

## **Book Review: ‘Leadership Team Coaching – developing collective transformational leaders’, by Peter Hawkins – Kogan Page ISBN: 978-0-7494-5883-6**

The benefit of this book is in its comprehensiveness about the topic of team coaching, and provides many tools and tables to aid the practitioner in considering to implement this facility, or to an internal provider in enhancing the delivery capability of team coaching.

People who will benefit most from this book are likely to be HRD, OD, L&D champions and line managers keen on using coaching as a tool to enhance performance.

The author has undoubted credibility in this field and draws heavily on his experiences of working with organisations externally and as a member of the Bath Consultancy Group, to provide us with a range of helpful insights.

A number of short case studies are cited as examples of this collaborative work, and these are generally useful. He is also quite wedded to offering a range of models and frameworks, which can appear rather academic at times, rather than pragmatic.

The book is organised into 4 parts covering high-performing teams, team coaching, coaching different types of teams, and, selecting, developing and supervising team coaches.

**Part 1 – High-performing Teams**, provides the context for teams to rise to meet the demands of an increasingly complex and demanding world where, despite rapidly developing technology, a ‘wisdom gap’ is occurring. Hawkins believes that leaders are failing to provide the leadership required, so his premise is that high-performing teams are needed to provide collective leadership and meet global demands.

Team coaching is needed, Hawkins maintains, to reduce the danger of ‘group think’ (the dominant culture prevailing thereby reducing independent and diverse thinking, and an increase in fear), and defines high team performance as more than the sum of its parts, not less.

The chapters includes many reasons why we need high-performing teams, recaps effective team research in recent years, and introduces successful team disciplines – commissioning, co-creating, connecting, and core learning - for teams to effect transition.

The author cites useful examples from his own consulting work where leadership teams have been challenged to think differently – these are also useful tips to improve meetings!

**Part 2 – Team Coaching**, includes a definition of team coaching, the processes used, and coaching systemic team disciplines.

My issue has always been around whether team coaching actually exists as an entity, rather than being an amalgam of facilitation and coaching techniques, process consultancy, with some team development thrown in! Hawkins answers this with a robust summary of the development of team

coaching, citing amongst others Tim Gallwey, David Clutterbuck, Edgar Schein and Jonathan Zneimar of Lane4 as influential.

He locks these elements together in a continuum of team coaching and defines the role of the team coach as working less from a traditional, task-focused 'inside out' approach, to a more 'outside in' style e.g. engaging with all stakeholders to create value by jointly transforming the wider business.

The who's who of team coaching includes line managers, internally trained coaches, HR and L&D specialists, and external coaches and consultants.

Hawkins advocates the use of the CID-CLEAR model, adapted from supervision, for the team coach to adopt when guiding them towards higher performance.

**Part 3 – Coaching Different Types of Teams**, defines the various types of teams that exist – project, virtual, management, international, etc. - and on coaching the board.

Board coaching can involve the board members defining their role, especially in relation to the executive team that they report to, and can focus around policy formulation, strategic thinking, supervision management, and on external accountability.

Hawkins encourages board members towards analysis and dialogue to ensure greater participation, debate and ownership of these issues. He also advocates that non-executive directors be more actively involved to help accountability.

**Part 4 – Selecting, Developing and Supervising Team Coaches**, includes a seven stage model for selecting team coaches, developing their capabilities, providing supervision, and offering coaching methods and tools – many of which, such as Myers-Briggs, Belbin Team Roles, etc., will be familiar to many experienced HR/L&D practitioners.

### **In summary**

Leadership Team Coaching makes a good addition to the bookshelf for those concerned with developing the culture within their organisation, towards a high-performance, team-based coaching environment. This goal is not for the faint hearted and will require careful consideration of systemic thinking and process consulting.

Hawkins urges us to adopt team coaching for its contribution to the wider system, and less on inter-team relationships and tasks. He ends with a plea for greater evidence-based research into team coaching, to create shifts in performance.

This book will appeal particularly to line managers interested in coaching, internal coaches keen on expanding their role, HR, OD and L&D specialists with responsibility for developing the coaching culture, and external coaches and consultants wishing to support their clients as a learning organisation.

Value for money? Yes, a good resource for under £25 particularly if you have a purpose to enhance performance through team coaching, or for extending the range of coaching options internally.

Reviewer: Peter of Peter Welch Coaching: [www.peterwelchcoaching.co.uk](http://www.peterwelchcoaching.co.uk)