# "One volunteer highly effective coach is worth a hundred conscripted to and instructed to coach"

The iABCt advocates using the Professional Coaching Certificate programme as an incentive to both encourage enthusiasm for coaching and target advance skills into areas of an organisation that might not otherwise experience this advanced level of education and training

### Quick fixes look cheap but can cost the earth

Few organisations can afford to teach everyone to be a professional coach. It can cost well over £5000 to put someone through an accredited coaching programme equipping them with the skills to sustainably change behaviour with coaching. Of course for a few hundred quid there's plenty of quick-fix coaching courses but only the very naive or seriously deluded really believes that this will do anything but raise expectations. Like a chef explaining a recipe and making it look simple, it's easy to explain coaching and it's benefits but the proof of this particular pudding is not just in the eating, it's about the audience being able to cook it first. The fact is that they can't. Coaching is much like driving, it can be explained easily but to drive safely takes practice and repeated tuition.

### Human Resource executives already know this is true, yet as powerful and game-changing as coaching is, there just isn't the budget to train everyone to be a professional coach

So the smart ones do the next best thing. They equip their senior people with professional coaching skills and set up exemplars in the business. They make sure that proper coaching takes place in formal and informal situations and have enough people at every level to demonstrate what coaching is and what coaching can do, so that it spreads like a beneficial virus. The more that catch it the more that get it. The more who get it the more the experience and results start to permeate up, down and sideways through the organisation.

But what if there isn't the budget to do all that, what happens then? More often than not they opt to train just very senior people and then 'sheep-dip' the rest in a watered down introduction to coaching, hoping that it'll be enough to make coach trickle down through the organisation.

It won't.

It's just plain wrong to think that coaching skills will trickle down an organisation. There is no evidence to support that and plenty to suggest it doesn't work. Effective coaching is contagious but so is quick-fix and ineffective coaching. A manager exposed to a short course on coaching or attending an inspirational seminar may get pumped but almost always cant convert that enthusiasm into coaching behaviour themselves. They need an exemplar. they need someone on their level working in their sphere or awareness that doesn't just know about coaching, actually knows how to coach and can do it well.

Training senior managers to be professional coaches may help them personally for when they leave the organisation, and it will of course help their performance at that level now. It won't however have very much effect on the level below, the level below that and the ones below those. It won't trickle down. It won't seep through. It won't because it can't. Coaching isn't an idea and it's not a process, it's a way of thinking - and that's very, very personal. People become coaches either by being properly trained how to be one or by having some idea what it's about and then working close to people who are good at it. They will copy that behaviour and make it their own. If there's nothing to copy then there's no means for them to change and take ownership of that change. It certainly won't happen by being introduced to the concept of coaching, being taught the rudimentary GROW model or by being told to start acting like a coach. It just doesn't work. Behaviour does not change that way.

### Low-cost high-impact focused and targeted incentive coach training

Whatever coach training is already happening in an organisation, any and every organisation will benefit from a few additional employees gaining the skills to be a professional coach. By rewarding enthusiastic employees recognised as having the potential to be good coaches, the iABCt can help turn those people into great coaches. Rewarding employees who might positively influence an existing coaching initiative by sending them to the sunshine island of Tenerife for a week's 'Summer School' as the start of a 9 month professional applied coaching certificate is a tangible and credible acknowledgement of their potential. Rewarding employees who might not otherwise qualify for an advanced education programme leading to professional credentials is a fabulous way to demonstrate coaching congruency; if the outcome of coaching is to see the delivery of a coaching culture then professionally trained coaches at every level will deliver it.

The cost of the iABCt programme is very, very low. It is the equivalent of just £300 for each of the 9 months of the programme and includes accommodation in a 4 star hotel on the marina in Tenerife, all training, support tuition and even the training materials that are delivered on a tablet computer that is theirs to keep. Even travel to the island is incredibly competitive, frequent and convenient from pretty much every part of the UK and most of Europe.

The benefit of rewarding individuals to help boost the impact of whatever else is already happening with coaching far outweighs any cost. The enthusiasm alone will raise the profile of coaching in whatever part of the organisation the chosen employee works. The ripples that flow from employees rewarded by being allowed to participate in this kind of programme spread far and wide, and are the polar opposite of the negative cynicism associated with more senior teams being sent on 'away day training'. The requirement of the programme for the participants to undertake serious amounts of coaching during the 9 months of the programme ensure that the quality and quantity of coaching increases and improves.

This is such a simple idea - and it does work.

Incentive training is a long established approach to rewarding, incentivising, engaging and enthusing employees. In the US there are hundreds of examples every year of training events, seminars and meetings that could easily have taken place in Houston, Hershey or Hatchie Bottom, Texas, instead are organised in Hawaii, simply because the location turns a training exercise into a desirable experience. Add to that the organisational exclusivity, because many might wish to go but few are chosen, and you have a potent combination that will serve you well. So whatever coaching activity you are involved in right now, ask yourself how enthusiasm and excitement are going to be sustained? If, as is probable, you've invested considerably already, how do you protect that investment and ensure that a few years down the road you don't have to start all over again? Instead of conscripts look to find the willing volunteers in the ranks that'll do the job for you. The iABCt programme will do this for you at a fraction of what an alternative might cost, but if not the iABCt, then do something that achieves a similar result because your investment so far deserves it.