

Executive Coaching – A Typical Approach

In a 1:1 coaching relationship there is no standard template for the experience – otherwise the development solution might just as well be an off-the-shelf or even customised training package. Having said this, the experience might typically include the following components:

Initial Meeting/telephone call

- ❑ Get to know each other better – share information and insights about each of our preferences, styles, relevant feedback from others etc. to allow consideration about whether or not the “chemistry” will work
- ❑ Explore and agree the development objectives – coach needs to build understanding of the current role and future aspirations of the participant as well as gain insight into the current organisation
- ❑ Coach to share if relevant, information/models/concepts to make transparent the methodology and techniques underpinning coaching and development so that the participant develops insight and trust
- ❑ Agree in outline form (typically looking 6 months ahead), the number/nature of sessions and other support required including, e-mail, telephone contact etc.
- ❑ Introduce the concept of the “learning log” to agree whether a method of recording “critical incidents” between meetings/interactions might help prompt review and learning from experience as the development process unfolds
- ❑ Agree relevance or otherwise and role of others in the process eg line manager of participant, internal HR resources etc. who might be interested parties in terms of providing feedback on progress, reviewing and adding value to objectives, providing positive re-inforcement etc. (Discussion of “politics” around this issue always important)

Development Sessions

- ❑ 1:1 development sessions would typically be scheduled around a month to six weeks apart over an initial 6-month period. First 3 session dates would usually be put in the diary up front
- ❑ There is no typical format for a development session – format might include any/all of the following:

Review “data” previously collected on participant strengths/weaknesses through development centres, selection processes etc. Discuss accuracy and implications for current role/future aspirations; collect new “data” through relevant psychometrics/self-assessment and feedback questionnaires etc. Build an agreed profile of the competencies required for the current and future roles and gaps/mis-matches if any. Explore real life examples to test understanding of the profile and re-visit development goals to refine in the light of the agreed “data”

Focus on a specific competency (e.g. influencing). Review examples of when things have not gone well, identify how incident might have been tackled differently using the competency (coach to input techniques/advice/feedback). Consider up-coming challenges where participant can practice new techniques/advice

Review learning log to identify successes and difficulties in practising new behaviours approaches. Identify further opportunities to practice refined techniques

Coach might observe participant in a typical workplace situation (with the permission of colleagues) relevant to development goals to provide direct feedback and review

Explore issues that relate to feelings, motivations, drivers, values, beliefs, attitudes, identity, and vision for the future. Help participant make connections between these and what is going on in their work and life. Develop an engaging and inspiring vision for the future.

Focus on specific challenging situations facing the participant. Rehearse the situation, facilitate self-assessment and provide feedback to help prepare participant to increase success

Facilitated learning/progress review with line manager or any other relevant stakeholder(s) identified early in the process

This outline is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. The nature of every coaching/mentoring relationship is unique because of the individuals involved and the role of the coach in terms of degree of directiveness versus facilitation style is very dependent on both the agreed goals and style/preferences of the participant.