

# Case study: The value of peer coaching



“This special kind of environment allows you to express yourself in a way you wouldn’t be comfortable with at work”

Stephen Edmondson is an Senior Executive HR M+A Director at Wipro. He works as a consultant on the back of a 25-year career in senior HR roles looking after the ‘people part’ of many large corporates. Wipro, for example, employs 185,000+ people across the world. This role is truly international and involves significant travel to India, Netherlands, Germany and Nordics countries. Stephen describes his role as very much ‘front of house’ and client focusing.

He considers his time with The HR Agenda as a “fix” where he is able to stop and think, air his current issues and explore them with other like-minded professionals. “When I am at The HR Agenda I am able to relax and, in an environment where I never feel judged, be completely open and raise anything that is concerning me or that I need further comment and expansion on” explained Stephen. The HR Agenda is an environment where each member of the group has time to talk, without interruption, and listen, again without interruption, to the feedback and experiences of others.

“This is somewhere I am able to express myself, show a little doubt, and even be less confident” he said. “At work you can’t be seen to be unsure, especially at a senior level, because everyone looks to us for answers all of the time!”

Stephen explained how the culture of The HR Agenda encourages everyone to speak and listen in turn: no-one is allowed to hog the time - something he really appreciates. “We are all equal and there to learn. Also, being able to help others in the group reaffirms that I do have strong, deep experience and can be useful” he commented.

He likened the experience to having several mentors, especially as the same people meet each time and bonds of trust are

constantly strengthened. “It’s sometimes a little uncomfortable but we go through the sheep dip and emerge, better for it, on the other side!”

Stephen also explained how he has adopted some of the talking and listening skills learned at The HR Agenda in his day-to-day work, including interactions with clients and senior colleagues. “The peer sessions run by Debra Cadman - whom I have known, worked with and trusted for many years - mean that I have greater self-motivation, awareness and discipline”.

Stephen funds his own sessions as he is committed to the process and even enjoys the time between sessions where he can focus on the issues he might be able to explore at the next event. There is a plan welcomed by Stephen to include a conference call between sessions to add in extra accountability and a further opportunity to check in with each group member.

“Our group is mature now - it has found its own shape and sense of community” he concluded.



“I am able to stop, reflect and learn so I am more self aware”