

# Introduction to M&L Solutions

## Background

This document introduces the idea of an *Employer Journey* towards high performance management and leadership. We believe high performance managers are those who, by unlocking the potential of others in their company, can achieve dramatic improvements in organisational performance. The document paints a picture of a 'desired state' for SSC staff and their partners in encouraging and supporting the journey. It suggests some ideas and resources that will be of immediate, practical help.

This grew out of our work to introduce two new solutions to the M&L all-sector programme's portfolio. Based on the output of the Sector Skills Agreements, two priority areas were chosen: *Managing People* and *First Level Manager*.

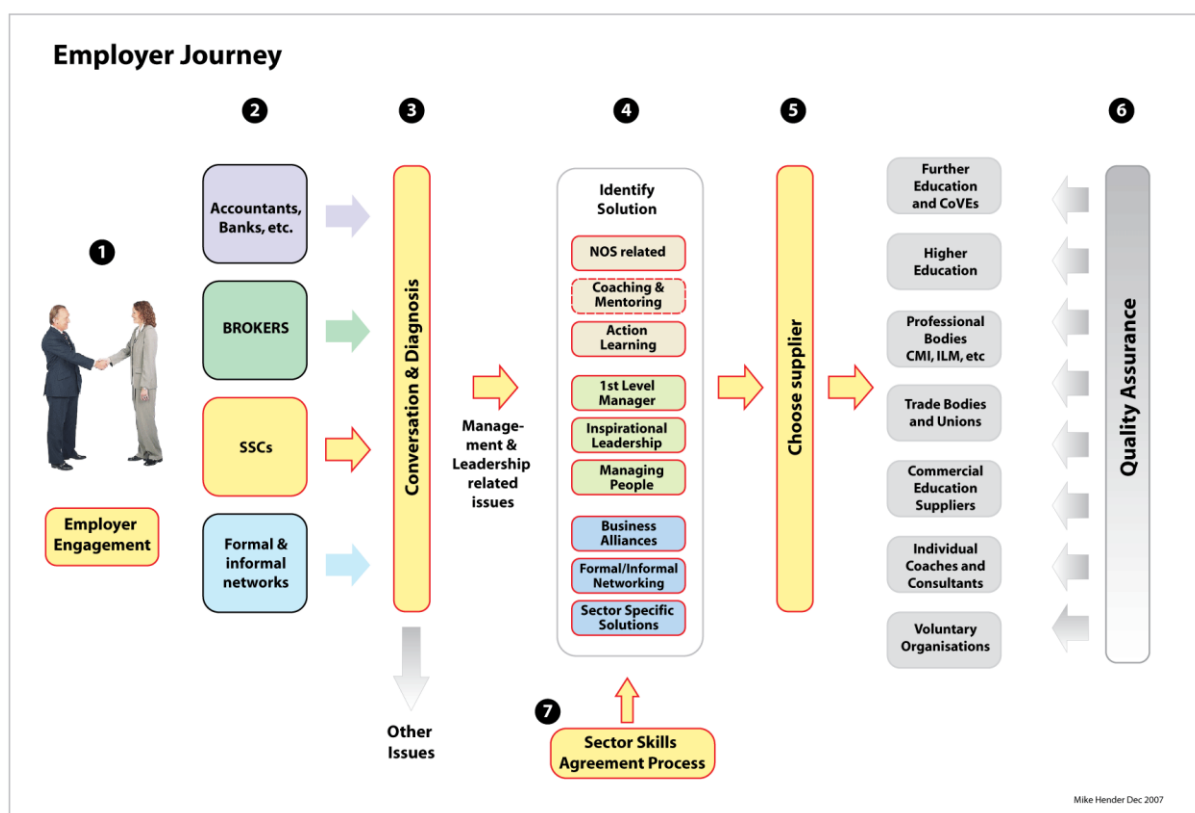
We looked for solutions already known to SSCs but also 'market leading' solutions from external suppliers. (Our policy is to find best-of-breed and not invent new solutions.)

It turned out there were few solution recommendations available from the SSCs while the external market was complex and fragmented. No *Which? Guide to Solutions* is available.

We continue to refine this work to deliver a valuable set of recommendations to the network. Meanwhile, in the process, we've developed some tools that will be immediately useful to colleagues in identifying who should be trained, how to diagnose the need and where to start looking for solutions including our two new ones.

It's based on an analysis of the Employer Journey towards M&L development – see the picture below and a detailed explanation of the thinking behind it at <http://www.sfn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/FlowChartTable.pdf>

Read on to see if you identify with the challenge, our analysis and recommendations.



## So where would we all like to be?

Imagine you're in a meeting with an employer and the discussion turns to management and leadership (M&L) and how it can drive superior organisational performance.

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In an ideal world, if you had the following toolkit at your fingertips, you would feel confident in exploring your employer's needs and advising them on how to identify and then fill their skills gaps.

We think you would like to have:

1. Easy-to-understand, credible, relevant **research** detailing the most likely M&L skills gaps for small, medium and large organisations
2. Some **convincing messages** that can be used to encourage time-poor managers to engage in improving their skills and performance. These messages would suggest solutions for likely business problems or provide a compelling vision of **performance improvement**.
3. **Credible case studies** that show example improvements for peer or competitor organisations.
4. A set of **diagnostics** that can be deployed to home in on the specific needs of the manager and their organisation.
5. A way of identifying **which managers will benefit** most from improvement and which of these will most impact the performance of the organisation.
6. Some proven, off-the-shelf **solutions** that can be recommended to address the most likely skills issues
7. A choice of recommended, quality assured, local **suppliers** who can deploy the solutions
8. A set of **helpful contacts** in every **Region** and **Country** who can advise on the availability of funding to assist the employer.

To see some of the resources available to you please look at Table 1 on the next page. You'll see each of the above tools listed with some comments on how to approach the issue.

But before getting to the tools you'll see a section in grey at the top of table 1 that is specific to your sector. It will clarify your thinking if you have answers to those questions first.

Over the last years our agreed focus has been on SMEs, so how relevant are the five solutions we are promoting to companies of different sizes? Table 2 suggests that the solutions are mostly relevant across the board.

Finally, do click on <http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/FlowChartTable.pdf> to get a clearer view of the diagram, a detailed key to each stage and a blow by blow walk-through of a likely conversation with an employer.

Mike Hender  
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Table 1 M&L tools for SSC staff	Comment
<b>For the sector specifically</b>	
1. Does your SSA identify M&L development as a key skills gap?	
2. Does your SSC have a strategy to address the gap?	
3. Are resources in place to execute the strategy?	
4. Are the different needs of small, medium and large organisations understood and segmented within the strategy?	
5. Are the sector specific needs segmented from the generic M&L needs?	
6. Is there a separate plan to address each?	
<b>For all sectors</b>	
7. Are there convincing messages that can be used to encourage time-poor managers to engage in improving their skills and performance?	These messages should suggest solutions for likely business problems or provide a compelling vision of performance improvement. There are some key messages for some of the M&L programme solutions at <a href="http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk">http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk</a>
8. Are there credible case studies that show example improvements for peer or competitor organisations?	Case studies and examples are the most compelling way of getting involvement from busy managers because they tell stories and make the theory real. There are cases studies for some of the M&L programme solutions at <a href="http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk">http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk</a>
9. Are there diagnostics that can be deployed to home in on the specific needs of the manager and their organisation?	Different managers react differently to formal and informal approaches. Getting the right diagnostic is key. See <a href="http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/Diagnostic_Tools.pdf">http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/Diagnostic_Tools.pdf</a>
10. Is there a way of identifying which managers will benefit most from improvement and which of these will most impact the performance of the organisation?	See the Good Practice Guide for suggestions on how to address this issue. See <a href="http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/GoodPractice_Guide180707.pdf">http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/GoodPractice_Guide180707.pdf</a>
11. Are there proven, off-the-shelf solutions that can be recommended to address the most likely skills issues?	The five solutions identified by the M&L programme are a good starting point. See <a href="http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk">http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk</a>
12. Is there a choice of recommended, quality assured, local suppliers who can deploy the solutions?	There are thousands of Universities, Colleges, Companies and Consultancies offering M&L development. To get some pointers on how to approach this challenge see <a href="http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/L&amp;M_Resources.pdf">http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/L&amp;M_Resources.pdf</a>
13. Do you have a set of contacts in every Region and Country who can advise on the availability of funding to assist the employer?	Regional contacts are at <a href="http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/regions/Regional_dbase_latest.pdf">http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/regions/Regional_dbase_latest.pdf</a> Country contacts are at <a href="http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/nations.htm">http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/nations.htm</a>

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## The five solutions – what size companies?

### Action Learning

Solve both short and long term business issues using the collective wisdom of a supportive group

### Inspirational Leadership

Provides rich insights into what makes inspirational leaders tick and shows individuals how to improve their own performance

### Managing People

The number one issue raised by our SSA survey across all SSCs. Work is underway to identify and share best practice solutions

### First Level Manager

Another key issue from the SSA work. For this too, work is underway to identify and share best practice solutions

### NOS for M&L

World class standards that underly the other solutions and provide 100 ways to improve organisational and business performance

Table 2 M&L Programme 'Five Solution'	Small and Micro	Medium	Large
1. Action Learning	✓	✓	✓
2. Inspirational Leadership	✓	✓	✓
3. Managing People	✓	✓	✓
4. First Level Manager	✓	✓	✓
5. NOS for M&L	✓	✓	✓
5. SFEDI	✓	✗	✗