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LEADERSHIP COACHING TOOLKIT

*The Complete Guide to Developing
a Leadership Coaching Program in
Your Organization*

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DION
LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP COACHING TOOLKIT

What Is Covered in This Tool Kit?

Using our decades of experience in developing and implementing coaching programs, this document introduces you to leadership coaching as a development tool and the various types of leadership coaching available. We provide guidelines to help talent development leaders determine whether engaging a leadership coach is the optimal approach to meet the development needs of a leader in your organization and, if a coach is engaged, provide information that will assist you in managing the coaching process.

The processes used in this tool kit can provide you with a set of resources you need to design, communicate, implement, and manage coaching programs for your organization.

What Sections Are in This Tool Kit?

- **LEADERSHIP COACHING OVERVIEW** – a resource for leaders who are considering the use of leadership coaching as a development strategy. This guide can be used to determine if coaching is the right tool for the development need.
- **LEADERSHIP COACHING PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES** – guidelines for optimal management of the leadership coaching process.



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PART ONE - LEADERSHIP COACHING OVERVIEW

This section is designed as an orientation to leadership coaching for those who are responsible for succession planning and development of leadership talent. It will assist leaders in understanding various applications for leadership coaching as a development strategy and in assessing the efficacy of leadership coaching for a particular development need.

UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP COACHING

What It Is

Leadership coaching is a targeted leadership development process that is designed to meet the unique needs of the individual leader. Developing internal talent is an expectation of all leaders, and all leaders should be internal coaches. An external leadership coach is a “thinking partner” whose specific purpose is to support the development of a leader’s personal and professional potential. This customized, tailored approach to leadership development is an investment to enhance leader performance.

Leadership coaching is a targeted strategy with a specific process, rather than a general ongoing leadership development practice, and is intended for use in special circumstances that warrant investment in the development of a particular leader. Whatever the reason for selecting leadership coaching as a development strategy, the company’s philosophy is to both leverage a leader’s strengths and focus on achievable development goals during the coaching process.

The use of leadership coaching does not preclude the continued involvement of leaders in the development process. The executive is the designated sponsor of the process for the leader being coached (the coachee), and this responsibility cannot be delegated or transferred. When chosen as an approach to leadership development, coaching is integrated with and complements the company’s leadership development and performance management processes.

A leader may independently choose to engage the services of a coach to enhance his/her leadership skills. In these cases, the leader is encouraged to follow the guidelines outlined in this document, including the involvement of the sponsor.



To create sustainable change, we follow a cognitive behavioral learning approach to coaching. This proven method helps a coachee explore situations with a new perspective, understand themselves in new way, create new mindsets for approaching situations, and build new and more productive habits.



What It Isn't

Leadership coaching is not counseling or psychological therapy or psychiatry. While some leadership coaches are also psychologists, and while it's true that leadership coaching often focuses on behavior change, coaching in a business setting is not therapeutic in nature. We don't attempt to trace behaviors back to their origins but rather help the coachee understand and label their motivations and fears, so they build an authentic plan to be a more effective leader.

A leadership coach is not an advocate for the coachee or for management. It is not the role of a coach to communicate on the behalf of or promote the special interests of the coachee. Nor should a coach be expected to assume any responsibilities of management or be asked by company management to provide information that is considered confidential to the coaching relationship.

When Should a Leadership Coach be Used?

Leadership coaching is only one of several methods that can be utilized to support leadership development. Many other resources are available and should be considered in the process of assessing a particular leader's development needs. Other methods include internal and external leadership development and skill-building programs, mentoring, partnering with internal subject matter experts, special project or committee assignments, peer coaching, etc. These guidelines will assist in determining whether coaching is a good fit for the leader's unique development needs.

What Can be Expected from Leadership Coaching?

No matter what the reason is for choosing leadership coaching as a development strategy, improved business results should be an expected outcome of the coaching process. Since the engagement of a leadership coach requires a concerted investment of time and money, a noticeable return on this investment over time is a reasonable expectation. Typically, executive sponsors report seeing behavior changes within 3 months of coaching. It is reasonable to expect these behavior changes to result in performance improvements with 6 months of coaching and not only sustain and gain momentum over time.

Because leadership coaching involves a substantial commitment of company resources, some guidelines for thinking through the purpose and efficacy of engaging a leadership coach are provided here. Leaders considering this approach to address a particular leadership development need can partner with their Human Resources representative to assess needs and determine the best approach to addressing the need. Below are some questions, categorized by type of coaching, which can be used to determine whether coaching is the right leadership development process.



ASSESSING THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP COACHING

Leadership coaching is a viable development strategy in a number of different scenarios. Examples of situations where leadership coaching might be considered are described in this section, along with questions to consider in determining whether it is the most viable approach.

A Leader Is Assuming a New Role

Leadership coaching is sometimes used to assist a leader in making a successful transition to a new role. This could be an internal promotion or lateral move from another organization, or it could be a newly hired leader.

Example: A director is promoted to a Vice President level with a considerable increase in resource responsibility. It will be this individual's first position leading other leaders.

Example: A leader is promoted to the first position involving global responsibility.

Some questions for consideration in these cases are:

- Is the new position substantially different from the prior position?
- First time leading other leaders
- First position with significant global responsibility
- First major assignment involving significant project responsibility
- First position in an organization where significant change is taking place
- Does the leader need support to develop/strengthen any critical leadership skills for the new position?
- Is the leader's success heavily dependent upon building relationships with peers who are key stakeholders?
- Is the leader new to the organization and/or the industry?
- Is there a business need to streamline the leader's assimilation into the position?

When leadership coaches are engaged for role transitions, it is often because there is a need for the leader to very quickly learn about the business and industry environment, the leadership culture, role expectations, and/or key stakeholder relationships.



The Leader Needs to Develop or Strengthen a Specific Skill

This is often a case where a leader takes on a new or temporary responsibility, and position expectations change:

Example: A leader will be representing the company externally and needs to develop more polished public speaking skills.

Example: A leader has assumed responsibility for sponsoring a major organization change initiative.

Some questions for assessing these situations are:

- Are proficiency requirements clear?
- Will proficiency in new/different leadership skills be required in a short time frame?
- Is it likely that the leader can develop new/different leadership skills?
- Does the leader recognize the need for skill development?

The Leader Wants to Enhance Performance in Current Role or Prepare for Higher Level Roles

There may be occasions when a leader wants a coach to support general goals for leadership development or to prepare for a higher-level role:

Example: A leader has a solid performance record and is viewed as a candidate for higher level positions

Example: A leader has completed a formal high potential leadership development program and needs support to apply the leadership program content to their specific situation to accelerate their candidacy for a specific future role.

This may be a case where the potential coachee initiates a request for a leadership coach, or an executive might want to explore leadership coaching as an approach for a high potential manager or staff member. Some questions to investigate are:

- Does the leader want to prepare for a specific leadership role laterally or move up the company hierarchy?
- Is the leader viewed by others as having potential for senior leadership roles?
- Is the leader identified as a potential successor for any lateral or senior leadership roles?

Leader Interest in Coaching

No coaching process will be successful unless there is active engagement in the coaching process. Since it is a critical success factor, the interest and commitment level of the coachee needs to be included in this initial needs assessment. Some questions to consider are:

- Has the leader voluntarily participated in personal and professional development activities in the past? If so, were the desired results achieved?



- Has the leader responded favorably to past offers of support for development opportunities?
- Does the leader have any prior experience with coaching? Was the experience positive, neutral, or negative?
- Does the leader usually accept constructive feedback about performance?
- Does the leader generally respond to requests for performance improvement?
- Does the leader view coaching as a demonstration of the organization's commitment to his/her success??

The executive may have answers for some of these questions relating to interest and commitment of the leader to be coached, but involvement of the potential coachee to assess their receptivity to focusing in their own development at this moment in time is an important step on the process. *Generally, leadership coaching should be pursued only when there is a high level of confidence that the potential coachee will make a positive and active commitment to the coaching process.*

The Leader Has a Specific Performance Improvement Need

The need for performance improvement in a specific area is one reason for hiring a leadership coach:

Example: The individuals reporting to a leader are missing project deadlines. The leader may need coaching in performance management techniques.

Example: There is evidence that a project team is dysfunctional. The Project Manager may need to improve team building skills.

Some questions to consider in assessing this situation are:

- Where is performance falling short of the leader's expectations?
- Have others expressed concerns about the leader's performance?
- Have performance issues been communicated to the leader? (If yes, when first, how often since, and how recently?)
- Has the leader done any performance coaching?
- Has the leader explored internal support for skill development or coaching?
- Is the leader confident that performance improvement is achievable?

In cases where management has clearly communicated the need for performance improvement and made a reasonable effort to use internal resources to address the issue, leadership coaching may be a viable approach to achieving performance improvement goals.



SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR THE COACHEE

The Coaching Experience

Coaching is a highly individualized experience that requires a high level of trust in the coach and a significant and sustained commitment from you. A coach serves multiple roles during the coaching process:

- A confidante who helps to explore new ideas and approaches to achieving higher levels of performance, or dealing with difficult situations, or removing obstacles to goal achievement
- A guide who helps to assess goals, interests, and abilities
- A strategic thinking partner who brings different perspectives
- A knowledgeable resource to introduce leadership tools and resources, share expertise
- An objective support to challenge and stretch thinking, ask provoking questions, and serve as a “reality check”
- An advisor you can trust with confidential information

Coach Interview and Selection

The most effective coaching experience starts with a good match between your preferences and the experience, skills, and style of the coach. Your sponsor and Human Resources will select from a pool of qualified leadership coaches and provide you with an opportunity to interview three or four coach candidates. The following guidelines will assist you in screening potential coach candidates. Included are questions that can be asked during interviews with potential coaches and questions to consider when evaluating the coach’s performance during the interview.

Interview questions:

- What is your coaching philosophy? Coaching approach? Coaching process?
- What led you to become a leadership coach?
- What training have you completed to learn coaching skills?
- What types of coaching have you done?
- What levels of leaders have you coached?
- Tell me a success story from your coaching experience. What are the factors that most influenced a successful outcome?
- What was your greatest disappointment in your coaching experience? What are the factors that led to the disappointing outcome?
- How do you deal with clients that don’t meet their commitments during the coaching process?
- How do you deal with sponsors who don’t meet their commitments to the coaching process?
- What do you do to keep your business and coaching skills relevant to a dynamic, global business environment?

These questions will help to evaluate the philosophy and experience of the coach candidate. But you must also feel comfortable with the coach at a personal level.



Sometimes this boils down to “chemistry”, but here are some questions you can reflect upon after the interview that will help you determine whether the “fit” is right:

- Was the coach polished, professional, and articulate?
- Did the coach demonstrate good interpersonal relationship skills?
- How long did it take for you to feel comfortable with the coach during the interview?
- Does the coach seem to be emotionally mature and self-aware?
- Did the coach seem honest and genuine, or did it seem like the coach was trying to give you the “right answers”?
- Does the coach have experience with situations similar to yours that you feel could benefit you?
- Is this someone you could respect and trust?
- Could you accept being challenged by this coach?

Assessing the Value of the Coaching Experience

The clearer you are about the purpose for the coaching relationship, the easier it will be to measure your success. Your coach will help you to define specific and measurable objectives and an action plan for the coaching process which is linked to your business goals. Your coaching experience may involve the administration of assessment instruments that will provide you with input on what others perceive as your leadership strengths and opportunities for development, and your coach may interview colleagues who are key stakeholders for your position. This input will prove invaluable in identifying high leverage areas of focus for your coaching plan. You will be accountable to achieve and sustain the desired outcomes of your coaching process.

Leveraging the Value of Coaching

Your level of motivation and commitment to the coaching process is the key ingredient to maximizing your coaching outcomes. You can demonstrate this by:

- Sharing previous assessment data, performance reviews, and development plans with your coach
- Being candid about your thoughts, feelings, opinions, concerns, and frustrations
- Orienting your coach to your organization, its culture and your role
- Being open about your coaching experience. The company’s investment in providing this leadership development support signifies your value to the organization; your openness and demonstrated commitment to your own development can serve as a role model for the value of leadership development. Share any goals that may affect direct reports or peers and ask for their support and feedback.
- Staying focused and holding yourself accountable for achieving the commitments you make in your action plan
- Integrating your action plan with your day-to-day business activities. Look for opportunities in your daily schedule to practice new leadership skills or behaviors, implement new practices, build key relationships, communicate



more effectively, etc. Make your leadership development an integral part of your day, rather than a separate activity

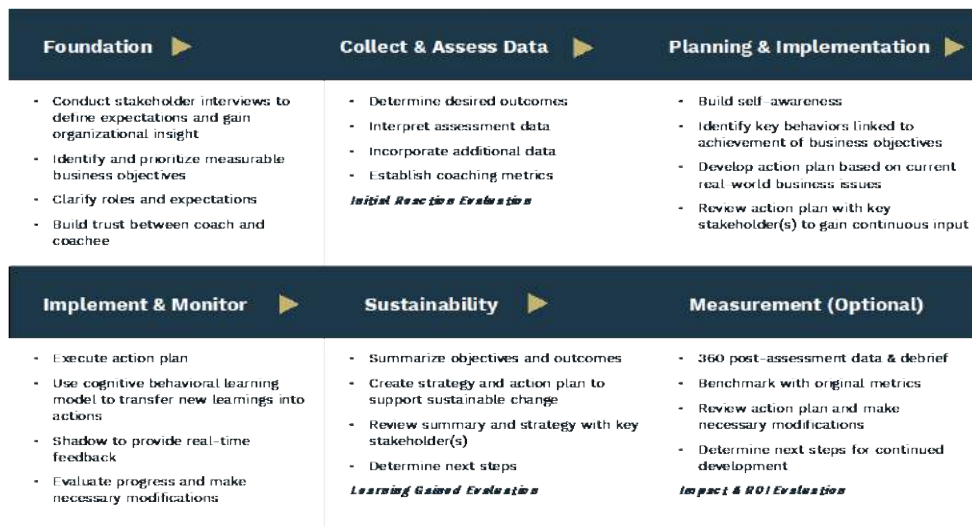
- Keeping scheduled appointments for coaching sessions. A consistent and dedicated effort builds momentum for sustainable growth
- Continuously seeking and showing appreciation for feedback from a variety of sources
- Developing strategies to sustain improved performance and/or new leadership behaviors/practices
- Advocating for coaching as a powerful leadership development strategy/sharing your positive experience with peers and direct reports

The Importance of a Coaching Process

Our certified and experienced coaches utilize our established coaching processes while bringing their own unique business and leadership expertise and industry knowledge to the process. This confidential and rich dialog allows the coachee to shift their mindsets, practice new habits, and try out new behaviors with the support of an experienced and trusted coach. Below is an example of our Executive Coaching Process:

DION LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE COACHING PROCESS



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SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR THE EXECUTIVE

SPONSORING THE COACHEE

Assess the Need for a Leadership Coach

As described in detail in these guidelines, leadership coaching is one of several approaches that can be considered for leader development. The typical situations where coaching is considered are:

- When there is a new leader in a junior role (new hire or internal promotion, or lateral assignment)
- When a change in position or responsibilities requires new skills
- For continuing development of a high potential leader
- When your coaching of a leader has not achieved desired results *and* you are confident that there is capacity for satisfactory performance

Whatever the reason for considering the engagement of a leadership coach, Human Resources can assist you in assessing the unique leadership development need, identifying alternative approaches to address the need, and assessing the cost and benefits of the alternatives identified.

When a needs assessment results in a decision to engage a leadership coach, these supporting materials will assist you in realizing maximum benefit from the resources invested.

Get Commitment from the Leader (Coachee)

Since *the most critical success factor in getting positive results from coaching is the active and sustained commitment of the coachee*, you should feel highly confident that the coachee will demonstrate this commitment. Some questions to consider in assessing commitment level of the coachee can be found on pages 10 and 11 of these guidelines, and your Human Resources Representative can assist in doing this assessment.

Here are some key points to include in discussions with a leader about coaching as a possible approach to leadership development:

- Coaching is a resource intensive option for leadership development and, therefore, a demonstration of the high value the organization places on the potential coachee
- The coaching relationship is confidential (See details about Confidentiality on page 13)
- The coachee selects the coach from three to four prescreened candidates
- There is an expectation for improved business results



Checklist by Phases of Coaching Process

You can maximize the benefits realized from resources expended for leadership coaching services by fulfilling expectations of your role as sponsor during all phases of the coaching process, as follows (See details of phases on page 9):

During the Selection Phase

Clearly define the purpose and expectations of the coaching process

Identify coach selection criteria

During the Assessment Phase

Be available for interview with leadership coach and be candid in responding to interview questions

Complete 360 assessment instrument, if used, in a timely fashion

During the Planning Phase

Be available to review draft of coaching action plan and assure that it:

- Is linked to critical business objectives
- Includes realistic and measurable goals and time frames
- Addresses areas of defined development needs
- Includes an action plan with defined learning opportunities and activities

During the Coaching Phase

Seek feedback from other stakeholders on coachee's progress

Provide regular feedback to coachee on progress

Meet periodically with leadership coach and coachee to summarize progress and course correct, if needed

Hold the coachee accountable for achieving improved business results

During the Evaluation and Sustainability Phase

Participate in the assessment of the coaching process and results, including evaluation of the leadership coach

Assure that sustainability strategies are in place; integrate sustainability strategies with your organization's performance management process

Meet any commitments made to participate in defined sustainability strategies

Provide a continuing stream of feedback to the coachee on the sustainability plan

Bring closure to the coaching process when goals have been achieved and there is confidence that achievements will be sustained

During the Entire Coaching Process

Maintain confidentiality of the coaching relationship and respect the confidentiality of the coaching conversations between the leadership coach and the coachee



PART TWO - LEADERSHIP COACHING PROCESS

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

When leadership coaching is determined to be the preferred approach to leader development, this section will help executives and coachees get optimal results from the coaching process.

COACHING PROGRAM LANES

Effective coaching programs are governed using a coaching process. Coaching should have a beginning and an end – it is not an ongoing relationship. It is important to select a coaching program or lane in which the size and type of coaching fits the situation and the coaching need. Through leading hundreds of coaching engagements, we have developed the following five coaching lanes to service the majority of coaching situations. The document below describes key elements within each coaching program and how they vary by target audience, duration, assessments used, stakeholder input, etc.

	Executive	Assimilation	Talent Fit	Targeted	Essentials
Overview	Comprehensive coaching for leaders committed to developing in multiple leadership skill areas	Coaching to support leader's integration into a new role and/or the organization quickly	Coaching for leaders or individual contributors having difficulty meeting expectations	Coaching for leaders or individual contributors committed to improve in one defined area	Focused coaching for leaders or individual contributors looking to develop awareness and action plans for change
Target Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders at all levels of the organization with the desire to develop their leadership skills High potential leaders Hard-to-replace individuals that need to evolve with the organization Individuals whose careers have hit a plateau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders at all levels who have been recently hired or promoted New to an internal role New to the organization Individual assuming his/her first leadership role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underperforming leaders Leaders with behavioral issues impeding their ability to be successful Perceived mismatch between the role and the coachee's abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders from any level of the organization looking to improve in a specific area from thinking to interpersonal skills Leaders preparing for a promotion Leaders preparing for organizational change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those looking to understand how they are perceived and be more effective in their role Leaders or individual contributors at any level looking to mature in their areas of responsibility High potentials looking to prepare themselves for future roles in the organization
Duration	9 -12 months	6-9 months	4-9 months	3 - 6 months	2 - 3 months
Focus	3 behaviors	3 behaviors	Situational	1 behavior	Situational
Stakeholder interviews	3	Up to 6	3	1	none
Assessment	360 + Self	Self	Situational	Self	360 + Self



PHASES OF THE COACHING PROCESS

No matter what the purpose for engaging an external leadership coach, the coaching process has definable phases:

Coach Selection

Matching a coach to the unique needs of the leader is a key ingredient to getting the greatest return on the investment made in leadership coaching. Management has established relationships with coaches and coaching firms that meet the company's quality standards for external consultants. Human Resources will help with the coach selection process by assisting in clearly defining the purpose and expected outcomes for the coaching process, identifying coach selection factors, and providing biographies of leadership coaches who are most qualified to meet those defined needs.

For coaching to deliver the expected results, there needs to be “chemistry” and trust between the coach and the coachee. The coachee will be presented with three or four prescreened coach candidates and personally meet, by phone or in person, with each candidate to determine the best fit. The final selection decision will be made by the coachee. The ability of the coachee to make this selection decision is one of the critical success factors for the coaching process.

Assessment

An external coach typically conducts interviews with the leadership coaching sponsor, the coachee, and key stakeholders. These interviews enable the coach to understand the coachee's business and leadership environment and challenges, to identify the purpose and goals for the coaching process, and to determine if additional assessment data is needed to support the coaching goals.

Items management should consider regarding this phase are:

- Examples leading to the consideration of an external coach
- The purpose for and expected outcome of the coaching process
- The critical leadership skills for the position held or being assumed by the leader to be coached
- The critical business objectives/expectations for the leader in the next few months
- The frequency desired for progress reporting during the coaching process
- Any perceived obstacles to a success coaching outcome



Planning

In this phase, the leadership coach and the coachee use the assessment data collected to establish a coaching plan, linked to business objectives, which is then reviewed with the leadership coaching sponsor. The coaching plan format will be provided by the leadership coach.

Coaching

During this phase, the leadership coach supports the implementation of the coaching plan. The leadership coaching sponsor meets periodically with the coachee and leadership coach to formally review progress toward achieving coaching objectives.

Evaluation and Sustainability

At the end of the active coaching period, the executive, the coachee, and the leadership coach meet to summarize what was achieved in the coaching process, evaluate the success of the coaching process, define strategies to sustain progress, and integrate sustainability strategies with the company's performance management process.



COMPANY ROLES IN THE COACHING PROCESS

Leadership Coaching Sponsor

The leadership coaching sponsor, with support from Human Resources, is the person who identifies the development needs of a direct report or junior executive and provides the resources for engaging a leadership coach. The role of leadership coaching sponsor is always assumed by the executive who manages and directs the individual being coached; it is not a role that can be transferred to another executive.

The leadership coaching sponsor:

- Approves the Statement of Work
- Provides the budget resources for the leadership coach
- Meets with the leadership coach to define the purpose and expectations for coaching process
- Provides the leadership coach with an overview of the business and leadership culture of the organization
- Reviews and approves the coaching plan
- Meets periodically with the coachee and leadership coach to formally review progress
- Provides timely, proactive and constructive feedback to the coachee on observable achievements
- Helps to address any obstacles to achievement of the coaching goals
- Participates in the evaluation of the coaching process and integrates sustainability strategies with the company's formal development planning process

Coachee

The coachee is the individual who receives the coaching. The coachee:

- Receives a slate of coaches from approved coaching firm to interview and selects an external leadership coach
- Meets with the leadership coaching sponsor and the leadership coach to clarify the purpose and objectives of the coaching process
- Participates in defining participants for the assessment process and requests their cooperation in completing assessment instruments or interviews
- Seeks to understand assessment data and uses it to identify priority development objectives
- With support from the leadership coach, creates a coaching plan and reviews it with the leadership coaching sponsor
- Implements the coaching plan, integrating planned actions and learning activities with day-to-day business operations
- Meets commitments for scheduled coaching sessions
- Keeps commitments and achieves performance measures outlined in the coaching plan
- Openly and candidly discusses progress and frustrations with the leadership coach



- Reports progress periodically to leadership coaching sponsor; seeks feedback from leadership coaching sponsor and other stakeholders
- Prepares a summary and evaluation of achievements during the coaching process and develops sustainability strategies for review with leadership coaching sponsor
- Integrates sustainability strategies with the company's ongoing performance management process

Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders are other executives or staff who have a major stake in the successful outcome of the coaching process or who can provide valuable information, input, or feedback to the leadership coach or coachee during the coaching process. Key stakeholders:

- May participate in interviews with the leadership coach
- May complete survey instruments connected with a 360-assessment process
- May provide input to the coachee or leadership coach on coaching plan objectives or feedback on progress toward achieving coaching plan objectives
- As appropriate, may support the coachee in sustainability strategies

Human Resources

Human Resources is responsible for screening of leadership coaches/coaching firms for the company and for assuring that company expectations of leadership coaches are defined and communicated.

The Human Resources representative who supports the potential coachee has the following responsibilities:

- Consults with executive sponsor in assessing whether coaching is the optimal development strategy
- Communicates need for and desired qualifications of leadership coach to Human Resources
- Assists in evaluating professional biographies of potential leadership coaches, if requested
- Coordinates potential coach interviews with coachee and communicates selection decision to selected coach / coach firm representative
- Communicates company expectations of leadership coaches to selected coach
- May provide external coach with information about company business and leadership culture
- Coordinates the selection and administration of assessment instruments with the leadership coach; may recommend participants for the assessment phase
- Coordinates interim and final evaluation of the coaching process
- Intervenes to resolve any issues relating to unsatisfactory performance of the leadership coach



ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE LEADERSHIP COACH

Depending on the purpose for coaching, the leadership coach may work with the coachee for anywhere from 90 days to 9 months, with 3 – 6 months the most common initial duration. Depending on the type and length of the coaching assignment, the leadership coach may be expected to perform any or all of the following responsibilities:

- Assures that the coaching process has a clearly defined purpose and objectives that are mutually agreed upon by the sponsor and the coachee
- Assures that involved parties have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- Recommends assessment tools and techniques and administers those needed to meet defined objectives
- Conducts interviews with sponsor, coachee, and key stakeholders to assess the business and leadership environment and to identify expectations of the coachee's role
- Provides coachee with a summary of stakeholder interview insights
- Assists coachee in interpreting assessment data and identifying priority development objectives
- Reviews and provides feedback to coachee on first draft of coaching plan and assures that coaching plan includes:
 - Specific goals which can be achieved within the defined coaching timeframe and are linked to the coachee's priority business objectives
 - Identification of leadership strengths to be leveraged for goal achievement and those targeted for development
 - Success measures for each goal
 - A definition of any resources or support required for goal achievement
 - Actions or learning activities planned for goal achievement
- Facilitates meeting with sponsor and coachee to review and finalize coaching plan
- Conducts regular coaching sessions with the coachee and supports coachee's implementation of the coaching plan, providing consultation, feedback, and learning resources as needed
- Facilitates progress reporting meetings with sponsor and coachee
- Assures that coaching process remains linked to business objectives and results
- Helps coachee identify and apply strategies to remove obstacles to goal achievement
- Assists coachee in summarizing achievements during coaching process and in developing sustainability strategies
- Facilitates final meeting with sponsor to report accomplishments, review sustainability strategies, and define next steps
- Maintains the confidentiality of the coaching relationship and coaching conversations



Confidentiality

The company promotes open communication about the use of leadership coaching as a development strategy. It is hoped that all will perceive this leadership development tool as a positive commitment to the success of the leader. As with many human resource processes, there are confidentiality guidelines that apply to this process.

Access to any assessment data associated with leadership coaching is limited to the coachee and the leadership coach. The coachee is encouraged to discuss general themes and learnings with the sponsor and, if deemed beneficial to the coaching process, with direct reports.

The sponsor and the leadership coach have access to the coaching plan developed by the coachee. The coachee is encouraged to share with direct reports any parts of the plan that will affect them. For example, if assessment data indicate that performance expectations are not clear to direct reports, the coaching plan may include an objective to address this. It will benefit the reporting relationship for the coachee to communicate this goal and ask direct reports for feedback on improvement efforts. Being open with direct reports about development goals demonstrates the leader's commitment to continuous leadership development and its value to the organization.

Leadership coaching, as a development strategy, offers a unique opportunity to the recipient to have candid conversations about performance challenges, personal frustrations, and difficult relationships with a "thinking partner" who has no personal investment in the company's culture. An expectation of the leadership coach is that these coaching conversations with the coachee will remain confidential. Any disclosure of these private conversations between the coachee and the leadership coach are at the sole discretion of the coachee.

Evaluation of Leadership Coaches

At the close of the coaching engagement, we recommend Human Resources solicit feedback on the performance of the coach. This feedback is important in assuring the maintenance of high-quality leadership coaching resources for the company. The sponsor and/or coachee may also receive independent requests for feedback on coach performance from the coach or the coach's employer. This feedback will enable the coach/coaching firm to monitor the quality of services provided. Here are some questions to consider in evaluating coach performance:

- Did the coach establish a trusting and professional relationship?
- Did the coach assure that assessment data was used to link coaching goals to the coachee's critical business objectives?
- Did the coaching plan include the elements required by the company?
- How helpful was the coach in providing resources for specific leadership skill building?
- Did the coach maintain the confidentiality of coaching conversations?
- Did the coach demonstrate the knowledge and executive presence to inspire confidence?



- Did the coach demonstrate good listening skills, constructively confront and challenge thinking, show empathy, effectively facilitate any difficult discussions, make helpful suggestions?
- Did the coach meet commitments made (for support, coaching sessions, progress meetings, etc.)?
- Did the coach assure that sustainability strategies were defined and documented at the close of the coaching engagement?

If there are any obstacles encountered that might prevent a successful outcome for the coaching contract, or if conflicts develop between any parties involved in the contract, Human Resources should be contacted to facilitate discussion and resolution of the problem with the coach and/or coach's employer.



GETTING MAXIMUM RETURN ON THE INVESTMENT IN COACHING

Leadership coaching has been proven as a highly effective strategy for leadership development, but it is also one of the more resource intensive approaches. There are some best practices that contribute to leveraging this investment. As the steward of the resources expended for leadership coaching, executives can use this list of success factors to leverage the benefits of the process.

A Motivated and Committed Coachee

As mentioned earlier in these guidelines, and first and foremost here, a successful leadership coaching process is dependent upon the motivation and commitment of the coachee.

A Qualified and Trusted Coach

When the coachee selects a qualified coach that is a good fit, *and* a relationship of trust is established, *and* the coachee is supported, encouraged and challenged by the coach, odds are high that the investment made in coaching will yield a great return. While other factors discussed below can add incrementally to a successful outcome, these first two are the most crucial by far.

Feedback

Seeking feedback and using it to guide future actions is an important trait of effective leaders. **A 360-assessment** survey can open a safe avenue for feedback, but it is equally important to put in place strategies to assure there is ongoing feedback that is useful for evaluating progress on development goals. A coach helps the coachee identify the most appropriate sources of feedback and solicit them in a safe, candid, and respectful manner. A steady stream of specific, balanced and honest feedback can be a critical success factor in achieving and sustaining development goals involving leadership behavior changes.

It is unfortunate, but true, that the higher a leader's role in the organization, the less feedback the leader receives about his or her leadership effectiveness. Those working most closely with the leader are often reluctant to provide valuable information about how that person's leadership style affects relationships with others or their ability to perform at optimum levels. This reluctance may be because they report to the leader and are concerned about the consequences of providing any feedback that could be perceived as negative, or it could be a peer who is concerned that any constructive feedback could adversely affect the quality of an important relationship of interdependence.

Self-assessment instruments and feedback from higher levels provide important, but limited, data for leadership development planning. The views of peers and direct reports more often provide insight into "blind spots". A multi-rater assessment process, whether data is gathered through 360 assessment instruments or



interviews, provides a confidential avenue for these important colleagues to provide their views of the coachee's leadership practices and behaviors. A leadership coach can conduct follow-up interviews with survey participants, if needed, to gain a more in-depth understanding of the perceptions of these groups. 360 data makes it possible to pinpoint areas for development that will most likely enhance business results.

Link Leadership Development to Business Objectives

Identifying the leadership practices or behaviors most critical to achieving high priority business objectives provides a context for analyzing leadership assessment data. The coachee can more easily determine what identified strengths should be leveraged and what leadership development goals will yield the biggest payback in terms of leveraging business results. Continuing to link business objectives and activities to leadership development activities throughout the coaching process will assure that leadership development doesn't become a separate activity that loses priority but remains in focus as a means to leverage performance results. Gaining insight to the relationship between effective leadership behavior and achievement of business results is a key to getting optimal results from the coaching process. One of the most valuable learnings from a coaching process can be how to integrate leadership development activities with day-to-day business activities, so it is a robust learning process.

Sustainability Strategies

With expert resources and added attention focused on leadership development for the specified coaching contract period, conditions are optimal for achieving improved business results. When those resources are withdrawn, there is risk of losing ground gained, particularly when development goals are related to leadership behavior change. The successful implementation of viable sustainability strategies will assure that improvements are maintained, and further progress is achieved.

Often, sustainability strategies call for continued coaching support from internal resources. This could mean increased involvement of the leader, use of an internal mentor or trusted peer, or support from Human Resources. In addition to periodic internal coaching, the sustainability plan often calls for a continuing stream of feedback from stakeholders. Ideally, this feedback would be candidly provided upon request. However, there may be a need for re-administration of a 360 assessment to gauge the success of further improvement efforts. Any expectations for continued improvement should be integrated with the company's performance planning and development programs.



Reasonable Expectations for Goals Requiring Behavior Change

Multi-rater data collected in connection with 360 assessments may shed light on some “blind spots” that a coachee has about his/her leadership practices or behavior and their impact on others. Changes that involve leadership practices can often be quickly achieved by implementing a quality coaching plan and sustainability strategy. Changes rooted in personal values are not so easy to accomplish and can take much longer to achieve a lasting change in behavior. If the reason for coaching is to change a leadership behavior that has deep roots, the leader needs to be realistic about how long it takes to change behavior.



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