

Coaching is 'still not being driven by strategy'

Many businesses are still failing to align coaching with business strategy, suggests research.

Some 39 per cent of respondents to a survey by consultancy Personnel Decisions International (PDI) said coaching was not driven by their organisation's strategic priorities and business objectives.

The study was carried out between February and May this year among 150 US and European HR, learning and development and organisation development professionals in international companies with more than 5,000 employees.

PDI's findings reflect the CIPD's *Learning and Development 2007* survey, which revealed that only 43 per cent of organisations linked coaching activity to business goals completely or to a great extent.

Forty-nine per cent of PDI's respondents said they had a clearly defined coaching process; 36 per cent said coaching was integrated into their talent management system; 43 per cent said they selected qualified coaches according to clear criteria; and 18 per cent thought the culture and values of their organisation supported coaching. Other findings were that 58 per cent measured the impact of coaching and 46 per cent said they currently got "optimal value from coaching".

Bobbie Little, director of worldwide executive coaching services at PDI, warned that coaching in an organisation would not be effective unless it was supported.

"If an organisation's culture doesn't support coaching, people will get frustrated and there will be a major disconnection. There needs to be honesty, trust, curiosity and flexibility and many companies struggle with that," said Little, speaking at PDI's Leadership Advantage Forum in London on 23 May.

Little also warned that organisations that only offered ad hoc, one-to-one coaching missed the chance to align coaching with broader organisational values and priorities. They also faced difficulties in tracking costs, determining organisational value and knowing what coaches were really doing or how effective they were.

Coaching could be "tainted" if the first or most prominent participants were poor performers, she said.