



One step back, two steps forward: The power of coaching through sudden change

The Covid-19 crisis has presented new challenges for businesses the world over. Organisations are working out how best to tackle the situation and the economic consequences that lie ahead. Can coaching help business leaders step back and consider the long term opportunities, as well as assisting with how they manage the short-term pain?

Recently organisations across the globe have faced disruption and challenges few of us could have ever anticipated. Everyone everywhere has been grappling to adapt to a new set of circumstances and establish a way forwards.

It's easy to assume business coaching isn't a priority at the moment; that it can take a back seat until we've all returned to more normal ways of working. However, in many ways, carving out regular time for coaching is potentially more important at times of sudden, unexpected change than at any other.

We're all facing questions we've never had to think about before. Until recently most people had never heard of a furloughing scheme, let alone know how to manage one. There's also a real opportunity to be on the front foot when life does get back to normality – businesses who take time to think about how this crisis could change working practices in a positive way will be the ones who hit the ground running at the end of it.

So how can a business coach help in times like these?





1. Coaching provides space to reflect on the bigger picture

As we are beginning to see, the working world may never be the same again.

We predict the best bits of what's changed will stick, especially if that makes us more efficient and effective. From more flexible working to fewer face-to-face meetings and business trips. There may be some organisations that thrive on the current digital transformation and jettison physical offices altogether.

The time to prepare for your organisation's post Covid-19 future is now. And business coaching? It provides that priceless commodity in a leader's diary: cordoned-off time. While we can all try to block out our calendar, it rarely results in quality thinking time. A regular coaching session allows you the space to reflect on the bigger picture and discuss your thoughts with someone who can help you detach yourself from the intensity of your job and think more strategically. Even a 30-minute session can prove invaluable in giving you the opportunity to step back.

2. A business coach is neutral

Many businesses are facing some pretty tough questions at the moment. If you're a senior leader you may have difficult decisions to make about the direction of travel, prioritisation of work and staffing. The nature of your individual role may be shifting. On a macro level, the role your organisation is playing could be changing too. It can be difficult to talk these things through with colleagues who are likely to be professionally and/or emotionally involved on some level.

A coach provides a neutral sounding board for you to take a tactical step back and talk through these obstacles, listening confidentially with no agenda or judgement so you can work out how best to respond to the challenges ahead.

3. Coaching provides a framework

Another great benefit of coaching, over trying to work things through on your own, is structure. On a basic level, a coach brings a framework. This helps you look at your problems in a way that takes you to actions, not just around in circles.

Here at Berkeley, we particularly like using a simple four-step process known as the GROW model. This allows you to set goals, look at the reality of the situation, explore the options available and work out a way forward.

Building a framework like this can be a very powerful way to generate new insights and actions. It gives a coach the opportunity to listen and ask key questions. Laying the foundations to help guide you through a thought process and work out a way to improve the situation you are in.

Can you connect with a coach in a virtual world? Yes you can

For business coaching to have an impact, chemistry is such an important part of the equation. So is it really possible to develop this rapport over Zoom or Teams? We believe it is – even if you start working with a coach you haven't yet met in real life.

As the current environment has moved us all into a virtual world, we are finding digital meetings can feel as personal as meeting face-to-face. Talking via a screen involves eye contact. We're also being parachuted straight into each other's houses – often a private study or living room. This can help you feel more comfortable. And, intentionally or not, it can provide more of an insight into someone than you would get in a sterile meeting room.

Just like in the real world, the key is finding a quiet space away from distractions. Take a little time in your first session to establish a relationship, and virtual coaching works.



Business coaching can help you get set for a post-pandemic world

In the grand scheme of things, the current Covid-19 crisis won't last for ever. There will be a post-pandemic world, and even if your organisation is standing still for a while, now is the time to prepare for the next stage.

Coaching can help you peer through the fog of uncertainty and review what's likely to have changed temporarily, permanently and fundamentally. Helping you consider what to bring into the new world and laying the groundwork to get your organisation in pole position for the future.



Learn more about how Berkeley's professional coaching approach can help your organisation achieve its goals **here**. Alternatively contact **Richard Marsden, Partner** to discuss your requirements in more detail.



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