

Why Do Executives Retain a Coach?

Executives retain a coach to . . .

Help define and focus on long-term strategy. Some new manager/leaders are more comfortable with their operational ability than their strategic thinking skills. An executive coach uses strategic thinking and experience to help clients identify strategies and the specific business issues that will make or break them.

Help attain higher performance from their teams. Getting greater alignment and performance from a team is an ongoing need for most leaders. An executive coach draws on executive and consulting experience in leadership development, organizational development and team building to coach the leader to lead his or her team and to help diagnose problems and suggest ideas that have helped in similar situations

Help solve immediate, sensitive personnel problems. Most executives find it valuable to get advice and perspective on sensitive issues from a confidential outsider who is willing to ask tough questions and who has no other ties to the business.

Accelerate “growing on the job” through a cycle of weekly action learning. A weekly coaching session can double the rate of personal development by providing a structure to define new behaviors and test them in the workplace.

Improve the existing culture of the organization. A company’s culture may need to change from traditional, autocratic management practices to a more decentralized, entrepreneurial, cooperative environment. The Executive Coach and the executive co-create with a design for the optimum operating culture for the organization and to devise a plan to integrate all players into this enhanced culture.

Increase the executive’s ability to leverage time. The leadership used by executives must continuously be upgraded in order to stay ahead of a more demanding workplace. The Executive Coach works to leverage the executive’s effectiveness.

Improve the way the executive comes across. Character, communication skills and listening ability are more vital today as clients and employees expect more political sophistication and subtlety from executives. The coach gives feedback and helps the executive draw themselves out to attract what they want from others.

Discuss the executive’s ideas in the inkling stage. Often the evolution of a company or its strategy is conceived in an open discussion of ideas. Most executives don’t take enough time for this type of creativity nor do they have the right “listening partner.” The Executive Coach provides the environment in which the executive’s inklings, ideas and concerns are respected and expanded. An executive coach is a sounding board.

Get an outside opinion from someone with no vested interest in the outcome of the situation. Everyone the executive works with, including their spouse, has a need to either maintain the status quo or to make changes that benefit themselves. This self-interest is normal, but may lead to a lack of objectivity. The Executive Coach is usually the only person in an executive's Rolodex whose only priority is the executive's interests.

Expand upon, clarify and clearly language the executive's vision. A simple, clear, articulated vision naturally creates focus for those you lead, reducing the need for management and constant motivation of others. The Executive Coach is an expert at language concepts, goals and visions, and assists the executive to properly language a vision for the organization, project or for the executive him/herself.

Have a secure, safe and confidential outlet to vent, when necessary. Pent up frustrations, anger and disappointments impair good judgment. Every executive needs a special person to complain to, vent and with whom to talk things out.

Point out what the executive can't, won't or doesn't see. Smart business people understand that they have blind spots and most invite opportunities to speak frankly and illuminate these blind spots. However, politics being what they are, most individuals aren't empowered to speak their minds. The Executive Coach has an ethical obligation to point out what he/she sees.

Find a better way to reduce stress, increase effectiveness, and still have a great life. Leadership today requires a clear-thinking individual who is in touch with all aspects of life, not just running an organization. Executives are expected to have a real life and set an example for others in the workplace. The Executive Coach works with the executive to design a balanced and sustainable personal and professional life.