

## Management and Executive Coaching

Do you ever ask yourself how you will achieve the following?

- \* Keep on top of your own work pressures and demands
- \* Turn your organisation around through revitalised people and products or services
- \* Keep employees motivated during change and uncertainty
- \* Give your leaders and managers further skills to support your strategy
- \* Move from a task-based culture to one that inspires people
- \* Have your people stay focused during a sluggish market or period of low performance
- \* Find ways to build leadership capabilities, innovation and strategic thinking
- \* Retain your best people in a competitive market
- \* Discover ways to reduce stress and increase team morale
- \* Deal with difficult situations – or people

Then coaching may be a solution for you.

Management Coaching and Leadership Mentoring can be extremely helpful to people at any level, but especially to those whose time is precious. At its most effective, it is conducted by an experienced former senior executive whose role is to ask questions and listen, helping you learn for yourself. Often that coach should have experience in an operating environment or level similar to that of the coachee, and will certainly be prepared to invest time in understanding the context in which their contribution will have an effect.

### When is coaching appropriate?

There are many areas where coaching can make a real difference, for example:

#### Induction

- \* Easing new recruits into an organisation, accelerating the process of getting them up to speed.

#### Development

- \* Enhancing the progress of talented staff so that they are ready for career progression, or helping a senior executive with managing growth and making difficult decisions.

### Personal Performance

- \* Helping individuals – or teams – who are struggling to reach the standards expected, or who have identified aspects of themselves that they wish to change over time.

### Relationships

- \* Developing an individual's awareness of how they communicate and behave, and the impact this may have on others, enhancing their ability to respond assertively to others and to manage difficult working relationships caused by perceived unacceptable behaviours, aggression or conflict.

Coaching takes several forms, but a common feature is that it is always client-led. We start by asking the coachee to identify the key features of their current situation, and what they would like to be doing differently as a result of any intervention. This provides a starting point, but by no means does this have to be the only topic of conversation. The whole process is led by you – not the coach.

We often talk about something different to that which we had originally planned to discuss – this is because the process is non-directive. Whilst retaining a long-term focus on the original outcomes, a good coach will allow the coachee to talk about issues that are relevant to them at that moment.

What is important is that it gives the coachee an opportunity to talk, to think through real-life issues with someone who is detached from the emotional and political framework in which they normally work, and to think about their own responses to these issues. This process can give rise to thought-provoking questioning of motives and options.

Topics can range from business development and marketing through to client relationships, performance management and personal behaviours at work. The only thing the coach seeks is a commitment from the coachee to undertake the actions we agree – but as these usually arise from the coachee themselves this is rarely a problem.

### The Coaching Process

Prior to beginning any coaching, we like to agree what is to be undertaken, and how success will be measured – a coaching contract. Any conflicting issues of confidentiality and reporting upwards will need to be clarified at the outset, preferably at a tripartite meeting of coach, coachee and boss/sponsor at which the 'rules of engagement' can be agreed. Similarly, we like to hold a tripartite review of what has been achieved at the end of any coaching programme.

For our clients we usually recommend that coaching sessions should last for around 90 minutes to two hours. Ideally they should be conducted offsite in a comfortable and discrete location.

A typical model that we follow is one based on listening and questioning, specifically avoiding the direct offering of solutions. It can be summarised as:

1. Identifying and setting goals – both for the process overall and the individual session.
2. Helping the coachee understand what's really happening around them, and drawing out the consequences of possibilities, options and proposals.
3. Setting the parameters for the next stage – what will they achieve and by when.
4. Recapping – asking the coachee to recap on the objectives, what has been agreed, and what he/she will do by the next session.

However, this process is not the only one that may be used; much depends on the issue being discussed. We can also use personality questionnaires, cognitive behavioural coaching and other tools to encourage self-awareness and provide feedback to the coachee.

ST\*R Learning's coaches and mentors are fully qualified – many at post-graduate diploma level – and have wide experience of many operating environments. So much depends on the success of the personal coaching relationship that we will work with you to identify who would be the right coach for you. We work within the Code of Ethics of the Association for Coaching, and operate a 'no-blame divorce' first meeting policy. You choose the person that you think will benefit you most – it's down to you.

**If you are interested, then please contact us on +44 (0)1883 717131 for an initial discussion.**