



# ONE-ON-ONE COACHING: WILL COACHING BE BENEFICIAL?

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*“...a company’s investment in providing coaching to its executives realizes an average return on investment of almost six times the cost of the coaching...”*

In today’s business and economic environment, retention of talent is critical. Forward looking organizations understand and embrace the importance of a commitment to a continuous improvement approach to developing and cultivating leadership talent. Increasingly, strategies that embed third party professional coaching in talent management planning are separating world class organizations from the mediocre.

This article reveals how leadership coaches are key facilitators of business success in so many organizations today and how to assess the best coaching strategies for your leaders.

## WHAT IS LEADERSHIP COACHING?

While mentoring programs have been present in organizations for a while, hiring a third party coach to work one-on-one with leaders of the organization is still a novelty in some sectors. Coaching has become more popular as organizations realize the positive impact that individualized leadership development can provide. And besides that, it’s good for people!



In the early years, the coach specialized in helping managers plan, organize, and energize their businesses, or to provide technical support to help the organization achieve its operational goals. Today the third party leadership coach takes more of a personal trainer approach and is there to help the leader with his or her leadership conditioning and improvement. This includes what some say are “soft skills,” but are in reality much more than that. Coaching today involves helping the leader to be a positive influencer of change and innovation within the organization as well as to achieve his/her personal and professional goals.

## FOUR TYPES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COACHING

There are many companies in the marketplace selling leadership coaching services. Being prepared to make decisions about employing a third party leadership coach begins with understanding the typical types of coaching services provided today and linking them with your talent management objectives. The four most common types of coaching engagements in the profit and non-profit sector are:

TYPES OF COACHING	EXAMPLES OF OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS
<b><i>INTERVENTION</i></b>	Provides targeted help and support for a leader facing a “must change” or critical turn-around situation.
<b><i>SPECIFIC SKILL OR LEADERSHIP STYLE IMPROVEMENT</i></b>	Examples include helping a leader develop a more effective leadership style, communication skills, or insights into how to handle conflicts skillfully.
<b><i>PREPARATION FOR SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT</i></b>	Helps prepare a leader for a new assignment, greater roles & responsibilities, or a change in job status.
<b><i>CONTINUOUS EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT; LEADERSHIP “TUNE-UP”</i></b>	Integrated with the organization’s talent management strategic planning. Examples include: organizational vision and values, core competencies, developing leadership talent within, specialty topics, and more.

## FACTORS THAT MAY INDICATE A COACHING OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR LEADERS

### *DECLINING BUSINESS INDICATORS*

When business indicators are less than favorable, leaders need to be able to remove roadblocks and overcome obstacles quickly. Examples include, but are not limited to, measures of productivity, quality, safety, sales, and financials.

### *LESS THAN OPTIMUM WORK ENVIRONMENT & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE*

The quality of the workplace environment and the wellness of the organizational culture is also an indicator of a need for leadership development and perhaps a coaching intervention. This is typically manifest by working relationship problems, lack of teamwork and camaraderie, workplace conflict, poor morale, low job satisfaction and other indicators.

## QUANTIFYING THE VALUE OF COACHING

Ultimately the decision to engage a talent development coach should be based upon the potential positive outcomes the intervention will bring. A recent study by Manchester, Inc., a career management consulting firm in Jacksonville Florida, entitled “Executive Coaching Yields Return on Investment” found that a company’s investment in providing coaching to its executives realized an average return on investment of almost six times the cost of the coaching. This study found that the benefits to companies in improvements to key performance measures were reported in the following areas:

*(Note: The percentages refer to the percentage of executives in the study who cited improvement in specific areas due to their experience with third party leadership coaches).*

1. Productivity (53%)
2. Quality (48%)
3. Organizational Strength (48%)
4. Customer Service (39%)
5. Reducing Customer Complaints (34%)
6. Executive retention (32%)
7. Cost Reductions (23%)
8. Bottom-line profitability (22%)

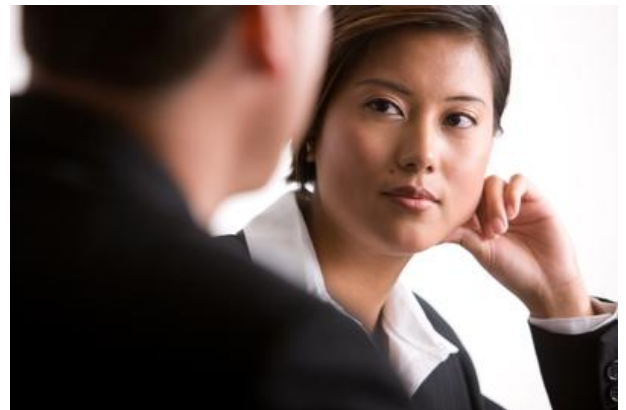
For the more intangible areas, the same group of executives reported the improvements in the following areas:

1. Working relationships with direct reports (77%)
2. Working relationships with immediate supervisors (71%)
3. Teamwork (67%)
4. Working relationships with peers (63%)
5. Job satisfaction (61%)
6. Conflict reduction (52%)
7. Organizational commitment (44%)
8. Working relationships with clients (37%)

## SELECTING A COACH

If you have decided to engage a talent development coach, the next step is selecting the coach. Selecting the right coach is critical to the success of the coaching effort. Some factors to consider include:

- **DEGREE OF TRUST.** The leader must trust the coach. All discussions should be confidential, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties. This is essential to the success of the engagement. A skilled coach is able to give periodic updates to the sponsoring manager without compromising the integrity of the coaching relationship.



- *FAVORABLE REPUTATION AND TESTIMONIALS.* Ask to see references and testimonials. However, understand that because of the highly confidential nature of the business and proprietary concerns of some organizations, you may have to settle for broad endorsements and a generalized recommendation.
- *EXPERIENCE IN YOUR PARTICULAR INDUSTRY.* Depending upon the nature of the coaching engagement experience in a particular industry may or may not be a critical requirement. What is important, however, is the training and experience of the coach and his or her ability to relate to the work and circumstances of the leader.
- *INVESTMENT.* The coaching engagement is an investment in the talent of your organization and the potential future outcomes that it brings. Always agree on the outcome measures that will serve as your best indicators of a successful coaching engagement.
- *USE OF A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH.* Almost any coach you interview is going to have a different coaching methodology. Look for a proven and systematic coaching process. This should include an initial assessment, an intervention plan, and common sense measurements.



## HOW TO DIAGNOSE AND PLAN FOR COACHING INTERVENTIONS

See the [Coach's Guide to Diagnosing and Planning for Coaching Interventions](#).

This tool includes

1. A description of the four types of coaching interventions
2. An Intervention & Symptoms Table
3. An Urgency Matrix to prioritize the coaching needs in your organization at a glance

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