

Corporate Coaching Builds Leadership Capacity

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How do busy leaders find time to keep up with their most urgent priorities? Since the early 90's, Executive Coaching has become increasingly popular as a just-in-time strategy for meeting the increasing demands that today's executives are constantly facing. In the middle of a busy day, smart leaders pick up the phone for a 30-40 minute conversation that can clear their thinking, generate new ideas, and find the conviction to do what seems impossible.

Tom's Story: Tom, a senior Vice President in the pharmaceutical industry found himself in the middle of a corporate restructure. His new boss wasn't providing the support Tom had taken for granted throughout his career. He felt insecure because he didn't have an engineering background similar to the rest of his peers. He had grown up in the pharmaceutical business and his rise to the executive ranks was due to his own just-in-time learning. He was known for his systems thinking and people skills. He said he felt like "an artist in a science lab."

Tom's boss was using the company's global restructuring to choose one leader from three contenders. Tom felt helpless as the corporate wheels turned slowly away from him to someone younger and more qualified on paper than he was. Now for the first time, he had hit a wall. After 25 years in the business, was it time for him to leave?

Tom felt trapped by his successful track record and the dead end where it appeared to be going. It was almost impossible for him to hear his boss on the

day he got the news. He was numb as the reality sank in. He would be leaving the work group he had built for the past 10 years. Although Tom's boss assured him that the company would do everything it could to find him a new role, Tom felt sidelined and shamed.

Full Spectrum Coaching had secured the contract to coach Executives at the senior management level, and Tom had already selected me as his coach. Our coaching focused on how Tom could re-gain himself and make some wise choices at this stage in his career. In addition to this career crisis, his father's death was making a huge impact. First, he took a month of down time. He retreated to his family, who had been missing their preoccupied father for far too long. When he returned to work, our coaching focused on his much-needed reconnection with his core values and vision for his life. He began to conceive of possibilities in other parts of the company, even though there were no specific jobs available.

Within a short time, Tom was invited to an interview with a top company executive. Though Tom approached the interview with an open mind, he had developed clear criteria for the kind of relationship he required with his "next" boss. In our next conversation, Tom joyfully announced that he had accepted a senior Vice President role in another division of the company. His combined skills would give him greater scope and impact across many divisions.

I reminded Tom where he had been when we started, and where he had arrived. Tom's new boss highly prized exactly the skills he brought, and Tom began to contribute at an entirely new level. Tom had transformed his perspective to embrace his new role, bringing his vision and passion to bear on a neglected part of the business. Best of all, he was recognized for the value of his previous work, and was able to develop a respectful relationship with his former boss. His favourite saying was that he had found his new Tribe. He was no longer an artist in a science lab; he had created his own inspiring studio.

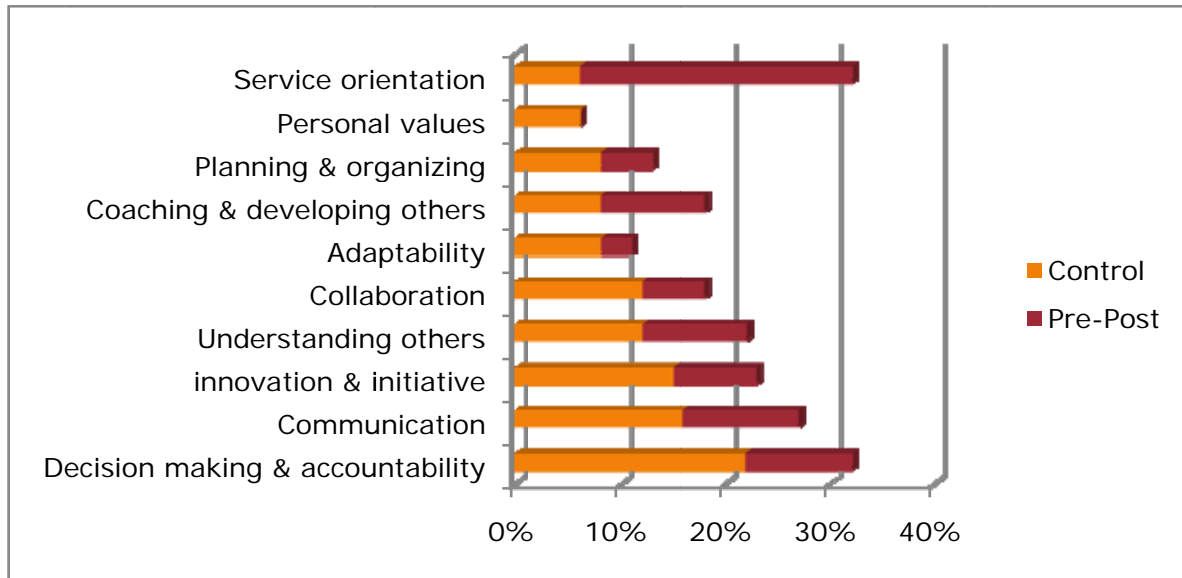
Tom's story is repeated many times over with men and women in different industries at all levels of organizations. One of the challenges for companies is how to put a value on the work of executive coaching, which is highly personal and specific.

Executive Coaching Impact Study: Full Spectrum Coaching recently conducted a study with 15 fast track senior leaders who were hand picked by their bosses for a six-month coaching pilot.

Questionnaires were completed by the leaders being coached, as well as their bosses and their coaches as to how their leadership skills were affected by coaching. A control group consisting of 10 other highly successful senior managers was selected. The control group was asked to complete identical pre and post evaluations of critical skills that had been determined to measure success.

- The leadership skills included:
- Adaptability
- Coaching and Developing Others
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Decision-Making and Accountability
- Innovation & Initiative
- Planning & Organizing
- Personal Values
- Service Orientation
- Understanding Others

After 6 months of coaching, the results were remarkable.



The leaders who were coached improved in all the leadership skill areas, except for their personal values, which remained the same. They improved over the control group in all competency areas. Some comments from the participants were:

- Coaching & developing others: ***"I know when it's appropriate to do problem solving (with my staff) vs. coaching."***
- Innovation & initiative: ***"Coaching provided a framework for analyzing risk"***
- Understanding others: ***"I'm delegating more to others with greater trust"***
- Decision making & accountability: ***"I'm doing better at evaluating important vs. urgent"***
- The leaders' bosses commented:
- Communication: ***"(The person being coached) is beginning to listen and absorb, not talk through people"***

- Decision-making & accountability: "The person being coached) is ***taking on problems rather than skating around them.***"

6 Keys to Implementing a Successful Executive Coaching Process:

- 1. Pre-screen coaches:** Not everyone who calls themselves a coach can meet your leaders' needs. Research has revealed these critical criteria:
 - a. Corporate experience
 - b. Critical thinking
 - c. Framework for coaching
 - d. Track record

We have applied these criteria to our database of over 200 coaches to ensure that only the highest calibre professional coaches become available to our clients.

- 2. Position coaching as a perk:** Coaching is often introduced to organizations as a remedial band-aid for individuals who are not coping in their positions. This is a serious error. Coaching is best provided to successful individuals whose potential can be maximized through just-in-time development. Our coaching targets top talent and prepares them for greater responsibility in the sponsoring company.
- 3. Establish impact criteria:** The most valuable coaching interventions are those that establish criteria for success up front. Our research services can determine how to best measure those criteria for the short term success and long term sustainability of a coaching program.
- 4. Find the best coach for each person:** There is a best coach for every leader, and there are proven ways to make the match. We use several criteria to scour our database in order to find at least two choices for each person being coached. When the leader has to choose a coach, the possibility of building a trustworthy relationship increases.

5. Teach coaching skills: A common question from companies who employ external coaches is, "how can we bring a coaching culture to our organization?" The critical elements for successfully introducing coaching are;

- a. Create successful coaching experiences for leaders
- b. Deliver high calibre coach approach training for managers
- c. Develop qualified internal coaches for ongoing coaching services to many

The Great Question Game™ introduces coaching to managers and paves the way for the popular Excelerator Coach Training Program™. The extensive curriculum can train managers to use a coach approach and can build a cadre of internal coaches who are qualified for certification by the International Coach Federation.

6. Evaluate outcomes: Evaluation of the coaching program throughout the process and after coaching has been delivered is an important aspect of building success. Some methods of evaluation include:

- a. On line survey of participants and their bosses
- b. 360 feedback surveys before and after coaching
- c. Targeted interviews with participants, bosses and coaches.

Coaching is emerging as the most powerful tool for growing and retaining exceptional leaders. In order to meet leadership demands now and for the future, it is essential to introduce coaching as a development opportunity. The program must be sustained with strong coaching skills training, and a comprehensive evaluation system.

The value our clients have gained from this approach are summed up in their own words:

Participant: *"I am more confident, and as a result, more proactive, change-oriented, and emotionally and psychologically energetic."*

Boss: *"(The employee) has remained employed here- retention with renewed commitment!"*

Coaching has not only built capacity in leaders, it has significantly increased the organization's capacity to be an employer of choice in a highly competitive labour market.

About the Author

Carollyne Conlinn is one of Canada's most skilled and sought-after business coaches. A 30-year veteran of the corporate world, her Excelerator Coaching Program™ has trained hundreds of executive coaches and managers to use a coach approach. Her innovative Great Question Game™ introduces coaching to teams of leaders who want to hone their skills. Carollyne has personally trained a team of skilled coaches who can work with individuals, or facilitate coaching skills training for your organization. Her seminars and keynotes give participants the first hand opportunity to build their coaching skills using the engaging Great Question Game™.



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