Coaching: what's it really like?

by Craig

At Rambutan we feel passionate about coaching...

...but this client story isn't about us. We wanted to share what it was like to experience coaching first-hand, just in case you were thinking about giving it a go. So, Craig grabbed five minutes with two of our clients and quizzed them on their time being coached.

The two willing clients were Sarah Mason from Talent Advantage and Karen McKenzie-Irvine from Transport for London (TfL). Settle down with a cuppa and read about their inspiring journeys.

The conversation

Craig: Thanks for taking the time to chat with me. So, since your coaching, what's different in your life?

Sarah: I've got a much better understanding of what's important to me, as well as a clear idea of how my values affect my decision making. That was life changing for me. Oh, I've also got more awareness of needing flexibility and tolerance in my day-to-day dealing with people.

Karen: My self-belief. I think more about how I can approach things in different ways; it's given me more of a 'yes I can' attitude. I recently gave a presentation where I 'presented as a winner' rather than delivering a winning presentation. I've also won an award that I was nominated for.

Craig: Brilliant, and congratulations Karen! Can you tell me what the coaching experience was like?

Sarah: It was a really positive experience, with a good balance of support versus challenge. The sessions held me accountable, allowed me time to think about what I wanted to be different and then action the change. It also provided a sounding board that pushed back. My coaching was always held in a safe environment; it felt safe, objective and impartial. The coaching was personally challenging at times.

Karen: My experience was very positive yet challenging. It made me think differently and provided a degree of stretch on my comfort zone. It was always focused, which allowed me to think about the end game.

Craig: And what was your situation like before coaching?

Sarah: For me, it was miserable. I felt frustrated and stuck in my situation. I couldn't see a way of improving it. Also, I'd tried coaching in the past and didn't have a good experience; it made me feel untrusting of coaching.

Karen: I was always using the same solutions and ideas. Coaching interrupted my thinking in a positive way.

Craig: When you started coaching, what outcomes did you want to achieve?

Sarah: I wanted to get out of my miserable situation. Working with Rambutan has shown me how coaching can be done well. I've found ways to improve things for the future.

Karen: I wanted to share the story of the great results we'd achieved in the TfL Learning and Development team, and to win the Training Journal (TJ) Learning and Development professional of the year award.

Craig: Thanks for your time today. To wrap things up, what would you say to others who were considering coaching?

Sarah: If you're not ready for change, don't do it. It's a great support and resource to have; it felt like a luxury, having time and space to think. In my experience, it was useful having someone facilitating to help me make really good decisions. I'm now living my dream and doing something I love doing.

Karen: Use it, definitely try it out. It helps to be openminded from the start and to have a specific goal you want to work on.



Sarah Mason, Talent Advantage



Karen McKenzie-Irvine, Transport for London

What other people have said

Rambutan's helped all sorts of people with their coaching needs; here is a selection of nice things people have said about their experience:



"I can't recommend Rambutan highly enough. They are genuine, original and deliver 'what you don't realise you need to know'. Pure coaching genius that can effortlessly lead you from A to Z, taking great satisfaction from your success."

Bob Butler, Director of International Business Development at HCA International

"The Supervisory Practice Coaching Programme has been incredibly helpful for my early career development. The online introduction session was very informative and gave me a good starting point. It helped me understand why reflective practice is important in supervising PhD students.

The one-to-one coaching sessions were especially valuable. They were tailored to my needs and offered practical advice, both online and in person. My coach has been amazing throughout this journey. She has guided me to reflect deeply on my supervisory practices and helped me find tailored solutions that suit my individual needs. This support has boosted my confidence in supervising and has given me effective strategies to assist my PhD student."

Derek (Rundong) Yan, Assistant Professor in System Risk and Reliability Modelling at University of Nottingham

"If you're expecting to buy something off the shelf and have a safe, comfortable ride then Rambutan is not for you. What the Rambutan team give each and every time is bags of energy, challenge, creativity and solutions that hit the mark. Their bespoke feedback tools give a unique insight into what is working well and not so well in any team and their approach to the associated one-to-one coaching is both refreshing and challenging. As a coachee myself, I've been pushed (willingly!) out of my comfort zone through their coaching interventions many times and I have improved as a leader as a direct result."

Tricia Wright, Chief People Officer at Transport for London

"I recently had the eye-opening experience of coaching from Rambutan, which is something I've never experienced before. It was an equitable, open and positive relationship, that has helped me to navigate not only issues with students, but helped me to become a better supervisor. It was beneficial to discuss topics with someone who isn't an academic, and Justine gave me a different perspective and approach to thinking through my problems. I truly recommend this programme to others, as everyone could benefit from coaching, whether they're just starting out or been in their role for a long time. You truly get out of it what you put in, and I couldn't thank Justine enough for her support."



Orla Williams, Assistant Professor at University of Nottingham

"I am delighted to say that working with Rambutan has been instrumental in a step change for our business. They quickly understood us, our needs and the dynamics of our senior team. They delivered exactly the right level of coaching, challenge and practical support with perfect timing and pace. I'm now seeing a more collaborative approach and improved business results driven by a high-performing senior team. If your business needs transforming, I have no hesitation in recommending the Rambutan team."

John Cox, Managing Director at VolkerStevin

"I have been working with David in spells, for nearly 5 years now, and he has played such a significant role in my professional development and growth - but in a way that bleeds across to life in general. He has a style that challenges in the right places and adopts techniques that feel unique to the objectives you want from the engagement. I would recommend David to any aspiring leader or established Exec. looking for someone to put a mirror up to themselves and find the next level they can achieve."

Gavin Perera-Betts, Managing Director of Nest Experience at Nest Pensions

Would you like to find out more? Give Craig a shout as he loves to chat about all things coaching.

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