

## **The Latest Trends and Best Practices in Executive Coaching...2004**

Our view is that Coaching is about both changing the attitudes and changing the behavior of an organization's key contributors, in order to help them perform even better and derive greater satisfaction from their everyday work life and their careers.

If you would agree that Coaching is fundamentally about refining and changing attitudes and behavior, then you would also likely agree that the process is, in essence, a psychological one and thus requires a great deal of training and finesse on the part of the coach. While helping an adult modify significant facets of their behavior may not be rocket science, it's pretty darn close. This is why we require that all our consultants have advanced degrees in the behavioral sciences and why we feel it is essential to use the best methods from the last 100 years of behavioral science, in order to accomplish this formidable task of enhancing performance at work...with an emphasis on "last 100 years".

So from this perspective, there's really not much that's new regarding behavior change and Coaching methods. We strongly believe that to accomplish substantive and sustained individual behavior change, certain methods must be used and specific protocols followed. We would also assert that these methods and protocols are ones that have been around for quite some time. There are a dozen or a dozen and a half components that had better be part of any Coaching Model.

## **Coaches had better:**

- 1.** Possess potent relationship building skills and trust-instilling techniques.
- 2.** Be cultural anthropologists, as it were, with a keen ability to walk in the shoes of both the coaching candidate and the organization's culture.
- 3.** Conduct a comprehensive and in-depth assessment, relying on (a) state-of-the-art, objective tests, (b) powerful qualitative data from a robust multi-rater instrument that captures the voices of the candidate's audience, (c) an in-depth, life history interview of the candidate, and (d) performance data, when available.
- 4.** Create a "data mirror" that casts a graphic and vivid reflection of how the candidate is experienced by their "audience at work".
- 5.** Be a skilled diagnostician. Most every individual brings their personal life—and, by the way, their own personal baggage—to the workplace, so the coach better be properly trained to handle and harness all of that.
- 6.** Know how to enhance a candidate's self-monitoring abilities, since self-awareness is so strongly correlated with and predictive of managerial and executive success.
- 7.** Know how to create the optimal level of anxiety and positive motivation, using both of these to fuel the change process.

**Coaches had better:**

- 8.** Use an effective goal setting and action planning template and methodology, which sets meaningful and measurable performance targets and is designed to assist the candidate in capitalizing on her/his own inner motivational dynamics.
- 9.** Rely on “behavioral experiments” as the everyday workhorse of the coaching process. Behavior change only occurs when behavior changes(!), thus behavioral experiments conducted between each coaching meeting are absolutely essential.
- 10.** Be able to forge a strong partnership, which rests on a strong “contract” (literally and figuratively), between the candidate and a representative of management (the candidate’s primary “change partner”).
- 11.** Show the candidate how to tap into and harness their own inner motivational dynamics, so they can become the prime owner and mover of the coaching initiative.
- 12.** Have a bag full of behavior change techniques available to help build the momentum required to achieve significant and lasting performance enhancement.
- 13.** Build self-sustaining mechanisms into the candidate’s individual change process.
- 14.** Understand how to link the step-by-step change process directly into the candidate’s workaday life, using the person’s job/role as the primary medium in which the changes take place.

**Coaches had better:**

- 15.** Know which behavioral patterns are predictive of work success and which ones are predictive of derailment or mediocrity.
- 16.** Understand how to link the step-by-step change process directly into the candidate's workaday life, using the person's job/role as the primary medium in which the changes take place.
- 17.** Know which behavioral patterns are predictive of work success and which ones are predictive of derailment or mediocrity.

These are among the reasons why we so strongly encourage everyone interested in utilizing executive coaching services to investigate the depth of training and experience possessed any coaches before giving them a role in your business.