



HR DELIVERY

Making Sure HR Delivers

HR DELIVERY WORKSHOP SERIES

HR Business Partner

An introduction to effective HR business partnering

Practise the conversations that connect HR advice with business needs. Explore stakeholder expectations, challenge an initial request, interpret relevant people evidence and agree a proportionate response with clear responsibilities, influence and follow-through.



01 DAY

Introductory taster

IN-HOUSE

Your people. Your context.

PRACTICAL

Explore, discuss and apply

A PRACTICAL STARTING POINT

Understand the topic. Try it in practice.

Business partners are often asked to solve a people issue before its business context is clear. Effective partnering requires curiosity, credible challenge and a practical understanding of what managers must deliver. This introductory workshop develops those habits through realistic conversations about priorities, evidence, options and shared responsibility.

Help participants approach business partnering as a disciplined advisory relationship. Through a manager case and short role-plays, they practise clarifying the business issue, exploring evidence, offering reasoned options and agreeing what the manager, HR and other colleagues will do next.

WHO IS IT FOR?

New or aspiring HR business partners, HR generalists and specialists moving into advisory roles, together with managers who want more useful, accountable conversations with their HR partners.

BY THE END OF THE DAY, PARTICIPANTS CAN:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 01 Understand the business
Summarise a manager's operational priority, relevant performance pressures and people implications before proposing a particular HR service or intervention. | 02 Contract the conversation
Clarify the purpose, expectations and decision responsibilities of a partnering conversation, including when specialist HR input is required. |
| 03 Ask diagnostic questions
Use open and focused questions to explore a request, distinguish symptoms from possible causes and identify missing evidence. | 04 Challenge with credibility
Practise a respectful challenge that links an assumption to business evidence and invites the manager to consider another explanation. |
| 05 Offer practical options
Present two proportionate responses with their benefits, limitations and manager responsibilities, making the basis for a recommendation clear. | 06 Agree follow-through
Record an agreed next step, accountable owner and review question that help both parties check progress after the conversation. |

A useful first application

This introductory day builds conversation and problem-framing skills. It does not qualify participants to handle specialist employee relations cases, replace local decision authority or implement a new HR operating model.

THE FRAMEWORK / WORKSHOP FOCUS

Business partnering conversation — workshop working model

The workshop working model follows six advisory moves: understand, contract, investigate, challenge, agree and review. These moves provide a learning aid for handling a business conversation without prescribing one organisational HRBP structure.

A PRACTICAL LEARNING AID FOR THIS TASTER

01 Understand the business

What is the manager trying to deliver, and what matters most?

02 Contract the relationship

What advice, decisions and responsibilities do we each bring here?

03 Investigate the request

What evidence explains the problem beyond its first visible symptom?

04 Challenge and advise

Which assumption should we test before recommending a people response?

05 Agree shared action

What will the manager, HR and other colleagues each do?

06 Review the contribution

What evidence will show whether our advice helped the business?

The six questions are an introductory conversation scaffold, not a proprietary assessment or a complete HR operating model. Participants adapt the sequence to context and retain local specialist referral and decision responsibilities.

LEARN BY DOING

Explore. Challenge. Make the ideas useful.

Short explanations lead into lively exercises, paired discussion and small-group challenges. Participants test ideas, share experience and build a draft together. The tone is engaging and enjoyable, with time to reflect and connect learning to real work.

01 Read the business briefing

Teams review a fictional operational dashboard and manager email, identify the business pressures behind the request and prepare three questions before offering any HR response.

02 Reframe the urgent request

In rotating pairs, a manager demands immediate training while the partner explores performance expectations, workflow and incentives, then summarises a more precise problem for agreement.

03 Practise constructive challenge

Participants use short role-plays to challenge an unsupported assumption, combining a specific observation, a business consequence and an open question while peers note the effect.

04 Contract the next step

Triads rehearse presenting two options and agreeing responsibilities; an observer checks whether the manager owns the business decision and the review point tests an actual outcome.

DIAGNOSE BEFORE YOU ACT

Evidence > shared feedback > agreed priorities

Use selected diagnostic prompts to distinguish known facts from assumptions. Discuss the findings and agree their meaning before proposing a solution. Feedback is part of diagnosis, not an afterthought.

ONE CASE, DEVELOPED THROUGH THE DAY

A sales director requests a training programme because conversion rates have fallen. Team leaders describe changing customer demand, unclear account allocation and pressure to maximise call numbers. HR has limited budget, and the director expects a quick response before the next monthly business review.

Groups prepare and rehearse a partnering conversation that clarifies the business problem, tests the training assumption and agrees a proportionate next step with explicit manager and HR responsibilities.

THE FACILITATOR WILL

- Invite different perspectives.
- Make assumptions visible.
- Welcome constructive debate.
- Capture practical learning.

SAMPLE WORKSHOP AGENDA

A working day, with room to think.

09:00-16:30 | Six hours of facilitated learning, plus lunch and breaks. The agenda, emphasis and timings are always agreed with the client, including local scheduling needs.

09:00-09:20	Define useful business partnering Explore expectations of the HRBP role and distinguish a useful advisory contribution from simply accepting the first request for support.
09:20-10:15	Understand the business conversation Read the case briefing, identify operational pressures and translate them into questions about performance, work and the people involved.
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:30	Contract and investigate the request Practise opening a manager conversation, agreeing its purpose and using diagnostic questions to separate symptoms, assumptions and missing evidence.
11:30-12:30	Challenge assumptions with credibility Rehearse respectful challenge, using specific observations and business consequences to create space for a different explanation of the problem.
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-14:30	Develop and explain practical options Compare a small set of responses and prepare advice that makes feasibility, manager ownership and specialist dependencies easy to understand.
14:30-14:45	Break
14:45-15:30	Agree responsibilities and boundaries Practise contracting next steps, identify when to involve specialist colleagues and define a useful review point for the case.
15:30-16:10	Run the partnering conversation Complete a triad role-play from initial request to agreed action, using observer feedback to improve questioning, challenge and advice.
16:10-16:30	Plan a live partnering application Choose a forthcoming manager conversation and record its purpose, preparation needs, likely assumptions and the support needed to handle it.

Move from a manager's first request to a shared business understanding, reasoned advice and accountable next steps.

FROM THE SESSION TO YOUR DESK

Useful models. Practical working records.

The day combines reference materials with drafts developed in the exercises. Each has a clear use beyond the workshop; the work reflects the evidence and perspectives available in the room.

01 Business conversation brief

A draft account of the case manager's operational priority, performance pressures, stakeholders and people implications, with space to record what remains unclear.

Prepare for a manager meeting with sharper business questions.

02 Partnering question bank

A focused set of questions for exploring purpose, evidence, work conditions, alternatives and ownership, with examples showing how to probe without assuming the answer.

Improve the quality of an initial HR advisory conversation.

03 Problem-framing worksheet

A worked example separating the manager's request, observed symptoms, possible explanations and evidence needs before choosing an intervention or referring to a specialist.

Check whether the requested solution addresses the underlying problem.

04 Constructive challenge prompts

Practised sentence structures for connecting an observation with a business consequence and an open question, supported by personal feedback from the role-play exercises.

Raise a difficult point clearly while preserving the working relationship.

05 Options and agreement record

An exercise comparison of two proportionate responses, followed by a clear record of manager responsibilities, HR support, dependencies and the first review question.

Make advice and shared responsibilities explicit after the meeting.

06 Personal practice plan

A short plan for one forthcoming business conversation, identifying preparation, a questioning or challenge skill to practise, and a colleague who can provide feedback.

Build confidence through one deliberate change in partnering practice.

CONTINUE EXPLORING

Continue with the models, diagnostic manuals and development resources on the HR Delivery website. Workshop exercises provide a first application; a full organisational diagnostic or implementation assignment can be agreed separately.

[Open the framework >](#)

[Explore diagnostic resources >](#)



MAKE THE LEARNING COUNT

A better conversation. A practical next step.

Prepare one upcoming manager conversation using the business brief and question prompts. Practise a respectful challenge with a colleague, then review whether the discussion produced a clearer problem, shared responsibilities and a useful next step.

YOUR FIRST 30 DAYS

01

Days 1-7

Prepare one conversation

Select a forthcoming meeting with a manager and clarify the business priority beforehand. Note the initial request, your assumptions and the questions most likely to improve your understanding of the problem.

02

Days 8-21

Practise and seek feedback

Use the conversation scaffold in a suitable meeting. Record the agreed action and ask a trusted colleague or manager whether your questions, challenge and advice made the issue clearer.

03

Days 22-30

Review the contribution

Revisit the agreed action with the manager. Check what changed, whether further evidence is needed and which partnering habit you will retain or practise differently in the next conversation.

Follow-through is participant-led. Additional facilitation, a full diagnostic or specialist support can be agreed separately.

AVAILABLE IN-HOUSE

Shaped around your organisation

Participants identify a common, non-confidential manager request and reflect on where partnering conversations become difficult. The client clarifies local HRBP responsibilities and specialist referral routes so exercises can reflect the organisation's actual decision boundaries.

PLAN YOUR IN-HOUSE WORKSHOP

Talk to Dr Phillip Welsh

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Discuss your workshop



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