

Case Study: Executive Coaching . . . the Joy of Working with a Super-Star

Presenting Issue and Background Information

Executive coaching has evolved over the past 30 years. Once considered a “last resort” for saving a derailing executive, today it’s more often considered an investment in the highest potential leaders.

I recently was hired as an executive coach for a highly successful “high-potential” young woman in a large organization in the U.S. She had moved up rapidly through her organization over a period of six years. She was highly respected by all and was being groomed for a place in the executive ranks.

The coaching engagement was set for six months. We began with a “getting acquainted” phase where I learned a great deal about her background, her challenges and successes up to that point and her aspirations for the future.

Approach

After the initial data gathering about her background and identifying the coaching objectives (from her point of view as well as her boss’) we moved into the assessment phase.

I used a core set of valid assessments including the Hogan*Lead* Series, the LEA 360, verbal 360 interviews and the MBTI-Step 2.

Upon completion of all of the assessments, my client took time for reflection, introspection and synthesis. She explained that she had some “aha’s” and new insights about herself that she had been unaware of—what we call “blindspots”. Rather than getting defensive she moved into “What can I learn from this” mode.

She distilled the most critical development areas down to three improvement goals. She created a thorough development plan that included:

- Measurable improvement goals
- Benefits for achieving the goals
- Risks involved in pursuing the goals
- Potential obstacles with her preliminary strategy to overcome them
- Detailed action steps
- Resources needed

In a 3-way meeting, we met with her boss to present the plan. Her boss added some suggestions for enhancing the plan and offered additional resources beyond what my client requested.

Client Outcome and Value

By the end of the coaching engagement all three goals were either fully accomplished or very near completion. We ended the six months with a closure meeting—again with my client, her boss and myself. We reflected on where we started, where we were at that moment and where she still wanted to grow.

Her boss expressed her high satisfaction for the progress my client demonstrated. They set up continued progress checks once/month to ensure progress continued going forward.

Eighteen months later, I learned that my client was promoted to Senior Vice President. Her hard work, her humble nature and her desire to continuously improve make her a rare find in the executive ranks!