

Leadership Coaching: How Does it Work? Questions & Answers

Q: What are the benefits of having an Executive Leadership Coach?

A:

- In the sports world, top performing athletes benefit from top coaches. In the writing world, top authors benefit from good editors. The same holds for business professionals. Business professionals can reach higher levels of performance faster through the expertise, outside perspective and the accountability that having the right executive coach can bring.
 - Just like your leaders are experts in your industry, a good executive coach provides professional and personal growth through increasing self-awareness and accelerating professional development.
 - The benefits that executive coaching can provide include the following:
 - More effective and productive leaders and managers
 - Greater sense of career direction
 - Increased productivity
 - Improved job satisfaction and engagement
 - Increased organizational commitment and retention
 - Increased collaboration and teamwork and reduced conflict
 - Improved relationships with managers, peers and direct reports
 - Stronger client relationships
 - Faster ramp-up times in new roles
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Q: How does the coaching process work?

A:

- You will work on specific goals during the coaching sessions as jointly determined by you and your organization. However, these will not be the only coaching topics. You should come to each session ready to discuss the professional issues most important to you.
- Through the coaching process, your coach and you will work together to make the most of your talents and skills in order to achieve your professional goals. You'll gain greater self-awareness of your strengths and development areas, and learn how to better leverage those strengths and address those development areas. You will focus on how to build your expertise in order to become a stronger leader.
- The specific focus of each coaching session can range from discussing an immediate challenge (e.g., a upcoming difficult conversation or leading an especially tricky meeting) to helping work on a specific professional goal (e.g., more clearly defining your expertise or becoming more collaborative). The focus will be on the issues most important to you while keeping organizational goals top of mind.

Examples of typical areas of focus can include:

- Improving leadership and management competencies.
 - Business strategy, including facilitating strategic change in the organization.
 - Navigating organization politics, organizational dynamics or team leadership and team interactions.
 - Selling and business development.
 - Seeing the broader firm perspective.
 - Identifying your passions, leveraging your strengths, building expertise.
 - Building professional development plans you can be excited about.
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Q: What is the expected outcome of a single coaching session?

A:

- A typical coaching session may have several immediate outcomes:
 - Practical steps to move forward productively and effectively. Also, complete or partial resolution or, at a minimum, greater insights into the issue at hand.
 - Greater awareness and insights on personal effectiveness and new ways of approaching a particular situation.
 - A shift in perspective resulting in clarity, courage and confidence to move forward in a bold new direction.
 - Specific follow-up action steps to keep the learning progressing between sessions.
- Over time, you will ideally start to take greater personal responsibility for every aspect of your professional career. By developing that mindset, you will feel like you are in control of your career; things just don't happen randomly to you. You will develop a line of sight as to how you want to develop as a professional. In that context, you increasingly learn to leverage your strengths to an even greater degree, and develop a proactive desire to address any challenge that they may be holding you back.

Q: What is the coaching relationship? Who does the coach work for?

A:

- The coaching relationship will be held as strictly confidential between the Coach and Coachee. Once engaged by the organization, coaches "work" for the Coachee. The Coachee sets the agenda but the Coach guides the Coachee to keep a strong focus on goals mutually determined by the organization and the Coachee related to areas such as employee business effectiveness (see below).
 - The Coachee will work on specific goals during the coaching sessions as jointly determined by the Coachee and the organization. However, these will not be the only coaching topics.
 - To help ensure goal alignment, we request that the Coachee and the Manager complete the pre-work forms prior to the first session and bring these forms to the kick-off meeting.
 - Following month 2 and following month 5, Coachees are expected to meet with their Manager or Head of Talent Management to self-report progress against goals.
 - Coaching topics are to be determined by Coachee.
 - The tone is set that coaching the purpose of coaching is not to "fix" the Coachee. Rather, coaching sessions should be a very positive experience to help the Coachee leverage his or her strengths to become a stronger business person, leader and manager.
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Q: How can I make most of the coaching experience?

A: Coachees who get the most out of the coaching experience challenge themselves with the following questions*:

- Do I have a strong desire to improve now?
- Do I have clarity around coaching goals?
- Am I open to new ways of thinking and behaving?
- Can I be honest about strengths and weaknesses?
- Am I open to feedback, even when mixed/negative?
- Do I possess patience while awaiting results of coaching?
- Have I made coaching related activities a priority? Will I honor this commitment to self-development?
- Will I follow-through on commitments and assignments?

**Adapted from Coached to Lead, by Susan Batley*

Q: How many coaching sessions and how often?

A:

- 12 coaching sessions for each Coachee over a 6-month period or whatever the organization and coach agree upon.
 - 2 in-person sessions. One at the initial kick-off and one at the wrap-up (60 minutes each). (In-person coaching assumes that the Coachee is available on mutually agreed upon onsite coaching days set up for coaching multiple coachees.)
 - 10 interim coaching sessions conducted by phone (50 minutes each – see timing below)
 - Coaching sessions will be pre-scheduled, two sessions per month for six months.
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Q: What happens if I have an unexpected scheduling conflict?

A:

- Sessions can be rescheduled in advance. To allow Coachees' scheduling flexibility, the option is provided for one session to roll over into month five and one session to roll over to month six if necessary.
 - We request a 48-hour cancellation period. Sessions cancelled and not rescheduled by Coachees will expire with notice given to the sponsoring organization.
 - Coaches pledge to make a good faith effort to reschedule at a time convenient to both Coach and Coachee.
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Q: How will success be measured?

A: The measures of success will include the following:

- Coachee self-reported satisfaction with Coach and coaching experience
- Coachee self-reported business results and professional benefits gained from coaching
- Coachee self-reported skills increased
- Others' observations of progress on the jointly agreed-upon goals
- Head of Talent Management or sponsor's observations of progress on the two jointly agreed-upon goals and overall performance