

Barrier Breaking Solutions!

## **Adding value through both Consulting and Coaching**

*- an approach to meeting both an organisation's objectives and improving the performance of its key people*

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## Adding value through both Consulting and Coaching

Coaching and consulting – they’re two different things, aren’t they? Put in simple terms, with coaching you help the client organisation help itself by raising the awareness and responsibility of its key players – usually senior managers. You coach them, challenge them and support them as they find their unique approach to achieve their desired goals. And with consulting, as a specialist in a particular discipline, you are called in to resolve particular issues. So you analyse data, devise potential solutions and either help the client implement those solutions or get your sleeves rolled up and do it yourself.

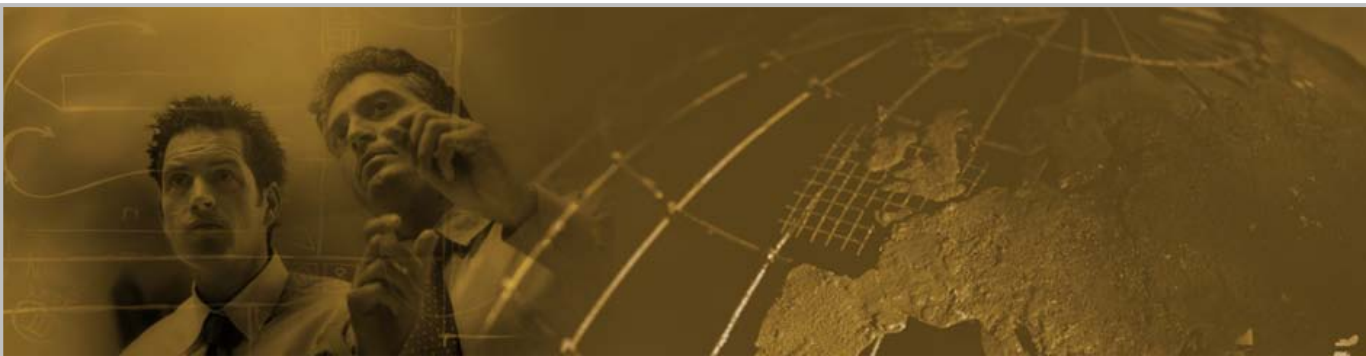
Of course neither the coaching nor the consultant role is as black and white as I portray, but nevertheless the distinction I make is the normal view. Judging by my work in the Aerospace and Defence sector in both roles, I believe that there is a way for skilled practitioners to add more value to their clients’ business in certain situations where both consulting and coaching are needed. This article explains why and how it can work.

Firstly, let’s look at coaching. It has developed at a rapid pace in recent years and is offered by a plethora of organisations and individuals. Undoubtedly, good coaches add value. Most leading companies either bring in coaches or have an established and effective internal coaching programme. Coaches, particularly external coaches, can raise the performance of managers at all levels in an organisation. One of the mantras of the coaching industry is that a

coach need not be an expert in the industry of his client. Indeed, it is asserted that the knowledge and experience of the coach can get in the way of helping his or her client find the appropriate route to achieving their goal. In his book “Effective Coaching”, Myles Downey underlines this principle by telling a story of how he helped a client improve his golf swing to achieve better distance and accuracy despite never having played the game himself. It’s a good story and a brilliant book, but in reality the principle is over-simplistic.

Almost everywhere that I have coached I have had either relevant experience (and battle scars!) in the discipline of my client (e.g. leadership, business management and team development) and / or I have had direct experience in the industry itself. And everywhere I have consulted, I have had either functional experience, e.g. procurement, and/ or industry expertise mostly in Aerospace and Defence. It makes sense, doesn’t it, to get help from people who know your business and your issues? And how many companies have brought in one of the major consultancy companies and found themselves effectively giving work experience to their under 30, wet-behind-the-ears consultants?

My first point in this article is, therefore, that just as your consultant needs to know your business; your coach needs to know your business too.



And what better way to get to know your business than to actually work in it? Imagine a coach who is independent and courageously tells you home truths about your management style; helps you generate ideas and solutions to some seemingly impossible problems; tells you when you are the problem; and who supports and guides you as you develop your business and people. Imagine also that this coach knows in great detail most of the key players in your business, how the organisation functions (or doesn't) and understands at a profound level the market and the opportunities and threats for your business in the market.

One way to achieve this in-depth knowledge is to come into the business and conduct structured interviews with staff, developing rapport and trust, and assessing how effectively the business works. It's a good methodology which works and I have done it myself. But it can be expensive, because while you are doing all this assessment you are disrupting the business and not adding significant value.

Hawksland Associates believe we can do it in a much more cost effective way. Initially we help Aerospace and Defence companies as consultants and interim managers in the way we have consistently done for over 20 years. Then, when we have achieved our client's goals, we can move into a second phase of helping the business not only to sustain the improvements that we have facilitated and implemented, but also to raise the level of achievement of key players in the business. During the consultancy phase we add value almost immediately, and

learn about the organisation in the process of doing "real" work. So my second point in this article is that an ideal person to coach your key people is one who has achieved a great deal as a consultant.

It's important, however, for the coach to be independent and therefore, when acting as a coach, we have to be in that role formally. A coaching contract and boundaries for meetings that are formal coaching sessions need to be agreed. The employee being coached needs to respect those boundaries and meet the obligation of being a "coachee". In my view this works best when the initial consulting phase is well under way or after it has been completed. And, of course, the coach has to be properly trained by a reputable and accredited organisation. A great consultant does not necessarily make a great coach.

Hawksland Associates are proud of our track record of helping Aerospace and Defence businesses improve turnover and profitability, optimise supply chains, introduce new technologies, manage programmes, introduce change, improve performance and save cost. We are committed to helping our clients become the best they can be. By coaching our client's key people during and after a consulting project, we add value at an even greater rate.

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