




Leadership and management coaching for the Ministry of Justice

Matt Jenkins, Head of Capability at Ministry of Justice, provides some insight on his experience and motivation working with one of our executive coaches, and the impact it has had on his career development.





What motivated you to take up our one-to-one coaching?

So, I'm a qualified coach myself and I've been working in leadership development for a number of years and I actually believe that people involved in this area are often the last to receive ongoing support and development.

I was also keen to take up some coaching as I had recently moved into a temporary role which was a grade up from where I had been before. I really wanted the coach to help give me that time to reflect and think about what I've learned whilst doing that senior role because I knew that was the level I wanted to get to and that without the coaching and having the opportunity to put time aside in my diary, you just don't get around to it.



How was the coach able to support you particularly in terms of having that reflection time?

The coach helped me have that discipline of so what's happened in the last month? What have I learned? How would that be helpful for me going forward if I get an interview for a role at this level. How can I demonstrate that I've worked effectively at this level and give myself the best possible chance for promotion.



What was the process like and why Skills for Justice?

We've got various access routes to coaching at MoJ, but the Head of Capability at the time said we can access a programme through our membership of Skills for Justice so why don't you consider that. I know Skills for Justice, I did an interview session for a member event last year, so I dropped them a note and so from my point of view, the process was very, very simple.

Tell us more about how you and your choice of coach came about?

I had an initial chemistry conversation, if that's the right term, and we took it from there.

But the fact I had a very good relationship with the Skills for Justice Leadership, Management and Organisational Development (LMOD) team certainly helped accelerate the process, as they could recommend a coach that would likely be the right match for me and what I was looking to achieve from the sessions.. If there had not been that good chemistry with my coach from the start I could have requested bios from their other faculty coaches.

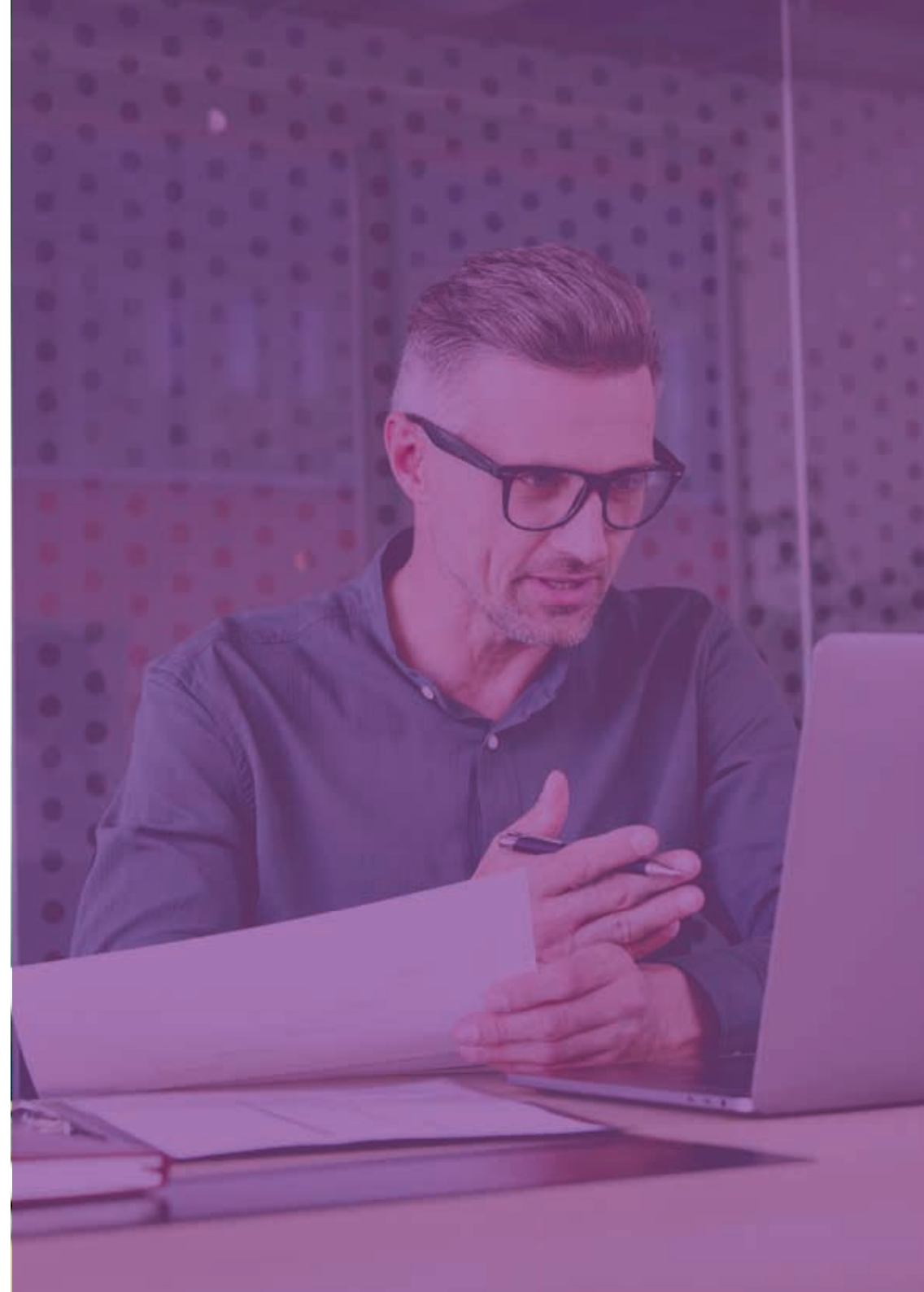
What was the pattern of your coaching in terms of schedule and working around your high-pressured job?

Ultimately it was flexible. One of the first things we talked about in the chemistry conversation was how frequently do we want this and that's very much determined about what it is that you're working towards? For the six 1-hour sessions available as part of our membership I took these over approximately 4 months increasing the level of frequency as I was building up towards my interview.

This schedule was just about right for me because coaching is meant to be short, sharp and focused on something in particular and about getting to a result or a goal at the end of it, as opposed to say mentoring which might be more long term.

The sessions were hosted virtually – did you find this an effective delivery method?

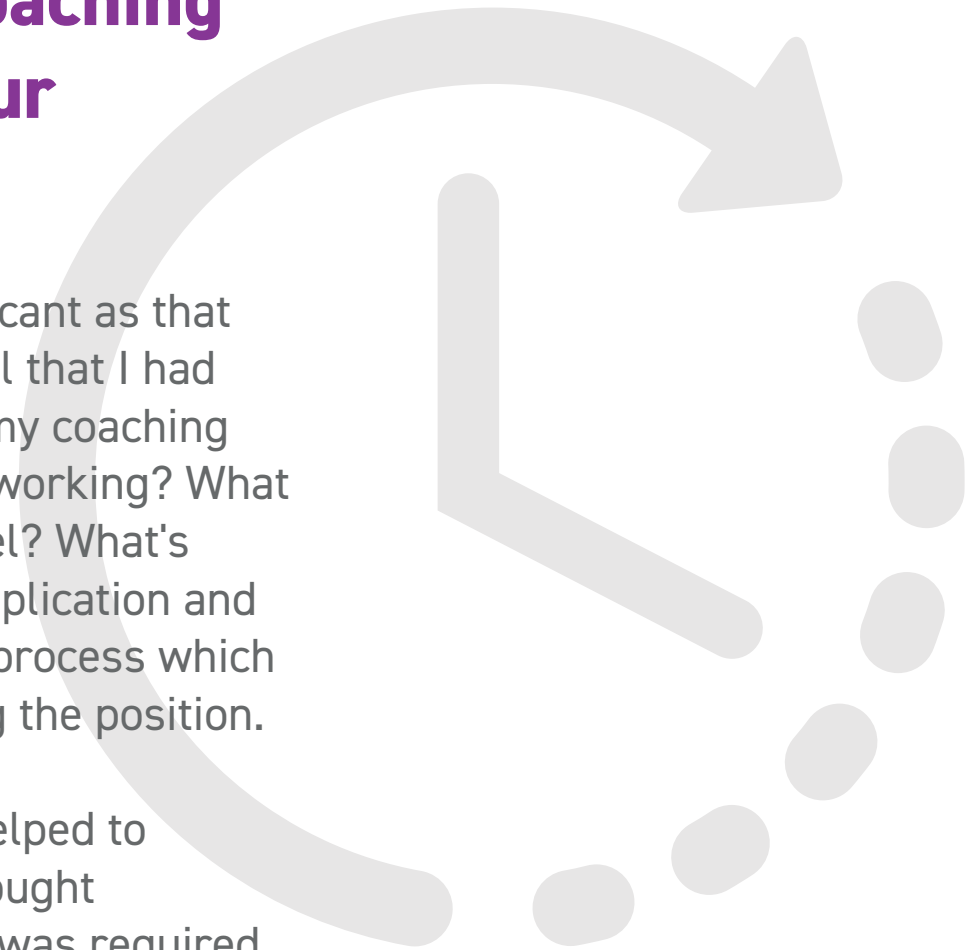
I know coaching, and you can do it remotely and actually it works pretty well virtually. As I am often based in different parts of the country it was a safer option, but I think if we ever wanted to meet up face-to-face that was also a possibility.




So wind the clock forward six months, tell us how the coaching has supported you and your career progression?

The Head of Capability position became vacant as that person moved into a new role. It's the level that I had been working at on a temporary basis so my coaching was focussed on areas such as: how am I working? What am I learning working at this different level? What's different? This helped immensely in my application and throughout the recruitment and selection process which resulted in me being offered and accepting the position.

I would say that ultimately the coaching helped to demonstrate my own perspectives and thought processes and the senior level vision that was required for the role.



A photograph of a modern, multi-story building with a grid-like facade, likely the Ministry of Justice. The building is partially obscured by a purple overlay. A sign on the building reads "Ministry of JUSTICE" with a royal coat of arms logo to the left.

What was the best bit about the coaching? What did you appreciate or learn most from this experience?

It was a space for reflection. It was a chance to build a plan, to think about your strengths, your experiences, how they would apply going forward, what you know, and the connection with the coach. For me it helped my immediate career progression. I knew what my development areas were and also what the recruiting manager for the role would be looking for, so the coaching definitely helped me to demonstrate and present examples of strategic levels of leadership instead of the day-to-day firefighting. When you're a senior leader, or being interviewed for a senior position, you've got to be bold and show a bit of you and what you're all about and what you think, not just go with the tried and tested, so that element of the coaching was a real success.



What would you say to peers and those already operating at a senior executive level about the benefits of coaching?

It's so easy to get wrapped up in what you're doing on a day-to-day basis that actually having the time to actually go: right, so what have I done? Has it worked or not? How would that help me? How is that going to help show my strategic leadership and all of those things that I know that this role will need? It was a good way of supporting and challenging me at the same time which I think is what coaching is all about. It was really, really helpful.



What are your future plans for coaching? Do you plan to use it again?

I definitely plan to use it again, and if not for myself in the medium-term, I will certainly consider it for members of my team. For instance, I have someone who is about to join, and it's a bit of a different role to what they've done before, so potentially some coaching can be of some benefit and support their move.



Our leadership and organisational consultants are skilled at facilitating and targeting conversations that can challenge and support mid-level and senior executives to build strategic organisational cultures to support personal and business performance and growth.

 www.skillsforjustice.org.uk

 info@skillsforjustice.org.uk

 0117 922 1155

Vertigo, Cheese Lane
Bristol, BS2 0JJ

Skills for Justice organisational and strategic members are entitled to access our executive coaching programme as part of their membership entitlement