

LIFELAB CASE STUDY



SA METAL GROUP

SA METAL GROUP, SOUTH AFRICA

BACKGROUND

SA Metal Group was one of the first major industrial companies in South Africa to embark on a structured company-wide coaching intervention. This pioneering approach to human capital development within the company was initiated in 2001.

Through the coaching intervention, the company has been able to measure substantial value in empowering management and employees to equip themselves by integrating work experience and theoretical understanding in order to develop increased levels of performance and accountability.

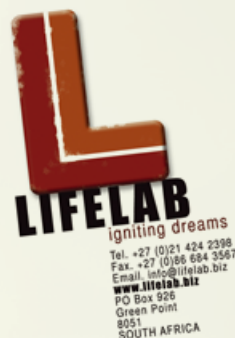
METHODOLOGY

A new methodology of ongoing provisions for coaching has developed through Life Lab's work with the SA Metal Group. The approach is to provide identified employees, through strict needs analyses, with an annual cycle of three months of coaching. This ensures that key staff has a developmental focus every year. Numerous cycles over the years have a cumulative effect. In many instances staff elect the same coach over several years. This approach keeps staff responsible for their own development without becoming dependent on their coach. This longitudinal approach provides a clear frame within which to view development over time, which is perhaps more difficult to see at the time of coaching.

A further benefit of this approach is that it is less taxing on the company when a large scale intervention is taking place. Coaching creates endemic change. Companies need to manage the rate of change with the need for stability and security.

In managing a large scale coaching intervention, LifeLab focuses on the alignment of the coaches. Coach Alignment Forums are used to identify systemic themes and find mechanisms through which the individual coaches can respond to these in an aligned way. The coaches develop common questions and critical focus areas which inform their coaching interventions. Thematic feedback is given to the company at regular intervals.

The neuro-scientific Benziger Thinking Styles Assessment has been implemented as a theoretical methodology to build "Whole Brained Teams", able to self regulate and draw on preferred thinking styles from of each employee in a department. This is used as a framework for aligning management and their employee coaching interventions towards meeting performance objectives.



LIFELAB
"igniting dreams"

HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

The coaching intervention began as open agenda whereby employees could prioritise their development areas for themselves within long term coaching relationships. This acted positively on the organisational climate, as employees felt valued by the company.

Gradually the coaching intervention methodology evolved to shorter term interventions contracted with line management. The coaching was implemented in annual cycles, timed to respond to periods in the year when performance tended to dip.

Departmental short term strategic planning sessions were then initiated and linked to the coaching in order to ensure that there was alignment between the various individual coaching relationships within a department. A diverse range of methodologies are now used to link hard and soft skills in a way that responds to particular departmental needs.

The Whole Brained Team methodology is being used within selected departments to enable staff to play to their strengths and develop greater synergy on team. With over 15 coaches working in the business, coaching has become an integral component of staff development within SA Metal. Over the years, leaders, managers and staff at various levels have discovered new resources within themselves and new approaches to enhancing learning and performance.