

CASE STUDY

Creating spaces for better conversations through supporting managers develop coaching techniques - enables the Royal College of Nursing to see improvements in staff engagement.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the world's largest nursing union and professional body. Operating for over 100 years, they represent more than 435,000 nurses, student nurses, midwives and health care assistants, in the UK and internationally. The RCN's remit is to consider nursing standards, education and practices, along with being the main trade union body for nursing.

With a staff of 900 people across the UK, the RCN is committed to providing a quality service for its members and being an effective, and efficient organisation that attracts and retains high quality staff - recently receiving the prestigious Gold Standard Award from Investors in People.

A lack of management confidence led to inconsistent and ineffective appraisal techniques.

In 2007 the RCN did not have a competency framework nor a management development programme in place, therefore managers were ill equipped to manage effectively. There was inconsistency in how staff were dealt with across the organisation and a gap in management development had not been addressed. To develop the competence and confidence of managers, the RCN started to train internal coaches who worked with the managers encouraging them to evolve a coaching manner.

More recently, in 2017, the RCN generated a transformational five-year plan setting out their ambition to enhance employee engagement and maintain growth. This plan provided the foundation for measurable success, identified key priorities and intentions, and the ability to drive effective long-term sustainability and growth for the organisation.



It was aimed towards adapting to the changing climate of employee expectations, changing demands of customers, and developments in technology. Central to the plan is the development of a culture of learning, and an emphasis on enhancing staff engagement, whilst being accessible, timely and self-managing.

Thus once again, the RCN identified a need for further coaching development for their staff, to allow the transformation of the culture of the organisation. By changing their very traditional appraisal model, to one that encouraged honest and timely conversations, they recognised that whilst some managers were comfortable with this style of working, others were out of their comfort zone and needed assistance.

Coaching Focus understood the needs of the organisation and tailored a coaching development programme to achieve the results the RCN were seeking.

Amisha Wilde, the Learning and Organisational Development Manager at the RCN, had already met Trayton by chance encounter in 2015, and therefore when the RCN were looking to launch this new coaching development programme in 2017, Trayton and Coaching Focus were one of the organisations invited to tender. Amisha explained, that not only did Trayton give the best pitch, but he also, "Understood about how to integrate the programme into our model and what we were trying to achieve, and demonstrated an understanding about our goals, and then built a programme that would help us achieve them."

In order to strengthen the coaching provision within the RCN and to allow managers to compliment and work in parallel with the existing internal coaches, throughout 2018 Coaching Focus delivered 10 regional workshops to one third of the RCN managers. Thus allowing them to create this coaching style, and feel confident when speaking with their staff.

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Developing managers in coaching techniques has proved successful in improving the quality of conversations occurring between employees and managers, resulting in higher staff motivation.

The workshops were extremely well received; with evaluation showing consistent positive anecdotal feedback from managers, claiming they were inspired to use the tools they had learnt in their interactions with their staff.

One participant commented: "Excellent coaching course - Trayton was highly professional and extremely knowledgeable in his field. The course was very thought provoking and I will no doubt use the knowledge I've learnt in my next CC [continuing conversation]".

Amisha explained that not only was there positive feedback from the participants in the workshops, but also, significant feedback from RCN employees, stating that their managers were better equipped to have open and honest conversations with them. A consequence of which, was that staff felt more motivated and supported.

The emergence of a new requirement, to ensure coachees understand how to be coached - is leading to further collaborations.

Since finishing the delivery of the workshops for managers, a new need has emerged for employees to be educated in how to be a coachee. Amisha explained, "We are now exploring an intervention into how best to be coached". The RCN's overall aim is not to have an abundance of professional coaches, but rather a culture of good conversations between employees and managers, and people to feel competent and confident to discuss their development, challenges, and celebrate everyday achievements outside the domain of a formal appraisal. The RCN wants to see coaching adopted as the internal culture across the entire organisation.

Amisha would highly recommend Trayton and Coaching Focus to other organisations. "Trayton had an ability to understand our organisation, what our needs were, whilst recognising the existing structure and internal coaches, he tailored his approach to meet our need and share his professionalism with the workforce".



Now the RCN is gearing up for another year of developing its staff and having continuing conversations around coaching.

Client: The Royal College of Nursing

Challenge: A lack of management development led to inconsistent and ineffective appraisal techniques

Solution: Tailored coach development programme for managers

Result: Training 70 managers in coaching techniques has improved the quality of conversations that occur between employees and managers, leading to higher staff motivation

About Coaching Focus Ltd.

Coaching Focus partners with organisations to create sustainable, performance-focused coaching cultures.

They offer ILM Coaching and Mentoring courses for senior managers or HR/LD professionals who want to develop their expertise, Manager as Coach skills programmes, and other courses, to UK companies such as Tesco and BSI Group.

They also offer coaching consultancy services to companies internationally.