

Concurrent Session K
Wednesday 2 September
1.00pm – 1.50pm

TEMG
Leading
Locally
Competing
Globally



30 Aug – 2 Sep 2015
Novotel North Beach Wollongong



Session 2

Coaching: A Way Forward Through Collaborative Empowerment

Linda Thompson

University of Auckland

Linda Thompson has worked at The University of Auckland for eleven years. Her current role is Director of Operations for the Faculty of Science, a large and complex faculty. In New Zealand, Linda has worked in both the public sector - as a secondary teacher and in tertiary management - and in the public sector in finance and public relations. Her finance career began in the banking sector in Germany where she lived for seven years. Linda's diverse experience provides an excellent background for working in the tertiary sector.

Tertiary education management has long since reached the point where we can safely claim to be dealing with change as a constant. Leaders are looking towards more effective ways of embedding change whilst building new capability quickly and efficiently. Coaching can be the answer. Coaching facilitates productive and positive change in individuals, teams and systems. Coaching provides the opportunity for organisational learning and adaptability by helping individuals learn to think and to work together more effectively. Through coaching, leaders can learn how to optimise the value of teams.

By using a coaching-based, team-building model, it is possible to build and lead a team to successfully embed a new structure or system through developing a collaborative vision and a sense of purpose. Coaching will assist in creating focused management teams. Coaching necessitates collaboration, an understanding of context and clarity of action.

Navigating and leading through a large change initiative is an optimal time to establish coaching as a leadership tool because real experiences provide opportunities to question, analyse and develop new ways of thinking and to try out new ideas. Coaching assists leaders to understand their values and beliefs and can be a powerful agent of change.

In my presentation, I will explore the use of coaching as a tool to lead a newly created management team following a complete re-structure of administrative roles in the Faculty of Science at the University of Auckland. I will provide a brief background to the change initiative explaining purpose and desired outcomes. I will then concentrate on the post-change experience and how coaching has been used to help the senior management team find a common purpose and vision that supports the organisational objectives.

I will discuss the concept of the 'learning leader' (Robertson, 2004). The 'learning leader' provides an environment that delivers effective coaching and uses feedback from colleagues and associates to identify obstacles to success. Plans are developed to tackle those obstacles as a team, supporting the organisation's objectives and working towards establishing and embedding the new regime. The focus is on genuinely reciprocal relationships.

I will investigate the empowerment of staff and how coaching better enables such empowerment leading to a quicker establishment of a new structure. Managerial behaviours can determine the success of fostering empowerment. Burdett (1999) claims that limited understanding of true empowerment can lead to leadership inadequacies during change initiatives. The presentation also discusses coaching techniques used by the Faculty of Science to ensure the senior management team

communicated consistent messages and applied effective, equitable allocation of resources to support staff during the unsettled transition time following the re-structure.