

Coaching & Facilitation

Sebastian Hallensleben

Who benefits

Individuals taking complex and/or far-reaching decisions – either for the future of their organisation or for their own professional path.

Teams of specialists who need to make the most of their collective talent to deliver exceptional solutions.

Teams of decision makers in challenging situations where politics and emotional attachments need to be peeled away to reveal the core of an issue and to navigate to a sustainable conclusion.

Your organisation's bottom line. Getting the best out of your people – both individually and collectively – is a powerful path to productivity.

Programmes & Approach

Coaching and facilitation are tailored to clients and their circumstances. In broad terms, we specialise in **Decision Coaching, Analytical Facilitation, and Crisis Coaching.**

The overarching theme is bringing clarity and insight into an organisation and thus helping it move forward. Unusually, we are able to join clients in the technical meat of the challenges they face. Reading up on project documentation, shadowing meetings, or poring over org charts and staff appraisals can all be part of the coaching relationship.

Please see overleaf for details of our approach and our programmes.

Delivery

Coaching sessions can be face-to-face or over the phone. A suggested best-of-both-worlds approach is a fairly intensive week of face-to-face sessions and reflection time followed by phone coaching at monthly intervals.

Facilitation for groups is generally delivered face-to-face – current audio/video conferencing technology is not mature enough for this purpose. The sequence of sessions very much depends on the purpose but typically fits into 1-2 weeks. We

are also available to help plan and to facilitate sessions at team off-sites.

Pricing: We charge market rates but are happy to provide trial sessions at nominal cost. Please get in touch via sebastian@solysis.com or +44 (0) 203 051 3349.

Your coach



Sebastian Hallensleben has built his coaching and facilitation skills in a variety of team leading, team building, technical leadership, and project management roles. His management track record includes being Production Manager for a 24/5 futures and equities trading operation

handling \$4bn in investments, building and leading software development teams in Financial Services and Telecoms, and various other IT management and architecture roles.

Initially covering both technical and people leadership the latter eventually became his main passion and he is now offering his talents and skills on a coaching/consulting basis.

Those who have worked with him comment that Sebastian stands out by being able to connect with equal ease with technical and non-technical people and to bridge the cultural divide between these two worlds. He combines an incisive analytical and scientific mind with strong emotional intelligence and leadership skills.

To complement his skillset Sebastian collaborates with other professionals as required, especially for the Crisis Coaching programme.

Prior to his commercial career, Sebastian studied physics in Germany and the UK and gained an MSc and a PhD in the subject. His professional base is in London/UK. However, he manages to spend much of his working and personal life with his family on the Azores/Portugal.

Sebastian is able to provide coaching and facilitation in both English and German.

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Below are examples of coaching and facilitation programmes to illustrate our capabilities. Please note that these programmes are not set in stone – we expect them to be adapted to clients' requirements. We are also happy to discuss fully customised services as long as they fall into our areas of competency.

Decision Coaching

We can improve the quality of decisions in an organisation by providing -

- a ruthless and detached analysis of what should and should not influence a particular decision
- clear (but not necessarily numerical) benchmarks to weigh different options
- a structured path through complex "webs" of decisions, including bringing in the right people at the right time and building consensus
- an honest picture of the buy-in from stakeholders

Some decisions are so sensitive that only a very small number of people in an organisation must be involved – in extremis, only the person at the top. In such situations, using a decision coach is an excellent way of sounding out possibilities, shaping decisions, and gaining full confidence in them.

Analytical Facilitation

When technical specialists meet to solve a tricky problem, design a system, or prepare a crucial decision, Analytical Facilitation helps to make the most out of the expertise in the room.

We employ and adapt techniques to -

- tease relevant information out of specialists' heads
- structure the information and crystallise the underlying sticky issues
- guide people to finding solutions and provide creative impulses and structural analysis
- ensure sustainability and a long-term effect of meeting conclusions

Crisis Coaching

In every professional career there are major junctures – losing one's job, hitting a career dead end, or being faced with a breakdown in relationship with colleagues. Crisis Coaching helps individuals take the next steps in the direction that is right for them. Two coaches (Sebastian Hallensleben and Lizzie Wright) engage clients on intellectual, emotional, physical, and energetic levels to –

- gain clarity about the challenges they are really facing
- understand what drives them - their ambitions, fears, values, outside expectations, etc.
- reassess where their unique talents lie and how to bring them into the world
- rebuild their emotional and mental power
- make concrete short- and long-term decisions about their professional and life journey

Organisations benefit from offering crisis coaching to employees either by securing the retention of key staff, or in an outplacement context.

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Sebastian on his coaching approach:

"I do not use a single off-the-shelf coaching method – hence a few notes about how I work:

The core of my coaching approach is *bringing clarity* to clients. I guide individuals in analysing a situation – recognising its overall logical structure, understanding the nature of constraints, knowing where emotions (their own and those of others) come into play. On the strength of this initial clarity we consider the various actionable aspects of the situation. I help clients to ask the right questions – and to have the confidence and mental discipline to attack them one at a time.

More than maybe many other coaches I *join clients in the technical meat* of the challenges they face. Reading up on project documentation, shadowing meetings, or poring over org charts and staff appraisals can all be part of the coaching relationship. When it comes to finding solutions and drawing conclusions I can thus provide creative impulses and act as a concrete sounding board and well-informed devil's advocate.

When facilitating series of group discussions, an obvious part of my effort goes into basic "meeting hygiene" such as ensuring the right people are in the room, setting a constructive atmosphere, teasing out contributions from quieter participants, etc. Beyond this, though, the key to making progress is to regularly *crystallise intermediate insights and decisions* and use those as the foundation for the next session. Again, I do dive into the technical meat to do this and bring both my analytical skills and my own technical and managerial background to bear.

It is rare that all members of a group are so in tune with each other that the results of this solutions process are a lasting blueprint for action. More commonly, individuals have all kinds of privately held reservations, and hence I recommend accompanying the group sessions with a number of 1:1 discussions. The more controversial the subject the more important this becomes, and it is no coincidence that similar techniques are used in mediation.

Being coached by me is not the "easy option" - I support clients but I also challenge them and will not let them kid themselves. Hence, it is not enough for a sponsoring organisation to prescribe coaching to an individual – s/he must be ready to at least seriously engage with the process.

Finally, while my skills are broad and my services are flexible, there are things that I cannot and will not provide. In particular, I am not a psychologist or psychiatrist and will advise clients to seek help from such professionals when I feel it is appropriate. Also, I will not accept engagements where the objectives of the sponsor/manager and those of the coaching client are irreconcilably different."



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Sample schedule for individual coaching

Week 1 (face-to-face)	Day 1	Exploratory session with client – 60 to 90 minutes Brief meetings with sponsor/manager to recap objectives
	Day 2, a.m. Day 2, p.m.	Client reflection time – set aside two hours of quality time away from the office Coaching session – 90 to 120 minutes
	Day 3, a.m. Day 3, p.m.	Coaching session – 90 to 120 minutes Client reflection time – set aside two hours of quality time away from the office
	Day 4	-
	Day 5, a.m. Day 5, p.m.	Coaching session – 90 to 120 minutes Client reflection time Wrap-up coaching session – 60 to 90 minutes
Week 2		Phone coaching session – 90 to 120 minutes
Week 4		Phone coaching session – 90 to 120 minutes
Week 8		Phone coaching session – 90 to 120 minutes
Week 12		Phone coaching session – 90 to 120 minutes Client and coach prepare a written summary of the coaching outcome for the client's sponsor/manager.
Every 1-2 months		Phone coaching sessions – 90 to 120 minutes

Other formats are possible, including compressing the week 1 programme into two days (a kind of “off-site for one”), or delivering the whole programme over the phone.

Facilitation schedule

Facilitation for groups is generally delivered face-to-face – current audio/video conferencing technology is not mature enough for this purpose. The sequence of sessions very much depends on the purpose but typically fits into 1-2 weeks. We are also available to help plan and to facilitate sessions at team off-sites.

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Questions & Sebastian's Answers – part 1

Q: Do you do business or life coaching?

A: It is impossible to strictly separate the two – personal aspects tend to spill over into someone's working life, and vice versa. However, it is not necessary to address everything at the same time and with the same coach, and hence I am comfortable with business-only briefs. In this case, personal issues that come up are acknowledged but there is no dedicated effort to resolve them. The Crisis Coaching programme by its nature addresses all aspects of a client's life, though, and does not lend itself to being split into “business” vs. “life” components.

Q: What models or methods do you use?

A: The short answer is: whatever works best in a given situation and with a given client. Within the overall framework outlined in the “Approach” section above I might e.g. draw on Belbin's Team Roles (both in their original sense and adapted for a single individual), Goleman's definition of Six Leadership Styles, an adaptation of Kotter's Eight Phases of Change to decision making processes, or some of W.E. Deming's ideas. Where resolving conflict becomes part of coaching or facilitation, my greatest inspiration is John M. Haynes' pioneering work as a mediator. There are also a number of concepts and models I have derived from my own management work.

I generally use off-the-shelf models to grow a client's analytical perception, establish a convenient language, or provide a creative spark, but not as prescriptive solutions. Solutions must ultimately always come from the client.

Q: What is your coaching and facilitation experience?

A: I started my career as a technical specialist – my background is in physics and software engineering – and held various technical leadership roles. From 2004, my focus shifted more and more towards people management, and I concluded early on that successful leadership must include a substantial coaching element. Over time, I built up my coaching repertoire, and with several hundred coaching and facilitation sessions under my belt I decided in 2008 to leave the safe environment of the company I was working in (last role was Production Manager for a 24/5 trading operation). Since then, I am a freelance coach and facilitator.

Q: Are you accredited or certified as a coach?

A: Currently, no. The most widely recognised accreditation scheme is run by the International Coach Federation (ICF), and I very much support their Coaching Core Competencies and Ethical Guidelines. However, I have yet to find a training scheme leading to ICF accreditation that caters to the niches I specialise in. Also, accreditation does not guarantee that sponsor and coaching client will be satisfied, and I believe that one or two trial sessions are a much better way to find out whether a particular coach is the right one for an individual or a team.

I do realise the commercial demand for formal accreditation, though, and hence I am planning to indeed become ICF-accredited in 2009/10.

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Questions & Sebastian's Answers – part 2

Q: Why do you deliver some of your coaching over the phone rather than face-to-face?

A: Phone coaching has two major advantages. The first one is purely practical – a phone conversation is easier to arrange (especially at short notice), can be rescheduled more flexibly, and gives the client a greater choice of location.

The second advantage of phone coaching is that it can sometimes be more comfortable for clients to “open up” in the quasi-anonymous setting of being alone with just the coach's voice at the other end, especially when people feel afraid or embarrassed. Having said that, it is of course true that face-to-face interaction provides a far richer set of cues and allows the conversation to happen on multiple levels. A sensible best-of-both-worlds approach is a mix of face-to-face and phone sessions.

Q: How can you measure an “improvement” in decision making?

A: The blunt answer is – you can't, for the simple reason that it is almost never possible to run a “control experiment”, i.e. let events play out with a different decision from the one you actually took, and then compare the outcomes. Therefore, we have to fall back on imperfect proxy measures such as staff satisfaction and retention, the stability of the organisation's strategic course, and standard business metrics such as turnover and profit.

At the same time, the coaching I provide sharpens clients' perception and allows them to observe themselves how the inner workings of their organisation and indeed their own thought processes have become more robust and efficient, and it is ultimately this feedback loop that brings lasting progress.

Q: What is the secret of a successful team off-site?

A: There is no secret but there are factors that deserve more attention than they usually get. Consciously setting and maintaining a constructive atmosphere is one of them, ruthlessly taking out the “cringe factor” is another. What also tends to get overlooked is that people are rarely comfortable with a big decision springing from a two-hour workshop during an off-site – the process of providing new information, considering options, forming opinions, and exploring consensus must be kicked off well in advance.

Q: Who is Solysis?

A: Solysis is the company through which I deliver coaching and facilitation. I established Solysis in 2008 when I went freelance. Where appropriate, I collaborate with other coaches (e.g. for Crisis Coaching) on a per project basis, and such programmes are also delivered through Solysis.

Q: Which languages can you work in?

A: English and German.

Q: How do I arrange coaching or facilitation with you?

A: Please get in touch by email on sebastian@solysis.com, or by phone on +44 (0) 203 051 3349. I am looking forward to talking to you.