it feels like to be coached, the role of the coach and the individual being coached, etc. These activities have helped BSI managers and executives to adopt coaching on a deeper level.



**‘What’s more, we had a whole area designated on what it means to be coached too, which I think has been quite helpful in terms of results,’ says Helen.**

BSI was particularly impressed with Coaching Focus’ feedback process and willingness to be open to the changes they needed to implement to better meet the organisation’s goals. Coaching Focus were very good at supplying feedback for delegates, but also being open to listening to feedback from delegates. They were also good at working with us on how to substantially change the way we delivered the programme to help us put more emphasis on coaching skills practice.

I look forward to progressing that even further together,’ says Helen.

## WHAT WE ACHIEVED

After 3 years, the partnership is still going strong. Coaching is being used across the UK at BSI, and its culture has shifted, though there is still work to do if the majority of their managers are to master it. In addition, the delegates that go through the programme exclusively provide positive feedback, and state that they enjoy the process. What’s more, Helen also notes that delegates do feel more confident once they have the qualification. From a business perspective, BSI is confident that they have equipped their managers with real skills because they have modified their programme so delegates can only pass if they are able to demonstrate their skills to a qualified expert.

Now that BSI have trained 70% of their UK managers, as well as others in Dubai, the organisation is now looking at its next steps. An internal coaching service is to be put in place, and a strategic plan is coming together regarding how to best implement the service to leverage performance, specifically.

Since BSI’s coaching initiative was a long-term plan and will be an ongoing cultural effort, they’re planning to support coaching and continue their progress with coaching for the next 5-10 years. And they plan to move into the future with Coaching Focus.