



Courtesy of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)

Creating a Coaching Culture for Better Talent

ORGANIZATIONAL SNAPSHOT: **GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)**

Headquarters: **Brentford, Middlesex, United Kingdom**

Number of Employees: **101,255**

Annual Revenue: **\$38.2 billion USD**

Coaching Implementation Date:
May 1, 2010

Number of External Coach Practitioners: **214**

Number of Internal Coach Practitioners: **1,085**

Number of Managers and Leaders Using Coaching Skills: **16,500**

Number of Employees Receiving Coaching from a Coach Practitioner: **5,390**

Prism Nominating Coach:
Adrian Machon, PCC



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Headquartered in the United Kingdom, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is a global health care company that researches and develops products in three primary areas: pharmaceuticals, vaccines and consumer health care. They have commercial operations in more than 150 countries.

GSK's coaching initiative also has a global presence within the organization and is available to all employees at every level. Since its initial implementation in 2010, coaching has had strong support from leadership including GSK's current CEO and new CEO designate. Even more impressive, the organization has seen a \$66 million USD return on investment (ROI) from its coaching initiative.

In recognition of GSK's robust global coaching initiative, the International Coach Federation (ICF) awarded the organization the 2016 ICF International Prism Award. The Prism Award program honors organizations that have achieved the highest standard of excellence in coaching programs that yield discernible and measurable positive impacts, fulfill rigorous professional standards, address key strategic goals, and shape organizational culture. (Learn more about the award at Coachfederation.org/prism.)

A Self-sustaining Model

Prior to 2010, GSK's use of coaching was reactive, with spiraling costs and dispersed and limited accountability. Leaders realized they needed to make a change in order to attract, develop and retain talent that has the confidence and skills to challenge the status quo and make change happen. The organization reoriented coaching as a strategic tool in the transformation and success of its business. Coaching is now integral to GSK's talent, leadership and organizational development strategy.

Since GSK wanted to make its coaching offering a truly global initiative, the organization looked to ICF as a model for consistent standards and ethics in coaching across all regions of the world. One of the first priorities was to build an internal coaching structure to ensure high standards across the global organization. The Coaching Centre of Excellence (CoE) was created. The CoE standardizes coaching globally throughout the organization by improving access, ensuring quality and efficiency, and creatively containing costs. It is a self-funded unit without a direct budget from GSK; rather, all coaching costs are charged to the business units using coaches' services.

Coaches and business leaders view the CoE as a sustainable structure. Adrian Machon, PCC, the organization's Prism nominating coach and an external

coach practitioner for GSK, explains that the CoE must offer a high-quality service because it is a business. "It must manage its efficiency and rigor, its capacity and creativity against costs," he says.

Rogério Ribeiro, senior vice president and area head of emerging markets and Asia Pacific, says that this model makes the program even more valuable than if it were budgeted because it really makes him, and other business leaders, evaluate how this cost will impact business. "We're not using it because it's something that is centrally available or funded," Ribeiro says. "We're using it because it's the right thing. You must believe that coaching is the way to develop better leaders."

GSK's coaching structure is a mixed-modality model, including more than 200 external coach practitioners, 1,000 internal coach practitioners and 16,000 managers/leaders using coaching skills. All external and internal Executive Coaches are credentialed; most through ICF.

The structure also includes a Job Plus Coaches (JPC) program, where employees volunteer as coaches. All JPCs go through a rigorous training process and are assessed by trainers in the classroom, by peers through peer coaching, through professional quarterly supervision and through coaching observations.

GSK's leadership sees the JPC program as a worthwhile investment for the organization and its people. Because of that, the majority of coaching happens on company time even though it is a "volunteer" activity, and JPCs have access to continuing professional development just as other coaches and managers/leaders do. GSK discusses the value of the JPC program, and other organizations are beginning to adapt the model for themselves.

Developing Leaders Internally

Coaching has strong support from leaders within the organization, and more than 60 percent of the corporate executive team uses coaches on a regular basis.

"They're very much supporters and talk about it openly," says Sally Bonneywell, PCC, vice president of coaching for GSK. "The way that they position coaching is that it's for success and for people who want to become the best versions of themselves. ... It's not positioned as

being anything like remedial; it's very much about saying how it can help us be even more successful."

Leaders are such believers in coaching that they have pushed for specific coaching programs. A few years ago, CEO Andrew Witty wanted to ensure he had more internal employees ready to take on C-suite positions, so GSK created the Enterprise Leadership program, which includes 18 months of Executive Coaching to employees identified as having the potential for these higher leadership roles. Ribeiro, a past Enterprise Leadership participant, says, "There's nothing more powerful than when senior leaders stand up and say, 'I'm doing coaching, it's helping me develop to be a better leader, a better manager.' This is having a huge impact on the organization."

Designated CEO Emma Walmsley, who will become GSK's first female CEO in March 2017, was one of three founding sponsors of the Accelerating Difference (AD) program, which aims to promote more women to more senior levels within the organization through coaching, sponsorship and dialogues. Walmsley says, "Having women at all levels allows us to see role models at all levels, allows us to see the possibilities that we have ahead of us in terms of our careers. It creates coaching and mentoring opportunities and frankly some very practical guidance around our career and life journeys that many of us face."

The program, which has 220 participants this year, includes 12 individual coaching sessions, six half-day group coaching sessions and senior leader sponsorship. Machon explains, "It takes them through a process of looking at confidence, presence, power, impact and challenge, and then pulls it all together as an authentic expression."

Approximately 46 percent of 2013 AD participants have been promoted by at least one level, compared to 26 percent of women and 27 percent of men at the same grades across the organization. Participants were also more likely to stay at the organization (76 percent) than 69 percent of women and 71 percent of men who did not attend the program. Direct reports indicated that AD participants improved in manager effectiveness over time, improving more than three times faster (7.7 percent) than a control group (2.1 percent).

“Coaching has transformed my life. It helped me get clear about how I could fulfill my potential. ... I came to coaching late in my career—I wish I'd found it earlier,” said one leader, a commercial senior vice president.

Coaching Across the World

Rolling coaching out to different cultures and regions can be difficult, but GSK has accepted that challenge and is working to give everyone at the organization the opportunity to experience working with a coach. “We’re helping people to understand the equal power of coaching in terms of it not being a power dynamic, but of it being an equal relationship and why this is valuable in achieving business goals,” says Bonneywell. “When you take the time and the effort to do that, then it can really take off, but it does take time to really help people understand the value and the importance of coaching and how it differs and how it’s much more beneficial in the long term of sustainable growth than mentoring or consulting.”

Individuals at GSK may also face cultural challenges when transitioning to different roles, and coaching is there to support them. Ribeiro recalls his own experience after being promoted to his current role, which moved him from Brazil to the United Kingdom. Not only did he have to adjust to new and added responsibility but also to a different culture. He sought out coaching to help him understand the different ways of working and the different agendas in his new culture. Calling the experience “incredible,” Ribeiro says, “Today I feel that I am contributing to the global agenda, even though I come from a different background and culture.”

With continuing support from leaders like Ribeiro, GSK’s coaching program will only become more robust. Coaching has increased 2,900 percent within the last

five years with coaching embedded systemically into organization increasing empowerment, accountability and confidence.

“There are a lot of huge ripple effects that happen as a result of coaching in terms of empowerment, , in terms of satisfaction, but also in terms of leadership effectiveness,” Bonneywell explains. “I do recommend people to do it, with caution, making sure they use credible ICF Core Competencies, making sure they have credentialed coaches and set the standards, but also with the encouragement of senior leaders. The sponsorship of the very senior leaders and our corporate executive team is so very important.”

The International Coach Federation (ICF) is dedicated to advancing the coaching profession by setting high ethical standards, providing independent certification and building a worldwide network of credentialed coaches across a variety of coaching disciplines. ICF is active in representing all facets of the coaching industry, including Executive, Life Vision and Enhancement, Leadership, Relationship, and Career Coaching. Its 27,000-plus members located in more than 135 countries* work toward the common goal of enhancing awareness of coaching, upholding the integrity of the profession, and continually educating themselves with the newest research and practices.

**Numbers as of October 2016. Numbers are subject to change month to month.*



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