

This Month

- **The essential consideration for survival and success – people**
- **Coaching considerations for all levels – including bosses**

Our Truly Valuable assets

Recent interfaces with a number of law firms have further convinced me of the business priorities that many face and perhaps the right solution not really being considered

Revenue, gross profit – productivity and efficiency, working capital, meeting client expectations and communications, business management MI/BI, compliance, security and so on.

Traditionally we look at many details but there is a key common factor - and that is resourcing and that means right across the firm from lawyers, managers, skill areas – finance, IT, business development, general support staff.

At last, we are getting to a point with many firms now that they are considering in house personnel as well as the option of outsourcing for skills and volume needs – with outsourced activity plus part time expertise – IT, finance etc

Without doubt all firms must consider their volume and appropriate skills resource as an urgent priority

Many of the topics have been covered separately and can be seen here

<https://professionalchoiceconsultancy.com/articles.php> Nov2021, Sept & Nov & Dec 2022, June & July 2023 can all provide more details.

Annual Review with strategy and budget

Strategy – without doubt every firm needs to do a three-year strategy review – Annually.

Traditionally such reviews cover owner ambitions, geography, work-types, routes to market etc and there is generally a BD plan, IT change plans – a stocktake of where we are at commercially, management teams ambitions – an overall action plan and a budget. Which as all regular readers will know, should last one month and perpetual forecasting and revised action plans need to step in.

We now have a key addition to this exercise – and that is people

We need to conduct an annual stocktake of our resources

- People available now by activity, function and discipline
- Performance and skill levels that have to include not just performance but also – communication skills, intellectual skills, management skills, motivation, emotional factors (availability as an example)
- We have to consider what the firm needs in terms of volumes and skills for every function – legal through to support and specialist skills
- We have to define what we have available to the firm already – the appraisal and review system needs to support this and what training and development plans that are in place to enhance the individuals on board and whether that will meet the needs of legal skills, supervision, management and support. Recognising the E2, C3 and B4 categories and taking the appropriate action

- We can then make decisions around people development, recruitment or outsourcing – part time roles and this covers everything in the practice – legal, support, financial, compliance, IT. This needs a plan, timing and a budget and making decisions on whether the people development actions are most effective in house or individual training programmes.

Without such an action plan we are avoiding critical business issues and not being proactive

Coaching

All of the above demand that appropriate training and people development is put in place, thought through and timed to meet the needs along with the appropriate recruitment demands.

However - It is also true that businesses are increasingly turning to executive coaches to help them achieve their goals more effectively. It means that many of the owners and managers of business can receive advice and ensuing advanced relationships with their teams – certainly for many a new consideration.

I have recently had input from [Jane Gilchrist Executive and Leadership Coach | LinkedIn](#) legal background and UK based coach and [Andrea Foot | LinkedIn](#) of [Who We Are | Leaf Logic](#) legal market experience in the UK and Australia both with some invaluable input.

Andrea's view

***So, what is executive coaching?** It's a developmental process where a coach provides guidance, feedback, and support to another individual or group to improve their performance, achieve goals, or undergo personal or professional growth. Businesses often employ external coaches for their objectivity and specialised expertise. These coaches can offer fresh perspectives and tailored strategies that internal resources may not provide, helping organisations navigate challenges, improve leadership skills, and achieve strategic objectives.*

When might you work with an executive coach? The first step is to think about what topic would benefit the most from deeper attention. Are you looking to improve your leadership effectiveness, or to drive individual or team performance? Perhaps you've taken on a new role and would benefit from a coach who can help you as you settle into it. A coach will work with you to help you to develop useful skills and reduce unhelpful behaviours to support you reaching your goals.

It can be challenging working out what kind of coaching that would be most helpful for you. A good solution can be to have a chat with your HR team for some pointers towards useful resources. Another useful approach is to ask your peers. You may be surprised to find who, in your community, makes use of an executive coach, to learn more about their reasons and their results.

Andrea Foot, who coaches senior leaders and their teams, often hears from her clients that they needed a coach to help them 'get out of their own way'. She adds that once individuals reach a senior level, coaching focuses as much on skills as on developing a deeper awareness of themselves. The effect of this can be dramatic - like a leader who wanted to grow her business but was holding back on pushing her superiors for the resources that she needed. Working with a coach, the leader started to recognise when her collegiate style made her look indecisive to her bosses. Changing this style with her leaders to a more directive approach resulted in her being awarded the necessary resources. The result was a shift from a gradual growth plan to a much more aggressively structured strategy, in response to newly emerging market opportunities. As a leader, the client felt

empowered to be unequivocal about her direction and her bosses perceived her leadership qualities more clearly.

Jane's view

Firms are recognising the crucial role that leadership coaching plays in their learning and development strategies.

Ensuring that learning and development focuses on not only technical skills, but effective leadership skills at all levels has a positive impact on success.

Leadership coaching has emerged as a valuable tool that supports all aspects of the employee lifecycle from recruitment, onboarding, engagement and development, and client relationships.

Recruitment/Onboarding: Leadership coaching and strength profiling can assist with assessing candidates' leadership potential, by identifying key traits such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, and problem-solving skills, which are all essential for the lawyers of tomorrow.

Tailored Development Plans: With a coaching perspective, firms can create tailored development plans that help new hires fully integrate into the firm's culture, values, and ensure that expectations are aligned from the start.

Engagement: When lawyers feel engaged, they are more likely to stay with the firm, work productively, collaborate more effectively, and develop strong relationships both internally and externally with clients. Leadership coaching can support employees in several ways:

- 1. Communication Skills – coaches can help leaders and team members enhance their communication skills, which increases engagement amongst their teams by setting and managing expectations, leveraging individual and collective strengths, building stronger and more meaningful relationships, increasing collaboration, establishing effective feedback processes, which ultimately support performance, client outcomes, and results.*
- 2. Stress Management and Resilience – coaching can equip lawyers with the tools they need to manage the demands of their role and build their resilience. This can lead to increase job satisfaction and engagement, which also supports wellbeing.*
- 3. Leadership Skill Development: Training and coaching can help lawyers build the skills that they need and help them to implement the strategies that they have learned. A blended approach of training and coaching significantly increases the transfer of learnings, maximising ROI.*
- 4. Succession Planning – By identifying high potential team members and investing in their development, firms can ensure a smooth transition of leadership roles when needed, which reduces disruptions, and helps to maintain stability.*

Jane Gilchrist, Executive and Leadership Coach has noticed that coaching is regarded as an integral part of learning and development for lawyers. It supports all aspects of the employee lifecycle, from recruitment to onboarding, engagement, and personal development.

By investing in leadership coaching, law firms are not only enhancing the skills of their employees but also cultivating a culture of leadership which ultimately contributes to their long-term success.

Cannot be ignored

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