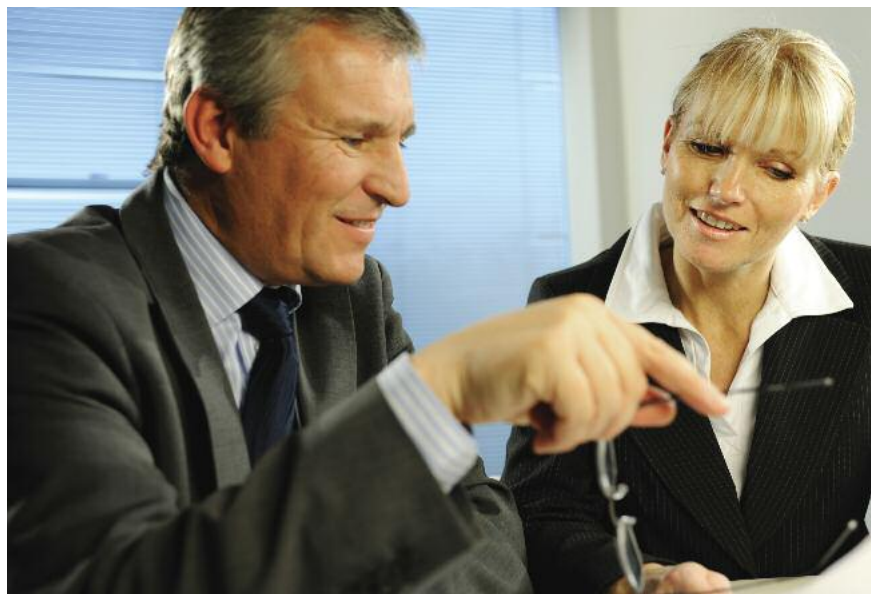


EXECUTIVE Coaching

The goal of coaching is the goal of good management: and that is to make the most of an organization's valuable resources — Harvard Business Review



The International Coach Federation (ICF), one of the largest worldwide resources for professional coaches, defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.

For many professional coaches this means working with executives to enhance leadership effectiveness, performance, and career progression.

According to a study by global outplacement and career-management firm Drake Beam Morin Inc. (DBM) and Human Capital Institute (HCI), investment in executive coaching is on the rise in organizations working to fill talent pipelines. These companies are benefiting from a high return on investment (ROI) for coaching. Furthermore, businesses that invest in human capital by effectively leveraging executive coaching to groom talent throughout the enterprise are witnessing a significant impact on both operational excellence and the bottom line.

According to HCI, as high performers move up the ladder of success, squeezing out that extra ounce of performance becomes increasingly difficult. Coaching helps executives solve their own problems and grow to new levels of performance and maturity. Coaching also keeps key people motivated and involved. Personal chemistry is an integral part of any coaching relationship. For coaching to really succeed, employees must feel confident that the coach is a valuable resource, assisting them to reach important goals. Helping employees to achieve their goals is what coaching is all about.

According to Elaine Crowley, M.Ed., founder of The Crowley Group, the ROI for coaching is evident.

“Dell Computer found coachees are promoted at a faster rate than those without a coach,” she says. “A hospitality industry leader calculated savings of more than \$30 million as a result of coaching their top 200 executives. And a Manchester Inc. study found the return to the employer on coaching to be six times the investment.”

According to Helen Cooke, managing director, Cooke Consulting Group, leading healthcare companies continue to invest in coaching because they have seen the benefit of this focused approach and they recognize that they can't afford not to continue to strengthen their leadership talent pool.

“The wisest managers are very intentional in how they select indi-

viduals for coaching,” she says. “Coaching when it's offered to high-performing, high-potential contributors pays for itself in no time. Coaching, if it's being offered to a problem performer, may or may not produce the desired results. With that in mind, identifying whether the potential coaching client is coachable is the first step before undertaking any coaching effort.”

REAPING THE BENEFITS OF COACHING

Elizabeth Brenner, LICSW, associate at Waife & Associates Inc., says executive coaching is a process in which the coach assesses the executive's management skills and needs and shows the directions for improvement.

“Executives at biopharma companies are working through an unusually stressful period where time, quality, and costs are overriding and there are conflicting concerns,” she says. “All levels of biopharma management are required to work effectively upward, downward, and crosswise with their peers in other departments. All executives have relative strengths and weaknesses with regard to understanding and managing people, managing their time, applying their personal creativity, and achieving business goals through and with people.”

Coaching is a powerful tool in the leadership development toolbox because it's customized to an individual's very specific development needs and the organization's current and anticipated priorities, Ms. Cooke says.

“Coaching is a concentrated solution — a little goes a long way,” she says.

According to various industry sources, among the benefits to companies whose executives participated in the coaching were improvements in productivity, quality, organizational strength, customer service, reducing customer complaints, retaining executives who received coaching, cost reductions, and bottom-line profitability.

A recent study cited in the Public Personnel Management Journal found a typical management training program increased a manager's productivity by 22%, but when combined with eight weeks of intensive coaching, that same manager's productivity increased to more than 85%.

Coaching can produce a 529% ROI and significant intangible benefits to business.

MetrixGlobal

A MetrixGlobal study found that coaching produced a 529% ROI and significant intangible benefits to business; including the financial benefits from employee retention, overall ROI was boosted to 788%.

Ms. Cooke says an investment in coaching indicates to the individual recipient that the company believes in him or her and is committed for the long haul.

"Since it's targeted and customized, coaching can be much more impactful than investing in a workshop that everyone goes through," she continues. "In other words, it's moving a key player forward a mile versus moving a group forward an inch."

For Ms. Crowley, leadership development and coaching go hand in hand.

"Coaching shifts leaders from knowing to doing by building muscle memory so new skills and approaches come naturally when called for," she says. "While a workshop can raise awareness, coaching creates laser-like focus on the leader's highest developmental priorities, e.g., communicating a vision, delegating effectively, resisting pretzel leadership — tying oneself in knots to placate others — and so on."

According to Susan Morris, M.Ed., CPCC, ACC, president of Morris Consulting Group, if organizations want to retain their leadership talent, groom their high-potential and high-performing middle managers to assume senior leadership roles, and attract future leaders, executive coaching is a cost-effective and time-efficient development strategy.

Ms. Brenner concurs that in a down economy, executive coaching is even more important because the company is likely facing the need for significant change management and process improvement.

"The executive today needs to find ways to meet these challenges that are cost-effective," she says. "Helping executives to use emotionally intelligent strategies to enhance productivity and performance is a cost-reducing corporate contribution."

Ms. Brenner adds that the benefits to the company are multifold: Employees who are managed well are more flexible, loyal, and passionate about their work, enhancing the ability for the company to be a learning organization that performs in a superior way.

"Executives who find a new level of effectiveness in time management, interpersonal relationships, and acceptance of their ideas become stronger and more motivated corporate leaders," she says.

Downturns demand the most effective and often innovative use of all resources, Ms. Crowley says.

"Working with a coach enhances leadership

skills and provides an impartial thought partner so leaders look at questions and priorities from a

different perspective — and new perspectives provoke innovative thinking," she says.

ViewPoints

Our experts provide their insights on how executive coaching can benefit companies.

ELIZABETH BRENNER, LICSW

Associate, Waife & Associates Inc.



Employees who are managed well are more flexible, loyal, and passionate about their work, enhancing the ability for the company to be a learning organization that performs in a superior

way.

Waife & Associates helps companies build competitive advantage through process improvement and technology adoption. For more information, visit waife.com or e-mail ronwaife@waife.com.

HELEN COOKE

Managing Director, Cooke Consulting Group LLC



Leading healthcare companies continue to invest in coaching because they have seen the benefit of this focused approach and they recognize that they can't afford not to continue to strengthen their leadership talent pool.

Cooke Consulting Group LLC assists Fortune 500 companies and leading not-for-profit organizations in unleashing potential through a wide range of organizational development initiatives. For more information, visit cookeconsult.com or e-mail helen@cookeconsult.com.

ELAINE CROWLEY, M.ED.

Founder, The Crowley Group



Working with a coach enhances leadership skills and provides an impartial thought-partner so leaders look at questions and priorities from a different perspec-

tive — and new perspectives provoke innovative thinking.

The Crowley Group takes an integrated, systems approach to create a positive environment for change, charting a course toward shared goals reinforced by human resources programs. For more information, visit thecrowleygroup.com or e-mail elaine@thecrowleygroup.com.

SUSAN MORRIS, M.ED, CPCC, ACC

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If organizations want to retain their leadership talent, groom their high-potential and high-performing middle managers to assume senior leadership roles and

attract future leaders, executive coaching is a cost-effective and time-efficient development strategy.

The Morris Consulting Group LLC provides consulting to the pharmaceutical industry, specifically for R&D scientists and technical experts. For more information, visit morrisconsulting.biz or e-mail smorris@morrisconsulting.biz.

LELIA O'CONNOR

President, Ngai So Authentic Leadership Group



Great coaching begins with a higher purpose to help others grow and succeed. A great coach measures their success by the ongoing growth, performance, happiness, and success of the people they coach.

Ngai So Authentic Leadership Group provides a conduit for leaders to achieve outstanding business results, breakthrough career success, and professional satisfaction. For more information, visit ngai-so.com or e-mail loconnor@ngai-so.com.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

As cited in several industry-based surveys, among the benefits to executives who received coaching were improved working relationships with direct reports, working relationships with line managers, teamwork, working relationships with peers, job satisfaction, conflict reduction, organizational commitment, and working relationships with clients.

“Executive/career coaching is a critical component to developing leaders, especially in this challenging business climate,” says Lelia O’Connor, president of Ngal So Authentic Leadership Group. “Coaching is about helping business people bridge the gap between potential and performance. Take world-class athletes for example. They forge a strong relationship with a coach to help them untap their potential, master the mental game, and achieve top performance.”

Coaching is about bringing out the best in people and connecting them to their strengths and authentic source of inspiration, Ms. O’Connor adds.

“When employees are focused, passionate, and filled with inspiration to achieve and make a difference, then the company is on fire and has the ability to achieve many great things,” she says.

“As leaders advance within their organizations, there are fewer objective sources of feedback offered on their performance,” Ms. Morris says. “Senior executives suffer from isolation, lacking multiple sources of performance feedback from trusted others, those who are willing to speak the truth to them. Also, senior leaders who are charged with the survival and growth of their organizations must continue to strengthen their leadership competencies just as they did before they advanced to their senior position. Executive coaching proves to be one of the most valuable elements in developing senior leaders.”

She adds that an external, executive coach offers senior leaders an unbiased and objective space to collect and interpret performance feedback. Leaders have a tendency to focus on their weaknesses and spend time and valuable resources trying to improve. Engaged in a trusting, confidential relationship, the executive coach and the senior leader strategize how to remedy performance weaknesses and amplify performance strengths and while not forgetting to celebrate achievements.

Ms. O’Connor believes that business today desperately needs more “enlightened leaders.”

“The global financial crisis has clearly shown the negative impact of unenlightened

leadership,” she says. “Enlightened leadership begins when executives connect to their inner compass and listen to their inner voice of authenticity and morality.”

CAPITALIZING ON THE EXPERIENCE

To get the most out of a coaching session, Ms. O’Connor outlines several best practices.

First, executives have to do the inner work, pay attention to the mental game, and learn how to connect to their inner compass to stay on course, especially during challenging times.

She says it’s also important for leaders to take the time to identify what matters most to them and define career success on their own terms

Next, she says is kindness, which goes a long way.

“Create a circle of generosity by being helpful to others; in return others will be helpful to you,” she says.

Ms. O’Connor says because stress is the biggest killer of creativity, good decision-making, and problem-solving it’s important

for executives to learn how to relax their mind.

Finally, she says, executives need to create goals with timelines, keeping the plan front and center.

“If you can’t see it, you can’t manage it,” she says. “Dreams without action are just day-dreams.”

Ms. Morris says for executives to make the best of the coaching exercise and to change their career trajectory, they should have clearly defined career goals with a clearly defined career pathway.

“If the coachee is not able to define his or her career goal, no one can help him or her to achieve it,” she says. “Executives should also be able to assess the skills and competencies required for the current position and those required for the next job on the career ladder. For example, the coachee should ask his or herself: what new skills and competencies do I need to perform this new job? What old skills and competencies do I need to jettison for the next job? Who can I trust and ask to help me in collecting this information? How can I practice these new skills and competencies as I transition into this new position?”

In addition, Ms. Morris recommends that executives identify multiple mentors who can act as their board of directors.

“In this marketplace, access to more senior executives who have been laid off creates the perfect opportunity to find several mentors outside of the coachee’s functional area and

outside of the coachee’s organization,” she adds.

Ms. Brenner says a coachee’s career trajectory can be enhanced by his or her ability to communicate effectively so as to hold others accountable for their deliverable; assess problems accurately to develop solutions that work; and use an understanding of the psychological aspects of change to facilitate innovation. All of these are best practices that can be enhanced by a professional coach.

Ms. Cooke believes that while ensuring that the performance level is where it needs to be, individuals also need to pay attention to their image and exposure across the organization or industry.

“Without performance, it’s just smoke and mirrors,” she says. “Without exposure, an individual could be the company’s best-kept secret. Without attention to image — how someone is evaluated by others based on reputation, style, and presence — visibility within the organization could have unintended negative effects.”

A best practice for coaching clients to remember, according to Ms. Cooke, is to find a way to genuinely be receptive to feedback.

“Generically saying to your employees, peers, and manager that you welcome their feedback won’t produce the specific feedback that can help you grow,” she says. “Instead ask each to provide input on two things that you are doing well and should continue and two things you could do differently for better results. If you give folks advance notice that you need their input, they’ll have time to formulate their thoughts and you’ll be able to decide which points are valid and actionable.”

According to Ms. Crowley, one best practice is for executives to know what they want and be ready to ask for it.

“Having a career plan that operates beyond the context of your own company and industry lets you explore unusual ways and places to apply your expertise,” she says.

She also advises coaching clients to widen their scope and to evaluate the possibilities that may not seem likely at first.

“Leaders should consider all directions, not just up, but also across, diagonally or maybe even down,” Ms. Crowley says. “Keep in mind not just the next move, but overall career goals. Finally, perfect your elevator speech. Practicing small talk and networking conversations with a coach prepares one to be ready to maximize any unexpected opportunity.” ♦

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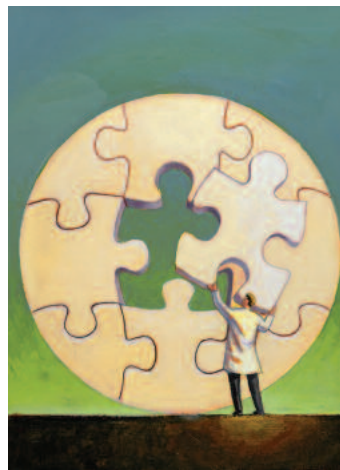
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