



6 Keys to Successful Coaching

Executives face enormous pressure to perform, compete in the marketplace, endlessly innovate and remain relevant. Constrained by time, overwhelmed by competing priorities and challenged by relationships, executives need support.

Research shows that executives hunger for more developmental relationships such as learning from bosses, and superiors, leadership communities and executive coaches.

Coaches offer the executive an unbiased “GPS reading” helping them to see beyond limiting beliefs, blinding assumptions and deeply established perspectives. Athletes are intimately familiar with the value of coaches. They understand that natural talent will take you only so far. Similar to Olympic athletes, high-level executive success demands superior performance. The best executives use a coach to develop an integrated plan and maintain a solid focus. Professional guidance keeps them at their best.

It used to be that executives fixed problems and repaired what was broken. That was then. Today executives are called not to just fix but improve things, raise the bar and increase the standard. The status quo is a plateau but not for resting. Rather, it is a place for launching into an improved future. Executives should be incessantly asking, how will our future be improved by what we’re doing today?

The improved future of organizations begins with executives launching from the status quo plateau.

Here are six keys to coaching that will launch you into an improved future:

1. The coaching relationship: The power of coaching to clear logjams, free stuckness and ignite the fire within comes from the relationship between the executive and coach. Mutual respect, trust and mutual

freedom of expression are foundational pillars that support all efforts in coaching. The relationship must also include openness and a shared commitment.

2. Agreement on direction: The executive and coach agree on the current situation in relation to the desired condition. Where you are must be assessed and where you want to go must be attainable.

3. Agreement on objectives: The executive and coach must agree on metrics that measure progress. Milestones toward success must also be included. If we know what we want to accomplish we can easily course correct as we go and evaluate our success at the end. It is easier to hit a target we can see.

4. Agreement on success indicators: Mutual agreement on what indicates success as one goes along is critical. For example, a common request is increased confidence but the agreement on how confidence is manifest is a better indicator. So we would agree on indicators like: Your hands won't shake or your voice will not quiver when speaking publicly or giving a presentation.

5. Value: The executive and coach mutually agree on the value of the coaching relationship. Value is the impact of the results on the individual and the organization. Value can be (quantitative) numbers—savings due to reduced turnover from improved leadership or qualitative such as reduced stress or increased comfort with delegating.

6. Improvement: The executive and coach must mutually agree on what discernable improvement looks like. These are changes that both executive and coach agree on at the start and agree that they are sufficiently present at the end of the coaching relationship.

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