

EXECUTIVE COACHING: WHAT TO EXPECT

Coaching

Navigating transformational change has resulted in a business-coaching phenomenon that is receiving a great deal of interest for the power and impact it has to create and enhance performance. The need to address very personal strengths and weaknesses can best be accomplished when you focus on the needs of the individual. Today's leader must commit to a personal development process that expands their capacity for understanding themselves in relation to the people they collaborate with, the technology and processes that supports them, and the customers they serve. Creating a personal leadership identity that is firmly rooted in core values is the foundation for long term leadership success. As leaders evolve they need an unwavering commitment to their values while they metabolize massive amounts of individual and organizational change.

Great business coaches have a sixth sense about what it takes to lead an individual or a team to victory. They have keen insight into the game of business, command of the elements such as; rising and falling markets, organizational change, and regulatory-financial-legal issues. They have long term vision, strategies, and tactical day to day processes to help you master the incessant demands of today's corporate environment. Having an ally that works with you to propel your success can mean the difference between surviving and thriving.

The coaching process

STEPS IN THE PROCESS	AVG TIME
Terms of Engagement established	1-2 hours
Data Gathering- Coachee, management, employee and/or client interview	1-2 weeks approx. 6-12 hours
Defining objectives and expectations	2 hours
Assess and interpret skills, behaviors and competence	1-2 weeks- approx. 5-8 hours
Coach Lab- Work on real world issues and skill development, role-play, discuss strategy, outcomes, impact and approach	Majority of coaching time devoted to this phase
Assignment & Follow-up- Individual activities designed to help the coachee achieve their goals	As needed
Action Plan- Once the coachee has optimized the value of the coach an action plan for continuous improvement is co-created to help the coachee achieve their goals	1-3 hours



Engagement Process-

A coach should set very specific targets, goals, objectives and time lines with the coachees. Spelling out the roles and expectations is pivotal in measuring the effectiveness of coaching relationships. Some people engage a coach to improve existing performance, some hire to help them prepare to assume new responsibilities and others are hired to neutralize or eliminate deficiencies or barriers to success. Regardless of the motivation for engaging a coach it is important to clarify expectations and outline what will occur during the engagement.

Assess & Interpret skills, behavior and competence

Looking in the mirror and accurately assessing your current state is a critical first step in self-discovery. 360 degree feedback and personal interviews with your stakeholders illuminate your influence and interpersonal impact, strengths and areas of needed improvement. It is a survey of the existing landscape that helps you and your coach best determine where and how to build a purposeful future.

Personal growth is by definition a personal responsibility and can not be delegated. However, while you own the responsibility, the complexity and behavioral nature of leadership skills necessitates the honest assessments and advice of others such as an executive coach to leverage full effectiveness. We are all a work in progress and coaches are a highly valued resource you use to bring about meaningful change and personal growth.

Coach Lab

A coach should offer unparalleled experience and resources to help bridge you from where you are to where you want to be. In removing barriers they will engage you by asking the tough questions such as "Why are you avoiding a task? What is causing you to perform at a less than expected level? What weaknesses are you compensating for?" There is no place to hide and confronting issues is the beginning of solving problems and seizing opportunities.

A coach will help you discuss the challenging "undiscussables" and provide a sounding board to help you unleash untapped potential. Confidential meetings allow you the freedom to explore and practice what could be, without cynicism and repercussion. Your coach will facilitate authentic dialogue in a safe environment giving you the opportunity, often for the first time, to be real and genuine about what needs to occur for you to take your leadership to the next level.

As you embark on your quest for optimum performance your coach will ask questions that lead you to your own answers and challenge you in ways that drives change and creates results. The coach helps you tap into your strengths and values and encourages you on your journey to personal fulfillment. They will also help identify blind spots, weaknesses and barriers that may have prevented you from achieving the results you've purposed in the past. They can oversee a



regimen of development that emphasizes your strengths and neutralizes your weaknesses. Coaching is custom-tailored to the individual coachee based on their experiences, aptitudes and desires. Spending time in the business gymnasium with a coach will help you develop the business muscle and abilities that will increase your level of performance.

Your coach may have you role play, conduct meetings, make presentations, review business plans, discuss options, and explore strategies and their potential impact. They may have you read, write plans, interview other key individuals, conduct competitive analysis, or visit clients. A good coach knows how to assign the right coaching tool and task at the right time to produce the optimum results. Like a professional athlete you can bet they will drill into you foundational principles and selectively provide differentiators based on your personal strengths. The lab will be the most exciting part of the engagement. Spending time with a coach is where preparation is bound to meet opportunity.

Action Plans

Regardless of how you look at it, you are your primary instrument of interpersonal influence, source of change and personal accomplishment. You and your professional coach will co-create the architectural blueprint of what you want to accomplish and help you synthesize an inspirational vision and mission that will anchor your activities, thrusting you into your desired future.

Your coach is a catalyst and accountability partner

A coach is often the catalyst and accountability partner that dislodges stuck agendas and visions. They provide intensity and a steely sense of focus that helps propel your success with a renewed sense of urgency. Coaches help you unleash personal power and ability to move intention into reality. Your coach will be your raving fan and passionate champion of your growth. They will allow you to explore new ideas and behaviors in a safe environment and give you the practice field and repetitions necessary to make you a world class business professional. They take you and your goals seriously and provide honest feedback. They motivate you in a very personal manner and always have your best interest at heart. Unlike immediate supervisors, the coachee's sole motivation is to see you personally reach your goals. Your coach is your advocate completely dedicated to your success. They can do this because they are not saddled with co-managing other agendas or intentions in providing advice and direction.

Who else needs coaching?

Coaching also needs to extend to the people on your team, ensuring they have the skills, knowledge, and resources to optimize their contributions and performance. This approach recognizes the explicit and implicit value of individuals, networks, and relationships and provides the energy and inspiration



for others to achieve the mutual aim of the enterprise. When you actively engage your team by coaching them, you more easily and genuinely work in collaboration with those reporting to you. You will come to understand that it is not so much about "giving answers or advice" as the sage member of the team, but it is about helping others discover and learn how to solve for themselves... and to spark their genius that creates value for the organization.

Qualities to look for in a coach

Ten years ago there were only a few thousand coaches; today there are tens of thousands and growing. Selecting a coach is a very personal issue. You want them to have the right temperament, skill set and resource base. As a trusted advisor you want to make sure you engage someone that you respect and can trust. Their professionalism and depth of experience will determine how much you are willing to receive their correction, advice and guidance. A coach should have experience speaking into the lives others and for tackling difficult issues. A coach-coachee relationship is delicate because the coach is hired by the coachee. Great coaches have a broad range of experiences to draw upon to help steer individuals, asking questions that reveal unlimited potential, inspire change and spark them to take action, now.

What is the competitive advantage of coaching?

Improving your individual skill and confidence through coaching is likely to shape a new era of development. When we add new skills we have to make a conscious effort until we achieve some level of mastery. A coach will help you acquire and enhance skills that will improve your existing performance and prepare you for additional levels of responsibilities. Leaders that engage coaches have a competitive advantage as they receive an invaluable source of support, insight, tools and processes based on decades of real world experience. Coaches provide an independent objective, fresh outlook and have an uncanny ability to get to the root issues and map a path to success. Coaches will inspire you and help focus your efforts, putting you on an accelerated path to enhanced performance and taking your leadership to the next level.

Summary

Growth isn't something that just happens. You have to stand up and say I will commit to growth, I will hold myself accountable to a higher standard. I will invest myself in the process and journey to maximize my potential and become my personal and professional best. When you go the extra mile you rarely ever encounter a traffic jam. If you want to become something you've never been then you have to do something you have never done. A coach will help you cross the chasm of being a good leader to a great leader with amazing success.