

# Coaching at Work

## “pp29-31 Random House”

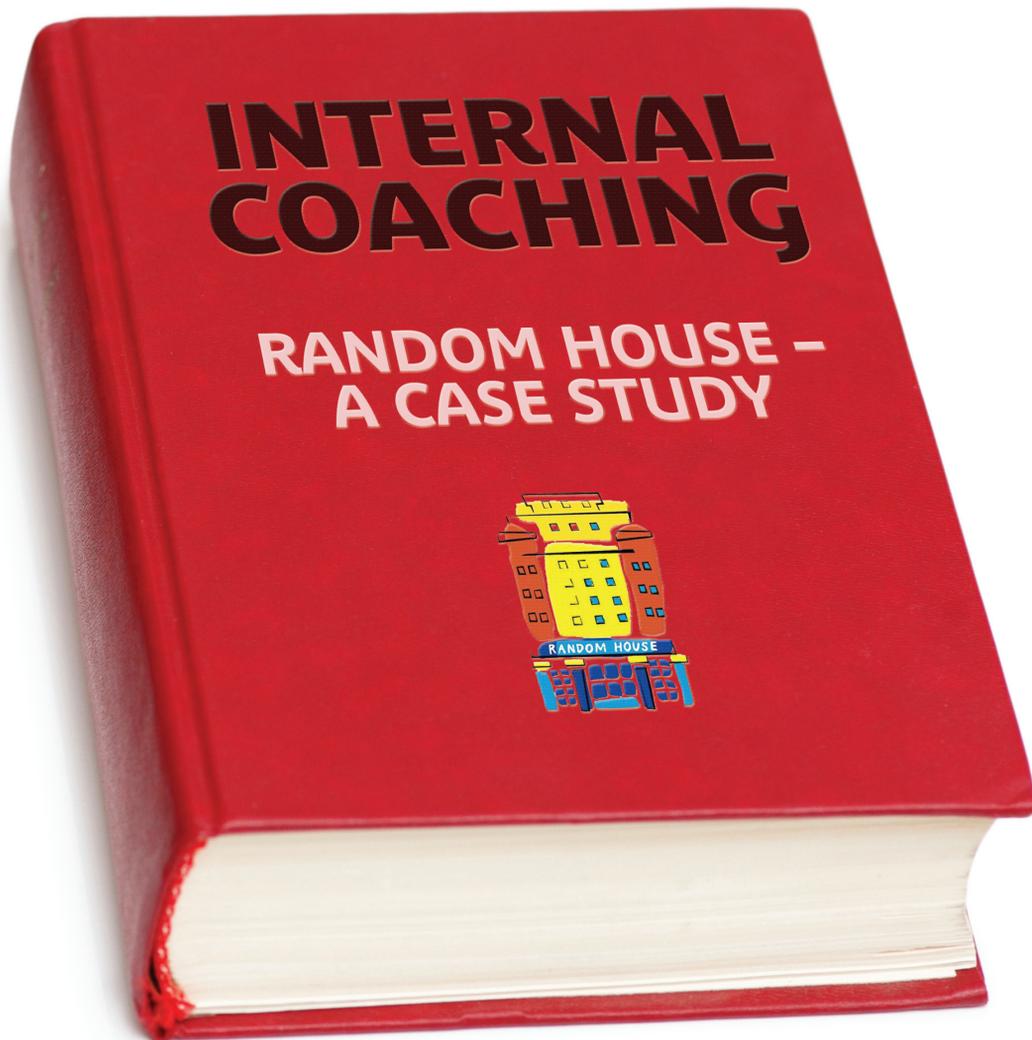
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How to set up and make the most of your internal coaching pool  
**Jason Miller, partner, Tinder-Box**

**A**re you considering setting up an internal coaching pool? If so, you need to give serious consideration to the following three challenges:

- *First*, how do you maintain quality and continually upskill your coaches?
- *Second*, how do you use your internal coaching pool more strategically to deliver

more ambitious and effective programmes?

- *Third*, how do you make sure that your coaches remain motivated, active and engaged in the coaching?

At Tinder-Box, we have just embarked on a leadership development programme involving one of our client's internal coaching teams, which we believe delivers on all three of these challenges.

The Random House Group is one of the largest general book publishing companies in the UK. It comprises five publishing companies: Cornerstone Publishing, Vintage Publishing, Ebury Publishing, Random House Children's Publishers UK and Transworld Publishers. The Group boasts more than 40 diverse and highly respected imprints.

Random House is an international publishing

“ The publishing environment is changing at a rapid rate of knots, transformed by the advent of online and digital. The Random House Group is at the forefront of this huge change ”

business, responsible for an extraordinarily diverse catalogue of books ranging from *Fifty Shades of Grey* to Mary Berry's *Baking Bible*. At the moment, the publishing environment is changing at a rapid rate of knots, transformed by the advent of online and digital. The Random House Group is at the forefront of this huge change in its marketplace.

A burning question for the Group is how to continue to innovate and drive efficiency against a backdrop of what is, at heart, a very traditional business, undergoing momentous change.

Random House wants to empower its leaders to take them through this transformational period and seize the opportunity, rather than be sidelined by the change. Two years ago as a key step in offering more strategic support to senior managers, the company established a pool of internal coaches. The 25 people who were selected all had the desire and aptitude to take on this coaching role, well aware that it would require time, commitment and motivation.

### **The leadership programme**

At the end of last year, the business coaching consultancy Tinder-Box was invited to tender for a leadership programme



**Neil Morrison, group HR director at Random House**

involving Random House's top 150 senior managers.

Having won the pitch, Tinder-Box devised a programme to develop the confidence and skill of these leaders, focusing especially on leading teams through change and driving innovation.

It consists of four modules – Self-leadership, Leading Teams, Leading Change/Driving Innovation and a pioneering Enterprise module (which will bring the previous three modules together by working with the leaders from a social enterprise to make real and sustainable changes).

The plan is that coaching will be a key support mechanism for people on the programme to create real change back in the business after each module, and the coaching will be carried out by the internal coaching pool.

The group of 150 programme attendees has been divided into cadres of 20-25 and each cadre will undertake all four modules over a six to eight month period, with a break between each one, where they will be able to apply what they have learned to their work – which is where the coaching support comes in.

Each internal coach will be assigned one or two programme members to coach and will spend in the region of 10 hours with each person across the programme. It has been devised in this very structured way to ensure that the coaches have the capacity to carry out their coaching role effectively alongside their regular day job and also to allow for ongoing quality control.

### **In-house control**

Normally, Tinder-Box would undertake all the coaching on a programme such as this, however Random House is taking on much of it in-house – on a grand scale.

There are many benefits to its approach. The programme will provide the opportunity to deepen the impact and enhance the experience of the coaches, as well as clearly making economic sense for Random House as it is using all the resources available to it. Part of the challenge though, is how to ensure the coaches are

## What did the participants think?

● **Transworld's marketing director, Janine Giovanni, explains why she was keen to become an internal coach:**

*"I had personally experienced the benefits of coaching and wanted to help others have the same positive experience. It's hard to learn new skills, such as coaching 'on the job' alongside a demanding full-time role, so to have the opportunity to do that and add real value to the business is REALLY SMART!"*

● **Marketing director for Ebury, Diana Riley:**

*"This is a terrific opportunity to embed a coaching culture in the business. We also find it incredibly motivating that the organisation has the confidence in us – and is willing to invest in our continued development as coaches – as part of this programme."*

● **Group HR director Neil Morrison:**

*"With so much change in our industry, developing confident, creative, innovative leaders will help us to continue to be successful today, tomorrow and beyond. Involving experienced and successful leaders in developing the future generation ensures that we transfer and share knowledge and insight and grow together as a leadership group."*

“ It is fast becoming apparent that some taking part in the leadership programme will want to become internal coaches as well – so this is a fabulous way of developing the internal coaching pool further ”

ready to meet this ambition, ie, that the internal coaches have the confidence, skills and experience to support the leaders on this strategic programme.

The role of the Tinder-Box team (who are all Professional Certified Coaches level, credentialed with the International Coach Federation), therefore also becomes one of support of the development and execution of the coaching by the internal coaching on the programme.

First, Tinder-Box will hold a short refresher course and explain the rules of engagement for the programme, as well as some of the key tools that will be used

throughout, such as EQi psychometric reports and 360-degree feedback.

Each module will be followed by a debrief for the internal coaches, in order to review their experience, share lessons, learn new skills and go forward knowing what they need to do.

Finally, some of the internal coaches may also wish to pursue externally recognised coaching credentials.

The opportunity to gain professional recognition can be a powerful motivator for internal coaches. Those who want to do this will be supervised by Tinder-Box coaches as part of the formal accreditation process.

### **Promising results**

The programme is just starting, and Module 1 went live at the end of March. There is a real buzz of excitement, not only among programme participants, but also among the internal coaches. It is fast becoming apparent that some taking part in the leadership programme will want to become internal coaches as well – so this is a fabulous way of developing the internal coaching pool further.

Tinder-Box will be tracking the progress of the programme via a range of metrics around its impact and the coaches, so we look forward to the opportunity to share these results at the right time. ■