

the
Living  **Organisation**

Brief Systemic Team Coaching
Interventions

By: Alan Gilchrist

May 2013



Contents

Introduction	3
Core Principles	3
Sequence of Activity	4
Scale of Investment and Timeframe	4
Short Systemic Team Coaching Interventions	5



Introduction

Systemic team coaching is a new approach that delivers significant and measurable improvements in team performance. Having previously worked with teams for over a decade, I have been using this approach with clients since 2011, having trained thoroughly to do so.

In my experience, systemic team coaching offers far more value for teams and the business than traditional team development approaches. However, in its full form, it's an expensive intervention, typically used at Executive and Board levels only.

So I am interested in how I can make the best of the approach available to a wider range of teams and businesses, including SME's for whom I think the approach is ideally suited.

Core Principles

These principles (when used consistently and skillfully) map out the difference between systemic team coaching (STC) and other forms of team development.

For systemic team coaching to be effective, teams and team members need to have some degree of interest in working in this way.

- Systemic Team Coaching attends to all of the team's action and outcomes in the wider system. This encompasses but is not limited to team dynamics and relationships (traditional team development)
- The views and legitimate needs of the team's sponsors, internal and external stakeholders are integral to the inquiry. Data gathering from outside the team itself is essential
- Work on the connections at least as much as the individuals (e.g. using dialogue across sponsor-team or team-stakeholder boundaries)
- Focus is on transformation as well as maintenance of current delivery. A "future-back" lens is used to determine what the team needs to do now in order to deliver the future they desire
- To build engagement (as well as reflect reality), the entire intervention is deliberately positioned as co-inquiry. The team as a whole is tasked with working out (with the support of the coach) what is going well, what needs to change etc.
- The work is a part of (not additional to) the core work of the team
- Here and now live-action feedback
- Action methods bring the data and the approach to life
- Fun as well as challenging

Sequence of Activity

Phase	Activity
Define team coaching scope and terms	Meet with key sponsors
Building Engagement	1-1's with all team members: - Introduce the coach - Introduce the team coaching approach
Clarify the team's Commission (as currently defined)	■ Dialogue with the team's sponsors
STC Meeting 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agree a contract for working together (the what, when, how of the coaching engagement) ■ Stakeholder mapping ■ Agree shape and methodology for stakeholder 360 feedback process
Data Gathering	■ 360 feedback process re team collective performance. (Using a simple, quick, engaging and effective method)
Inquiry and Co-Diagnosis (STC meetings 2, 3, 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1-3 further meetings. ■ Using the 5C model, the team and coach produce a co-diagnosis of the team's current strengths and development edges
Connection across boundaries	■ The team's sponsors and the team meet face-to-face to discuss, amend and agree the team's Commission
Summary Review	■ Document the team and coach co-diagnosis and the way forward/what's next
Re-Contracting for further work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Re-contract based on the co-diagnosis: - What work needs to be taken forward by the team? - What support (if any) is needed?

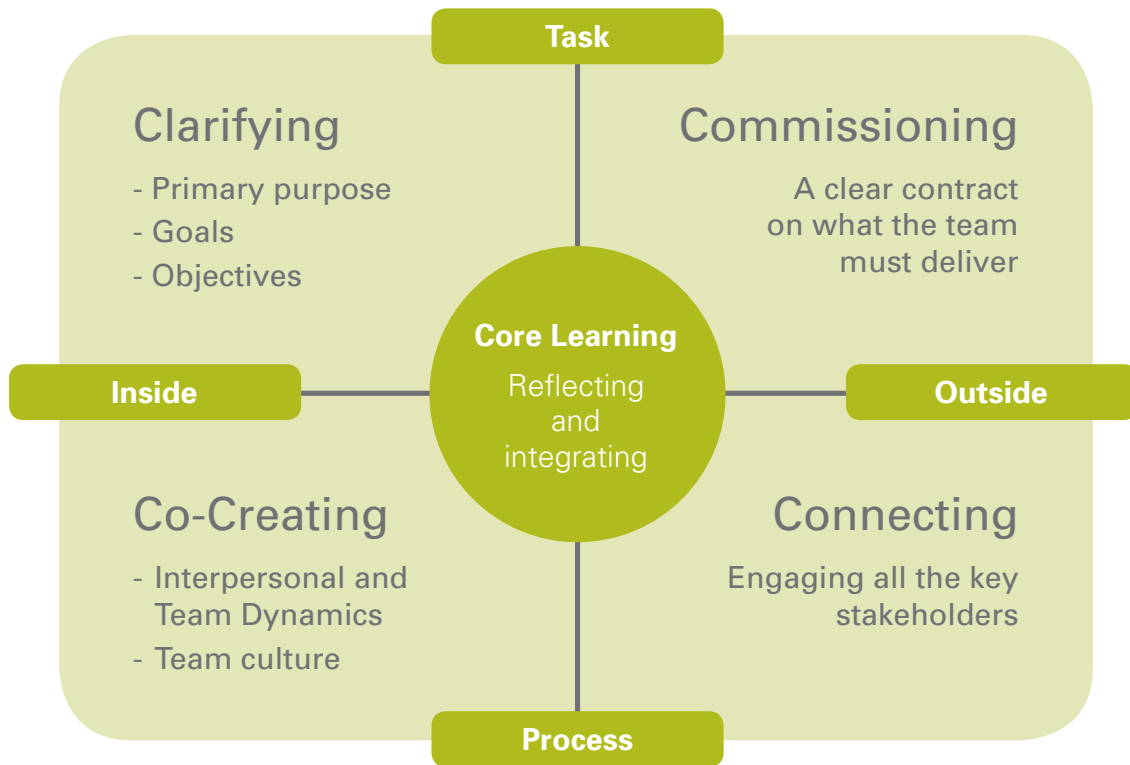
Scale of Investment and Timeframe

The above scope of work (up to re-contracting) can be completed in 4-8 consulting days over 2-4 months, depending upon exact requirements.

Further support, for example quarterly team-coaching meetings, can then be added if required.

Short Systemic Team Coaching Interventions

Hawkins (2011) proposes 5 core disciplines for Systemic Team Coaching. His "5C" model is a useful guide - the diagram and explanation below give further detail of how this applies.



Discipline	Activity
<p>Commissioning Clarifying the team's Commission with its sponsors (Board, Executive, other). Clarifying expectations re delivery, timescale, resource, partners and alignment with other teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Interviewing the team's sponsors ■ Team inquiry and dialogue re sponsor feedback (re collective team performance to date) ■ Inquire into and refine current team Commission ■ Sponsors and team joint dialogue to clarify and commit to a shared Commission
<p>Clarifying Clarification of and commitment to: Goals and Objectives, a Strategy to deliver these, a shared Team Purpose (why these people need to operate as a team), agreed Roles and Responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mapping out roles and responsibilities and looking for overlaps and missing elements ■ Building thorough understanding of stakeholder needs and perspectives ■ Bringing stakeholder views alive using action methods ■ Collective build of Team Purpose ■ Constellations work
<p>Co-Creating Building/using awareness and awareness-in-action of the team dynamic developed so far. What are the team's strengths and development edges? Is there a shared approach to working together? Does the team hold team members to account? Is disagreement in the open and useable? Do individuals, pairs, sub-groups and the whole team all work on delivering the team's objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ On-going coach, live-action feedback (external data for the team) ■ Connecting stakeholder feedback to "here and now" behaviors ■ Sharing perspectives on team journey to date, meaning etc ■ Constellation re the team, leadership
<p>Connecting How does the team (as a whole, as individuals, as pairs etc) engage with the wider stakeholder system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stakeholder mapping ■ Gathering external data for the team (360 stakeholder feedback re collective team performance) ■ Live coaching of the team when in action with stakeholders <p><i>Note: the data gathering is not an onerous process for stakeholders. It requires 5 minutes attention and an email.</i></p>
<p>Co-Learning How are the team growing their own individual and collective capacity through learning together?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developing a sequence and rhythm of activity (e.g. plan-do-review-learn) including fieldwork ■ Team audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When/how does the team learn from its own action? - Is this learning put to good use in future action? - How can this be improved? - What meaning is there for individuals and the team in this work? ■ Action learning style short interventions