

Transition Support

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Bath Consultancy Group
11 Kelso Place, Upper Bristol Road,
Bath BA1 3AU
Main Office: +44 (0)1225 520866
Email: office@bathconsultancygroup.com

Transition Support

Onboarding Senior Executives

In these uncertain times it is even more important that organisations retain their senior executives and ensure they start to contribute as soon as possible. Research by CLC suggests that within 18 months 60% executives fail to deliver on their objectives. Research also indicates that the cost of recruiting a senior executive can be 150% of their salary. Fiona Ellis, Director of Bath Consultancy Group describes Bath Consultancy Group's Transition Support process.

Moving to a new position is an enormous challenge for senior leaders. Within 100 days they must assimilate a new job, a new team, make an impact and review the business strategy. New leaders are expected to hit the ground running. The cost of not doing so can be huge, in terms of direct impact on the business when an appointment is not successful and to the individual in terms of their career.

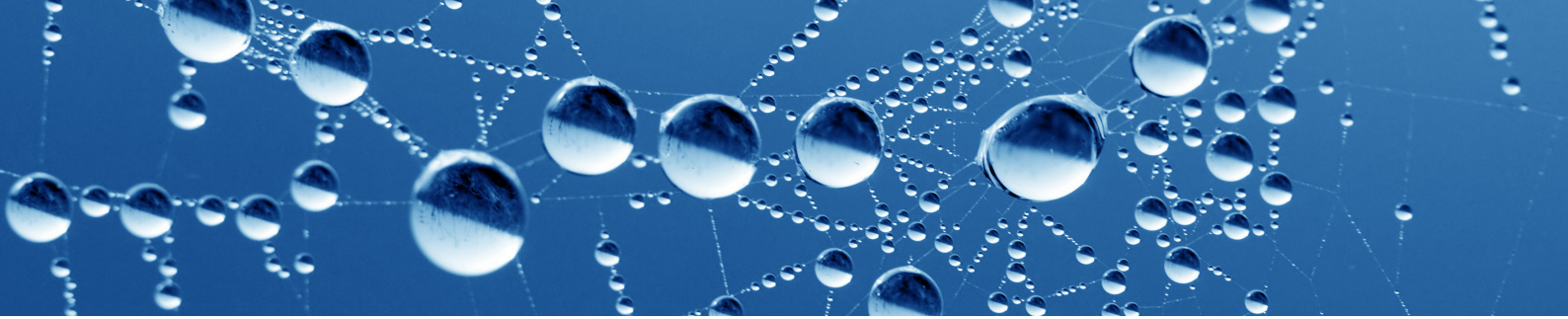
We have been supporting HR functions in corporate clients and the UK public sector to improve their onboarding process and to consider the internal transition process for those promoted within.

How can HR provide an integrated service to support these transitions and increase effectiveness?

In many organisations the quality of onboarding or induction support for senior people is poorer than at lower levels - there can be assumptions that these are experienced managers who will find their feet quickly, and don't need support.

However in any organisation one of the key challenges is getting to grips with the new culture, the unwritten rules and building a network quickly, which is vital to effectiveness at senior level.

Transition coaching is very effective in providing space for the individual to reflect and absorb, and ask questions about the new organisation. As part of our transition coaching we provide a First 100 days transition support workbook that the senior manager can use to review their strategy, understand the culture and assess what leadership they need to provide.



Developing internal HR capability

HR is also developing its own capability to provide transition coaching support. We have trained HR Business Partners as far afield as Africa, Finland as well as the UK.

HR has a great advantage in knowing the organisation, its unwritten rules, characters and culture. The big win for the Business Partner is establishing a relationship early on with a senior client on a personal level discussing business issues, rather than just procedures.

Culture shock

Through a well-planned transition support, the leader is able to take a structured approach to reviewing their strategy, culture and leadership style.

The workbooks we have developed guide the thinking the leader would endeavour to do anyway, but may miss out on due to pressures of those first months. For instance, the process takes a deep look at culture, capturing those vital first impressions that are strong even when it's a transition within the same company and same geographical region.

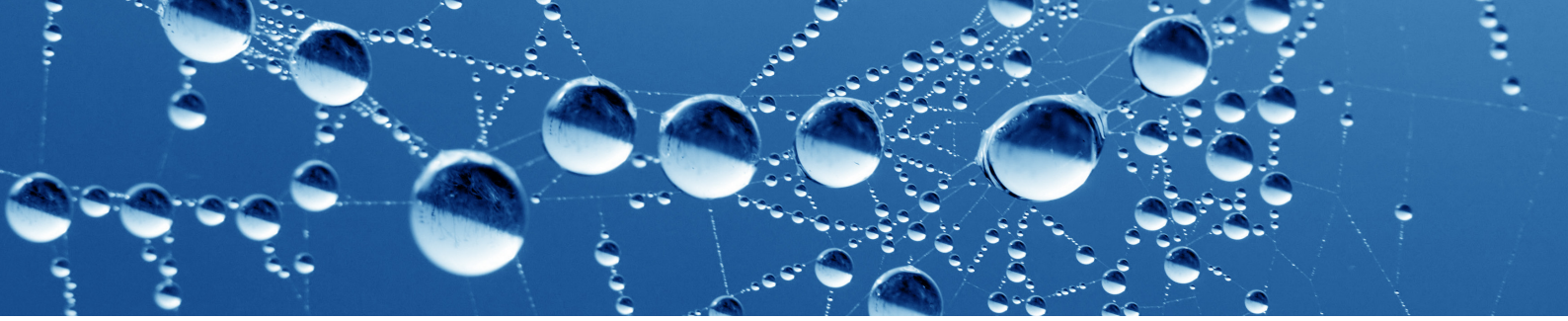
One of our definitions of culture is "what you stop noticing after three months". To notice, observe and then to plan strategically what needs to change in the culture, rather than just ignore those odd things and try and impose one's old culture, is much more successful in the long run. Too often leaders from outside an organisation hark back to "when I was in X... we did it this way", a sure way to create resistance with your new colleagues.

Our work in the Civil Service in the UK shows that entry from outside the Civil Service is often a huge culture shock. This means that the senior executives can be less effective and can lead to losing the individual in the first year if there no adequate support is provided.

What senior recruits want

Our research with new senior recruits within organisations show that they want effective guidance through:

- Easy access simple information through portals on intranet
- Personal contact such as HR transition support or an external coach
- Buddy at a peer level and mentor at more senior level
- Network of new joiners who can meet and share experiences



HR needs to create and operate an integrated process. A common pitfall is to provide a new system, and support from a range of HR roles but not integrate the process. This can be on a simple level such as letting the HR Business Partner know when the new executive is arriving, as they may not have been involved in recruitment.

Let's leave the last word with one of the leaders we have worked with: *"This has helped me create pace in the first 100 days by dedicating real time and creating the continuity to come back to what we discussed. It's been great!"*