

# Meyler Campbell

## Legal Education & Training Review 'Developing the Detail' Response

Meyler Campbell is a leading business coach training consultancy based in London focused on training senior business people to coach.

Our links with the legal profession are substantial: professional services is one of our core client sectors and many of our graduates are lawyers (mainly solicitors) or the learning & development directors within law firms, most of whom go on to work as internal or external coaches to the legal profession; we continue to remain close to them after graduation through the learning community which we host; and we are an accredited external CPD provider under the SRA providing very specific training on business coaching and business coaching-related topics.

These links have given us a particular perspective on the training needs - and gaps - within the legal profession. We see it from the perspective of the learning & development interventions required, often quite some time after qualification (when technical competence is no longer the issue), in respect of skills and behaviours that have not been acquired or embedded as part of the training continuum. Not surprisingly many of these relate to the 'people' areas – the capacity to work with others, build positive relationships (external and internal), manage performance, develop people and teams and, significantly, provide leadership. Our own conclusion is that the absence of real focus on the absolute *need* for these skills (and the behaviours which underpin them) as part of early training reinforces the lack of attention to them in favour of technical competence. By the time these skills are required for the challenges that come with increasing seniority, there is a lot of ground to make up and a more entrenched mind-set to breach.

Embedding in those coming into the profession the need for these skills, as well as the benefits of continuing the process of developing them as a career-long aim, will - as the current evidence of a lack of these skills suggests - take a more focused and consistent strategy of (a) emphasising the importance of these skills to professional practice, (b) modelling what the skills and behaviours actually look like and (c) ensuring the practice of the skills through learning & development interventions which do not simply stop with 'input' of advice or information.

The clues exist: the focus on technical skills as part of training is absolutely embedded. It is measured through summative assessment and reinforced by a CPD framework that provides the added impetus of maintaining competence. Transferring this model to non-technical skills, a framework of assessed competencies might be the first step in skills acquisition and would provide the clearest signal about the *importance* of their acquisition, maintenance and enhancement. Additionally such a framework would underpin a second tier of learning & development (as part of career

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progression) that would embrace features of reflection and critical self awareness underpinning successful strategies in self-management and the management and leadership of others.

It will not come as a surprise that we would strongly advocate the establishment of a framework that encompasses coaching and the learning of core coaching skills. The coaching intervention is a powerful one – focused on pulling out the capacity that people have within and fundamentally encouraging the development of self-awareness and insight that is pivotal to openness to the development of these skills. It is not the only intervention of course, but its success in embedding the skills that make up the gaps in the current system should, we think, dictate a comprehensive exploration of its use in addressing the gaps.

By way of a small 'taster' in this respect, we attach a copy of the first chapter of: *The Financial Times Guide to Business Coaching* by Anne Scoular, Meyler Campbell's Managing Director (see brief bio below).

We would be delighted to assist further in your research as part of the next phase of work for LETR and our contact details are below.

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**Notes for LETR: Biography**

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Managing Director - Meyler Campbell**

Formerly a diplomat and an international banker, Anne co-founded Meyler Campbell. Twice awarded Distinction by London Guildhall University for her postgraduate work in the psychology of coaching, Anne has served on numerous Advisory Panels in the profession including Standards and Ethics in Coaching (ICM 2000); Training of business coaches (WABC 2006); and Accreditation (BPS/SGCP 2007). Her research interests include a paper on the Psychology of Executive Coaching to the 2nd European Conference on Positive Psychology in Milan; co-authoring a chapter with Professor Carol Kauffman of Harvard University proposing a research agenda for the profession; and research on goal-setting and personality difference in coaching (*Coaching Psychologist*, May 2006.) In 2009 she was cited by Harvard Business Review as one of the world's leading experts in the field. She was recently invited to become a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. Anne is the author of the *Financial Times Guide to Business Coaching*.