

## Executive Coaching

Essentially, the key factors for a good coach include subtlety, empathy, curiosity, trust, character and insight. The coach must be strong on strategy, good at lateral/creative thinking and able to customise individual coaching programs to suit each executive's particular needs. And there must be mutually agreed objectives.

Top coaches can often be found operating within multi-function teams where the most useful professional backgrounds include organisational development, high-level consulting, psychology and management. Everyone's coaching needs are different, and there's no 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

Many leaders have benefited significantly from informal mentoring early in their career, but regret the absence of coaches who themselves had felt the 'blow torch' of leadership and could have empathised and analysed during the CEO years.

Just as the world itself is becoming more complex, so too is executive coaching. It's assuming an integral role in the lifelong learning paradigm. But remember that coaching is not, as some would have us believe, a solution to all of our workplace flaws. Instead, a master coach is akin to a harbour pilot – being neither ship's captain nor crew, but helping you avoid the reefs so you can steer navigate the right course for your ship.

Good coaching **demands complete confidentiality**. The empathy and trust required to optimise the outcome must be founded on highly sensitive interpersonal skills and organisational acumen.

As the coaching industry in Asia matures, it will be those executive coaches and mentors who can differentiate themselves via their credibility and core skills who will enhance their reputation amidst what will inevitably be a sector awareness brought about by an influx of ill-equipped practitioners.

Beware of those theorists who market convoluted, irrational coaching systems to camouflage their own inexperience and professional inadequacy, at the same time creating coaching modules that are easier to mark up.

### How Does it Work?

Executive Coaching is a collaborative programme of exploration, learning and development whose main goals are the development and fulfilment of individual potential. There are 3 main actions to be undertaken in an Executive Coaching programme:

1. Establishing the goals of the coaching programme with both the Organisation and the Executive Client
2. Taking actions that ensure a sustainable behaviour change
3. Reflection to make sense of these changes in terms of new individual capabilities, goals and achievements, desired organisational results and long-term personal potential.

A typical Executive Coaching programme will include Foundation Meetings with the Executive Client and appropriate Organisation sponsors, a series of coaching sessions with the Executive Client and final wrap up with the Executive Client and the Organisation sponsors.



## Executive Coaching (cont.)

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### Foundation Meetings

#### 1. Initial Meeting with Executive Client

- Discuss potential goals and desired outcomes
- Discuss engagement method and structured program of interaction

#### 2. Organisation Sponsors

- Discuss programme goals with HR and other key stakeholders (Client's CEO or Chairman)
- Develop desired outcomes for the Organisation
- Agree engagement method and structured programme of interaction

#### 3. Meeting with Executive Client and Organisation

- Agree goals and desired outcomes

### Coaching Sessions

#### During each session:

1. Review of the goals of the coaching
2. Review of the actions taken since the last session to work towards those goals
3. Agreement of actions to be taken before the next session
4. Advice and guidance on any other areas of concern

Initial coaching sessions are face-to-face however later sessions may be via phone or video conference.

### Organisation Meetings

#### 1. Foundation Meetings

- As above

#### 2. Feedback Meetings

- Feedback meetings to update the Organisation on activities undertaken and progress made, to be held quarterly or as otherwise agreed.

#### 3. Wrap Up Meetings

- Wrap up session with the Executive Client to discuss the process and satisfaction with the process and any further activity that needs to be undertaken.
- Wrap up session with HR and Organisation Sponsor to discuss changes achieved and recommendations for further activity.

### Why be Coached at All?

Finally, why be coached at all? Perhaps because gazing at yourself in the management mirror can give a distorted reflection. And, in a world where complexity and communication increasingly dominate, the objectivity and subtle guiding hand of a coach can help attenuate your management blemishes.

The erosion of the 'job-for-life' mentality following the advent of globalisation and the knowledge economy has awakened the more alert among you to the reality of on-going career changes.

Achieving your goals through the savvy selection of a coach/mentor is likely to prove as value-adding a career move in the years ahead as will the choice of appropriate postgraduate studies.