

What Is Executive Coaching?

Executive coaching is an interactive development process between a coach and a leader with the goal of improving the leader's leadership effectiveness. Executive coaches help leaders acquire new skills, perspectives, tools, and knowledge by providing them with support, encouragement, and feedback in an organizational context.

Executive Coaching Benefits All Leaders

Despite the name, executive coaching is not just a service for executives. Executive coaches work with and help leaders across the entire management spectrum, from newly promoted supervisors to seasoned senior executives.

We all have a tendency of looking at life from our own particular perspectives. A skilled executive coach can help us access the other perspectives out there, while also helping us clarify our own voices and intentions.

Organizational leadership is really the art and science of dealing with people. The effective leader needs to harmonize his or her usage of leadership and management tools to achieve certain organizational outcomes. An executive coach helps leaders solve complex problems, while also increasing the leader's capacity to accomplish more.



What most organizations don't realize is that leadership is its own technical skill set. Being an outstanding engineer or account technician, does not necessarily mean the person is going to make an outstanding leader. An executive coach can often work with the new leader to help him or her develop those new skills needed, like appraising performance, having tough conversations, dealing with conflict and motivating teams.

For the newly promoted leader, an executive coach can help facilitate the transition from employee among peers to supervisor among subordinates. The new leader transition is one of the most important, yet often anxiety-filled experiences in a person's career. Most new leaders are promoted because of a particular technical skill set they possess.

For the seasoned senior executive, an executive coach can help combat one of the most costly and pervasive challenges of executive leadership, CEO disease. CEO disease is the tendency for subordinates to tell the senior leaders only what they believe the senior leader wants to hear. This means the higher a person rises in an organization, the less likely is she or he to hear the truth about things. An executive coach often serves as a truth partner for senior leaders and helps them evaluate their own, as well as their organization's performance challenges.

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For those in the career stages between the newly promoted supervisor and seasoned senior executive, an executive coach can help them develop and refine the skills that will help them lead people effectively.

A Growing Trend

Whether it's in sports, healthcare, public or private organizations, there is a growing trend for organizations to hire executive coaches to help their leaders lead more effectively.

According to Dr. Kenneth Randall, director of executive talent at Banner Health, "coaching can truly unleash a leader's hidden potential."

Banner Health is one of America's largest health-care organizations. Banner's work with executive coaches has provided a lot of value to its managers and executives. Randall stated, "from an organizational standpoint, coaching has helped leaders at Banner improve the level of customer service we deliver, which is a key business initiative measured through patient experience scores and national rankings."

Executive Coaching Works

Research¹ shows that leaders who worked with executive coaches improved in these areas:

- People management
- Relationships with senior leaders
- Goal setting and prioritization

- Engagement and productivity
- Dialogue and communication

Are Your Leaders Ready for Executive Coaching?

Before you consider hiring an executive coach, be sure that your organization and its leaders are ready for change. An executive coach is going to help you discover the truth, which can be quite unsettling for most leaders. As defined by the International Coach Federation, coaching is about "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential."

If your organization is ready to get serious about leadership, we are eager to partner with you in helping you achieve that objective. We have been coaching leaders at all levels for more than 20 years now and have a proven track record of success. We'd love to partner with you and your leaders as well.

1. Kombarakaran, et al, 2008, Executive Coaching: It Works! *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*.



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