

# Henley Business School reveals HR paying lip service to coaching

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Henley Business School has revealed the results of its Corporate Learning Priorities survey which shows coaching remains high up the list of development priorities for 2010. However, while 61% of respondents said developing a coaching culture was one of their top 5 priorities, only 9% made it their 1st or 2nd priority.

Henley has suggested that this reflects an uncertainty about how to go about creating a coaching culture and concern as to whether the senior team will support the initiative. In addition, a quarter of respondents made 'developing leadership coaching (<http://www.henley.reading.ac.uk/executiveeducation/HenleyCoachingServices/cl-HenleyCoachingServices.aspx>) skills' their first or second priority.

Dr Patricia Bossons, Director of Coaching Services at Henley Business School (<http://www.henley.reading.ac.uk/>), commented: "I am hearing from clients and students alike that coaching has never been more important since it helps maintain clarity and resourcefulness in people driving business recovery. The fact that so many in the survey recognize the importance of coaching yet few appear to make it a high priority may be because coaching is seen as a process, rather than a specific 'management development (<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/CSTD/managementdevelopment/cstd-leadership.aspx>)' area, such as strategic thinking or managing change. It is also still perceived by many to be something that lies in the hands of HR, or external coaches, so coaching skills development can easily be seen as someone else's responsibility."

She added: "Coaching can be the 'oil' that enables the rest of a management development agenda deliver tangible outcomes and results. A senior strategic leadership programme for example, is going to have much longer lasting impact, and a much greater return on investment, if each individual is supported by an independent coach as they go through their programme. Individuals recognize this, which is why the statistics in the research show leadership coaching skills development as a high priority."

Atkins Plc approached Henley Business School because it wanted to be able to have more open, adult and constructive conversations with its top 100 managers and an honest exchange of views about current performance and future potential. The senior team felt that understanding exactly where their leaders saw their own futures and articulating how the organisation saw those leaders developing was critical in building a succession strategy that would deliver business goals.

The Dialogue Programme was created, which included a two-day workshop preceded by a detailed process of data gathering and working to guidelines given by Henley. This included career history to date, current aspirations, psychometric and 360-degree feedback data. During the two-day workshop, there were self awareness raising and skills development sessions facilitated by the tutor and two one-to-one sessions with a personal coach. The coaching sessions were designed to help the individual reflect in the moment about the issues being raised by the programme.

Brian Fitzgerald, HR Director Group Talent Management, commented: "For the company, an in depth

dialogue with top talent is now providing insights that didn't previously exist on a consistent basis. This enhances knowledge of current capabilities and aids succession planning aligned with the company's future strategy."

Notes to editors:

The Henley Corporate Learning Priorities Survey 2010 can be downloaded from:

<http://www.henley.reading.ac.uk/executiveeducation/cl-home.aspx>

Henley's Academic contact, Dr Patricia Bossons, can be reached on 01491 571454.

About Henley Business School at the University of Reading

Henley Business School is one of Europe's largest full-service business schools and offers a comprehensive range of management courses (<http://www.henley.reading.ac.uk/>), from undergraduate business degrees to executive education. Its portfolio also encompasses the world-ranked Henley MBA, Executive MBA and Flexible Learning MBA, The Henley Doctor of Business Administration, PhD opportunities, and postgraduate Masters courses in business. It is also one of the very few international business schools to hold triple accredited status (AMBA, EQUIS, AACSB).

Henley Business School was formed from the merger of Henley Management College and the Business School at the University of Reading.

PR Contact:

Fiona Leslie  
Communications Management  
Calverton House  
2 Harpenden Road  
St Albans  
Herts  
AL3 5AB  
+44 1727 733884  
[www.henley.reading.ac.uk](http://www.henley.reading.ac.uk)