

Learning Resources

Executive Coaching: What it is, How it Works and Why it's Important

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What is Executive Coaching?

Executive coaching is an integrated process aimed at boosting performance, learning and fulfillment so clients reach their full potential or redefine their view of their potential. Sherpa Coaching defines executive coaching as "regular meetings between a business leader and a trained facilitator, designed to produce positive changes in business behavior in a limited time frame."

Why Hire an Executive Coach?

In today's business climate an executive coach helps clients gain an edge in the competitive workplace. By acting as a sounding board and guide in honing business skills, the coach helps clients focus their energy on steps they need to take to have the greatest professional and personal impact.

Executive coaching is a tool for facilitating growth and bringing out top performance strengths, skills and capabilities. The process offers a real-time opportunity to understand and distinguish which behaviors are effective and which ones hinder or derail success.

Different from other personal development arenas, in executive coaching clients are held responsible and accountable for their results. Coaches work with the executive to set specific, measurable goals. Focus areas often include solving problems, creating balance, coping with stress, advancing careers, increasing communication effectiveness, improving teamwork and relationships and building confidence and motivation.

Executive coaching optimizes the executive's leadership potential and that of key

individuals the executive manages. Coaching experiences positively affect the people with whom the executive regularly interacts. The transformation of executives' behavior or management style has a rippling effect on the productivity and satisfaction of those around them. Hence, a strong investment is made in the organization itself. Coaching provides insight into management style and communication skills and the impact these have on others and the organization.

How Does Coaching Work?

Coaching is an experiential and customized, tailored process designed for individual client needs. As an outcome-based, personalized development tool, coaching is used to assess and address strengths, opportunities for growth and threats to an executive's professional

journey. Coaching differs from other forms of professional and personal development in many ways:

- ◆ A targeted, collaborative effort requiring the input, support and feedback of those who work with the person being coached
- ◆ A highly focused developmental tool for growth
- ◆ A practical and results-oriented process that yields observable change
- ◆ Behaviorally based
- ◆ Customized to the specific needs of the individual

Executive coaching services are offered in a highly personalized, confidential, one-on-one relationship that strengthens performance by helping clients understand their current business realities; identify, organize, and plan executive work priorities; assess strengths and weaknesses; and identify ways to improve specific business and leadership abilities, including communication skills.

Certified coaches are trained to listen, to observe and to customize their approach to individual client needs. They seek to elicit solutions and strategies from clients; they

believe clients are naturally creative and resourceful. The coach's job is to provide support to enhance the skills, resources, success and creativity that clients already have.

What Makes a Coaching Relationship Successful?

- ◆ An atmosphere of confidentiality, support and commitment
- ◆ A receptive individual who is seeking change or development
- ◆ A clear, defined action plan that drives the process
- ◆ An ongoing, co-created partnership between the coach and the client

I never cease to be amazed at the power of the executive coaching process to draw out the skills or talent previously hidden within an individual, invariably finding a way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable.

John Russell, Managing Director of Harley-Davidson Europe Ltd

Why Does Coaching Work?

Executive coaching is one of the most accessible and time-efficient ways to learn, and it is one of the best and primary tools organizations have for developing their people. Coaching works because of the supportive nature of the coaching relationship.

What Are the Benefits of Executive Coaching?

- ◆ Increased leadership effectiveness
- ◆ Acquired skills and abilities critical to an organization
- ◆ Amplified impact and organizational results
- ◆ Improved relationships, communication and interpersonal skills
- ◆ Increased self-awareness
- ◆ Enhanced job satisfaction, success and productivity

What Are the Facts about Executive Coaching?

Research has clearly demonstrated the tremendous benefits of coaching. According to the International Personnel Management Association, training accompanied by coaching can improve performance by 88% over simply training alone, which improves performance by only 22%. The Metrix Global Survey proved that coaching produced a 529% return on investment and significant intangible benefits to a business. The Geoff Hinsley Study showed that an investment in coaching was far below training expenses and coaching exhibited an enormous payback of 2,000 to 3,000%.