# Executive Coaching

# An Investment in Mastering Leadership

*"Even if executive coaching costs $50K (which it doesn't) it's barely a rounding error to invest in the coaching of a key player who has responsibility for millions of dollars and for key human resources. Coaching is a success if one direct report, who used to be intimidated to speak up, comes up with an innovative idea."*

— ***CEO,*** *Fortune 100 Company*

## The Management Landscape Has Undergone Change

The art and science of management has also been radically transformed and executive coaching has become a highly valued resource within corporate life.
Regardless of how you look at it, you are the primary person of influence, organizational impact, and personal accomplishment and fulfillment.

| Industrial Age | Information Age |
|---|---|
| • Please superiors | • Delight customers |
| • Command-and-control | • Empowering and participatory |
| • Stable | • Agile |
| • Meddle | • Enable |
| • Conforming | • Outside-the-box thinking/action |
| • Need-to-know | • Open and transparent |
| • Fiefdoms | • Interdependent networks |

The *heroic military model* — plan, control, delegate, coordinate and motivate has been augmented in the 21$^{st}$ century by six high impact leadership roles that provide powerful leverage for the executive:

**Explorer/Pioneer**: Forges a vision and is an agent of change
**Beacon**: Instills trust and inspires passionate commitment to the vision
 **Advocate**: Clearest voice in support of visionary, strategic, and values-driven behavior
**Facilitator**: Creates a consultative and teaming work style within the culture
**Partner**: Encourages a collegial, supportive, and collaborative work style
**Coach**: Brings out the best in the organization's people, in terms of their aspirations, potential, performance and contribution

*"This company is not going to be successful unless we have
people who can learn from experience. We need our people to act independently, be
accountable, and be responsible for managing their own piece of the business. It takes a
certain amount of reflection to do that successfully."*

**– Joseph Galerneau
V.P. of Executive
Training**, *AT&T*

## High Performing Executives vs. Under Performing Executives

Successful executives are aggressive learners. They are individuals who:
• Regularly seek feedback and analyze their successes and failures objectively
• Possess a tuned capacity for self-reflection, self-awareness and intuitive literacy
• Seek a wide variety of experiences, out of curiosity and as the best medium for self-discovery and inquiry learning
• Continually learn something new and different by searching for comparisons, contrasts, generalizable insights to generate creative solutions
•Apply new learning to new and old situations
• Use strengths to modify weaknesses

## The Four Pillars of High Performance Executive Leadership

**Mental Agility**
• embrace complexity
• appreciate ambiguity
• enhance interests, perspectives and thought processes
• pursue complexity out of heightened inquiry and mental risk-taking
• respect the art of questioning as more important than answers

**Interpersonal Presence**
• self-reflect and develop conscious self-awareness
• monitor counter-productive behavior and change it
• adjust role and style to the situation
• manage conflict and harness it for creative ends

**Change Mastery**
• learn how to be as strategic
• employ conceptual modeling in thinking and problem-solving
• embrace the underlying concept of continuous improvement
• come to understand how tenacity and resiliency contributes to change initiatives

**Goal Orientation**
• create a presence and inspire others by consistently acting "from purpose
• address own performance and others' in a systematic, developmental, and strategic way
• differentiate among the various levels of priorities and act accordingly
• deliver and follow through on promises and expectations

*"Difficulties and obstructions throw a (person) back on himself. While the inferior (person) seeks to put the blame on other persons, bewailing his fate, the superior (person) seeks the error within himself, and through this introspection the external obstacle becomes for him an occasion for inner enrichment and education."*

*– The I Ching*

## Why Use An Executive Coach?

At one time the idea of using an executive coach was looked on as a weakness. Somehow, the higher up people got in a company, the more responsibilities they were supposed to handle without any outward sign that they weren't superman or superwoman. In the current work environment it's not considered a weakness to seek support.

## Benefits of Using an Executive Coach

- It's a place to offload

- The coach offers confidentiality and objectivity

- The coach motivates and energizes

- The coach brings outside expertise

- The coach brings a third party perspective

- You will experience the power of coaching others

- You will develop new practices, skills and techniques

## The Anatomy of Coaching

21st century professional coaching is an integrative approach founded on the behavioral sciences. A coaching model must encapsulate personal development, beliefs, values, attitudes, emotions, motivation levels and adult and social learning, as well as personal and organizational dynamics and defenses.

Many of the components of a behavioral-based coaching model have emerged from the behavioral approach to learning and change. Some aspects of a coaching model include:
- targeting and focusing on specific behavior (what we do or say)
- analyzing the behavior in relation to its antecedents and consequences
- applying valid and reliable methods of assessment, data collection and data analysis
- building a developmental plan
- employing validated behavioral change techniques
- managing, measuring and maintaining behavioral change.

## Four Coaching Models

Coaching models address how individual factors such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, prior experience, and personality influence behavioral choices and priorities. The professional coach uses a multimodal approach. Based on an assessment of the client's needs the coach is able to select the appropriate methodology and skill sets to suit the situation. Application of the appropriate models creates a supportive environment where the Executive is challenged to reframe the factors above to become a more effective and confident leader.

**Model:** Stages of change/transtheoretical model
**Change Factors addressed:** Readiness to change or attempt to change behavior varies among individuals and within an individual over time. Relapse is a common occurrence and part of the normal process of change.

**Model:** Social cognitive theory/social learning theory
**Change Factors addressed:** Behavior is explained by dynamic interaction among personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior.

**Model:** Theory of reasoned action/theory of planned behavior
**Change Factors addressed:** People are rational beings whose intention to perform a behavior strongly relates to its actual performance through beliefs, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

**Model:** Solution focused theory
**Change Factors addressed:** Assumes that the client has the answers within himself/herself. Recognizing the critical role of trust and commitment in the partnership change is promoted by constructing solutions.

*"A key goal of successful introspection is authentic cself-confidence. That is, not the overbearing bravado of a command and-control manager, but an openness to facing uncertainty, ambiguity, and paradox. The most effective leaders are able tobe both vulnerable and quietly self-confident at the same time, more open about their weaknesses than their strengths (which speak for themselves)."*

*– **Mark Brenner, Ph.D.***
*Brenner Consulting Group*

## Stages and Steps in the Executive Coaching Process

### Self- Awareness

**Step 1 - Establish Leader Involvement and Commitment**
Leaders are more responsive when they set their own goals. During this step, the coach guides the leader through the process of defining the characteristics and qualities that are important for a leader in his/her position as well as the importance of improving, both for himself as well as for the company. Level 1- Trimetrix Self Assessment is introduced at this stage

**Step 2 - Identify and Enroll Assessment Contributors**
In the case that the leader does not have a current leadership assessment, the coach involves the leader in identifying a suitable set of contributors to assess the leader. It is important that the leader be involved in this step so that he accepts the assessment results as valid and will not be likely to dismiss or discredit the feedback. Level 2 360 degree feedback is introduced at this stage.

**Step 3 – Implement and Review Assessment**
This step involves conducting the assessment in a timely manner, compiling a report of the data collected, and sharing the report with the leader. If appropriate, the coach conducts interviews with selected stakeholders to provide additional input.

### Self-Acceptance

**Step 4 - Determine Key Behavior(s) and Stakeholders**
Using the assessment report, the coach guides the leader to determine which one or two behavior(s) should be the focus of the coaching engagement and which assessment contributors should be the key stakeholders - individuals who are committed to the leader's development and willing to provide feedback to the leader during the coaching engagement. Once the leader has identified behavior(s) and stakeholders, they are validated with the leader's manager.

### Self Development

**Step 5 - Collect Feedback**
This step requires two types of activities. The first is to enroll the key stakeholders, which happens only once. The second activity is to collect feedback (suggestions on how to improve the selected behavior in the future) from the key stakeholders. Studies on the value of this step are very clear. When successful people identify and articulate goals, announce these goals to others and involve colleagues in helping them improve, positive and measurable change is more likely to occur.

**Self Affirmation**

### Step 6 - Develop Action Plan
Once the stakeholders begin to provide feedback, they become the true "coaches". This step involves the coach and leader developing an action plan with specific and measurable behaviors based on the feedback suggestions of the stakeholders. On a monthly basis, the action plan will be revisited and revised according to the leader's progress.

### Step 7 - Facilitate Follow-up
This step occurs iteratively with Steps 5 and 6. In the leader's conversations with stakeholders, he will ask for feedback on his performance over the last month and then ask for feedback suggestions. Depending on the stakeholders' suggestions, the coach works with the leader to adjust the action plan regularly.

### Step 8 - Review Results
In addition to the informal follow-up conversations (leader-stakeholder, leader-coach, and in unusual cases, coach-stakeholder), more formal methods of assessing progress, called mini-surveys, are conducted at the mid and endpoints of the coaching engagement. These mini-surveys are designed to assess the stakeholders' perceptions of the leader's improvement in his selected behavior(s).

After the final assessment at the end of the coaching engagement, the coach and leader determine how the leader can continue applying the steps without a coach as they identify new behaviors they want to improve.

## The Coach's Contribution and Role

- Makes informed use of assessment instruments (without relying solely on those instruments) to gain an understanding of the client's situation
- Expresses sincere interest in the client's life stories
- Takes time to understand the situation from the client's perspective
- Listens deeply so that the client is fully engaged and feels genuinely understood and valued
- Creates a sense of connection, fostering a climate of openness and trust
- Utilizes a variety of tools and techniques to interrupt the client's habitual patterns
- Challenges clients with creative, unexpected questions
- Brainstorms a variety of alternatives to the current situation, probing beyond initial responses to unearth a broad spectrum of options
- Works with the client to develop goal(s) with high personal meaning and relevance
- Develops a specific set of measurements with the client to provide clear evidence of goal achievement
- Exhibits confidence in the process and works with the client to develop alternative pathways to the desired goal
- Provides space and time for the client to think creatively