

## Can we move towards sustainability without coaching?

September 2008

*Research reveals the critical role coaching can play in the shift towards sustainable and profitable business.*

---

Most large organisations are making moves towards sustainability. Leading organisations are integrating ecological and social factors into strategy. *But what about their cultures? Is sustainability truly integrated? Are there opportunities for game-changing innovation to be driven by a shift in the values and attitudes of individuals and teams?*

These questions prompted Article 13's latest research into the role and relationship of coaching and sustainability in large organisations.

Many factors constrain how fast and far organisation's move towards being ecologically and socially sustainable. Culture and values have so far received limited attention as a constraint. And, coaching has not been widely used as a means of integrating sustainability into culture and strategy.

Now values and culture, rather than technology or prices, are increasingly been seen as primary constraints, and coaching is emerging as a powerful and effective tool for transformation. At the leading edge, more organisations are making the connection between personal development and sustainable development, between a coaching culture and sustainable innovation.

This research looks at these key questions including:

- *What are current attitudes to coaching and sustainability?*
- *Is coaching an appropriate tool for dealing with the challenges organisations face in the next decade?*
- *What drives organisations to resource coaching as a priority activity for moving towards sustainability?*
- *Which kinds of coaching (i.e. models and practices) are being used?*
- *Is coaching an effective tool for taking organisations to Innovation plus, using sustainability issues as the opportunity?*

*So what did we find?*

---

Organisations at the leading edge are embracing the opportunity to drive innovation through shifting their culture, and the values and mindsets of employees. Those that are still focused purely on technical fixes and policies are missing an opportunity to leap ahead of their competition.

The link between 'inner' (personal development, organisational values and culture development) and 'outer' (organisational, business, sustainable) development is real and critical to organisational success. But, few organisations know how to effectively facilitate and benefit from those inner shifts.

Inter-subjective, dialogic processes like coaching are a powerful and effective way to accelerate leadership development and adoption of new values and culture. They foster



innovation and adoption of behaviours and systems that can enable ‘outer’ development of organisations and society towards sustainability. Organisations that aren’t encouraging this type of interaction with and between staff are missing a crucial piece of the sustainability puzzle.

New, peer-to-peer and collaborative approaches to coaching are being used to accelerate leadership development, enhance performance and embed sustainability. Choosing the right form of coaching is critical to realising the benefits of the activity at an organisational level. For executive coaching and leadership development, Sustainability provides a more compelling context for the coaching, and is likely to be increasingly adopted as an explicit orientation by many coaches.

*Article13 Director and Accredited Coach, Neela Bettridge comments “true sustainability now requires far more than mere consideration in business strategy and we can now see truly innovative companies successfully using coaching as a means of leading an internally generated business revolution. What is so compelling is the success of companies using coaching to break the constraints of culture and values, and recognising the link between personal development and sustainable development”*

Neela Bettridge and Andrew Outhwaite are co-authors of the research.

To order a [full copy](#) of this research report contact [Fiona Banyard](#).

E: [fionab@article13.com](mailto:fionab@article13.com)

T: +44 (0)20 8840 4450

W: [www.article13.com](http://www.article13.com)

---

*Article 13 are experts in business responsibility, typically in the areas of corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability and governance. Article 13 seeks to embed and integrate responsible business practices in organisations by means of consultancy services, training, executive coaching and thought leadership.*

Article 13 Group  
ISO 9001:2000 accredited

Recognised as an Investor in People

A notable CoP signatory of the United Nations Global Compact - [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Article 13 Ltd** 71a the Grove, London, W5 5LL

**T:** +44 (0) 208 840 4450 **F:** +44 (0) 208 566 4738

**E:** [info@article13.com](mailto:info@article13.com) **W:** [www.article13.com](http://www.article13.com)

*Registered in the United Kingdom No. 03624247  
Registered Office: Canada House, 272 Field End Road  
Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 9NA*