

## Bowman Gilfillan believes in the value of coaching

Coaching has taken off within law firms around the globe, with the *Law Gazette* reporting that the top 100 law firms are now spending an estimated £4.5 million (R93 million) on coaching annually.



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As such, South African firms who want to compete globally are turning to coaching as a way to develop, guide and mentor their valued employees. As an example, Pan-African law firm Bowman Gilfillan Africa Group has been running an Executive Coaching Academy for its partners and senior leaders for two years.

“Coaching is a more personal and a longer-term approach, compared to the traditional training models. It can cover anything from business development, entrepreneurial and networking skills, through to devising a personal career plan, working through career challenges, and also addressing ways to achieve some work life balance, for example,” says Lee-Ann Greyling, group learning manager at the Bowman Gilfillan Africa Group.

The firm has also expanded their coaching offering to include a focus on women and junior colleagues.

“Juniors typically join the firm with good technical knowledge. However, they may need to develop their soft skills and experience needed for a corporate role. This programme works with our lawyers and business service professionals, teaching them the personal mastery and business skills they need as their careers develop. They also learn the skills necessary to be able to climb the corporate ladder in a demanding and often stressful working environment.

Also recently launched by the Group is a Maternity Coaching Programme which involves six to eight hours of individual and group coaching before, during and after the maternity leave period. Greyling believes the benefits of this form of training in plentiful.

"Firstly, it has been proven to increase the proportion of women, especially senior women, who return to and pursue their careers post maternity. Secondly, it facilitates a faster and more seamless re-integration into the business and return to full productivity for women who have been on maternity leave. Finally, it helps female employees navigate through this significant life stage and helps them to decide if, when and on what terms they want to return to work."

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