

# Graping **the** pipeline

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## TALKING TALENT

Karen Halford, Head of Resourcing and Development at **Vodafone UK** talks about how the telecomms giant has been investing in its talent pipeline

For professionals in talent management

# Peak Performance

## The quality question

What qualities and experience should you insist upon when appointing a coach?

Dr Sabine Dembkowski, Founder of The Coaching Centre, gives us her views



Being a relatively new and rapidly expanding industry, coaching has suffered from a lack of coherent regulation or definitive accreditation. With this has come an increase in the number of under-qualified people offering executive coaching as a service, unfortunately to the detriment of the experienced and professional majority.

It is of course vital to conduct face-to-face meetings with a prospective coach, but what should you look for when drawing up the shortlist? Dr Dembkowski comments: "I think one of the main criteria that counts is educational background, because in my experience a lot of coaches do not benefit from the same standard of education as some of the people they are

coaching. It is important to also have regular training in the field, and to have more than one specialism.

"Coaches need a very broad toolbox, and I don't think you can get this by learning from just one coach training programme. For example, it's not sufficient to become an NLP coach alone, as you tend to treat every problem the same, and this is not in the interests of the client. You should have at least three different approaches, and no training should be left for more than three years before revisiting. People who say 'I'm a child psychologist for 20 years and now I can jump on the coaching bandwagon' are not doing the profession justice."

On top of professional qualifications, it is important to have experience of working in a business at a similar level to the people you will be coaching. A large part of a successful interaction

comes out of respect between coach and coachee, and without this base knowledge the relationship breaks down. Dr Dembkowski comments: "I think that there is definitely a correlation between experience and quality. However, I do not think you can necessarily say that a recently qualified coach is not a good one, and professional qualification can be sufficient for some situations."

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