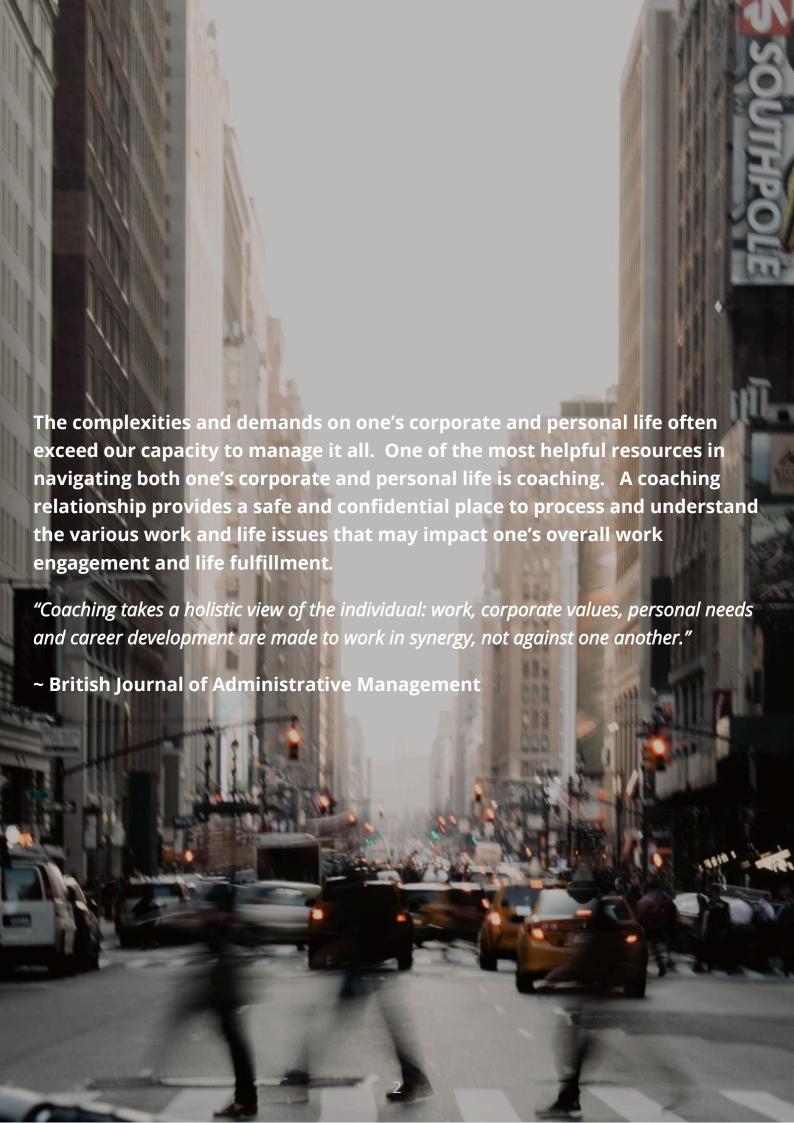


What is Executive Coaching?

July 2019





Executive coaches typically work with organizational leaders. The distinction is most clear when compared to life coaching that helps an individual for example, to achieve a personal goal such as happiness, work-life balance, financial security or wealth, or better relationships.

Of course, there are several exceptions to this distinction and in my own coaching practice for instance, there is often a continuum between business and personal life and it is sometimes difficult to separate the two. Nevertheless, executive or leadership coaching is meant to meet organizational needs.

Leadership Coaching, however, is a collaborative, individualized relationship between a leader and the coach — the leader could well be an executive, manager, supervisor, team leader or business owner for example — anyone in charge or responsible for a group of people.

Coaching is a **partnership** — one in which both sides work to reach an agreed-upon destination.



The aim of the partnership is to bring about sustained behavioral change and transform the quality of the leader's working and personal life.

It could involve working with individuals or teams in executive or management positions. The Executive Coaching Handbook defines executive coaching as...

"an experiential and individualized leader development process that builds a leader's capability to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals. It is conducted through one-on-one and/or group interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect. The organization, an executive, and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum impact."

What Executive Coaching Isn't

- It isn't **technical guidance** although it's true to say that some coaches have a strong technical background.
- It isn't **career counseling** although many coaches certainly assist in helping leaders find the right fit and match for their talents and strengths.
- It isn't **consulting** (although the boundaries between coaching and consulting can often be blurred) where the consultant is really seen as the expert who comes in to solve a problem and give advice. Coaches on the other hand, prefer to ask questions and assist the leader to find their own solution.
- It isn't **mentoring** who is someone who has trod the journey before. In this way, mentors are often informal supports either within or outside the organization, but they have done the journey and typically have the wisdom of experience on their side. However, they can often be compromised with the company on the one hand and the needs of the 'mentee' on the other. Coaches instead, are generally hired from outside the team or organization, have a broad range of experience and are skilled at managing discussions that might be deemed sensitive or 'off limits.'
- It isn't **training**. Training usually doesn't involve reflection and introspection, it's usually not tailored to the individual and trainers are often not aware of the intricacies of human nature that undermine or sabotage behavior (including success) or that bring about an individual's downfall.

The Trickle Down Effect



Coaching is a one-to-one or perhaps group engagement for leaders or executives designed to bring about more effective, healthier organizations. Hence, when leaders improve their performance, such benefits spread throughout the organization. In a sense, exposing senior leaders to the coaching experience has a flow-on effect of precipitating a coaching culture within the organization itself.

As people responsive to coaching apply their new found skills and techniques to other people in the organization, improved interaction cascades down the organization. Hence, coaching can also be viewed as a passing on of a set of skills used by leaders in the organization on a day-to-day basis that enhances the performance of their people.

Custom Designed For Each Client

Coaching has become a viable option for businesses and organizations looking to operate at peak performance. Where training and workshops are usually general in nature when everyone learns the same set of material, coaching is individualized and specifically tailored to the person.

In most leadership coaching situations, the real objective is to help successful people become even more effective. Effective coaches go to great lengths to emphasize the unique talents and abilities of their clients as well as emphasize their client's potential. It's about challenging their clients and helping them change their behavior. It's about encouraging clients to be open to change, to step-up, and to be more responsible corporate citizens. Not surprisingly, leadership coaching improves the bottom line.

At an individual level, in a sense, the leader often uses me as a "confidential processing partner."

Areas of typical focus in coaching include:



developing a more effective leadership style or manner

- succession planning & management
- improving interpersonal or communication skills
- strengthening personal development
- managing "difficult" people
- building sustainable work-life rhythms
- career development & planning
- crucial conversations
- dealing with conflict and learn conflict-management skills
- learning how to manage upwards
- recognizing and implementing effective staff development
- strengthening self-confidence, assertiveness and well-being

Two Main Forms of Coaching

Developmental coaching is about improving skills and knowledge, providing frameworks for effective work-life balance as well as developing sound emotional intelligences which area all oriented towards good leadership. At an *interpersonal level*, the coach can support a leader in a new role and help teams set the bar for excellence in behavior. At an *organizational level*, coaches can support the succession planning process by helping people realize their potential as well as help fast-track the "rising stars" or those leading transformational change.

Coaching to resolve problems or risks is about helping to prevent career derailment or helping to reduce stress or other emotional factors that might get in the way of effective performance. It might also involve reducing conflict between team members or helping to resolve issues with company politics.

What is my ROI?



As any business leader will tell you, return on investment should be measured in dollars and impact. This is probably one of the most challenging aspects of coaching. When goals are clear from the outset, success can be judged by whether those goals are actually met. However, goals often evolve or change throughout the course of the coaching engagement, or the impact of coaching may be intangible, or the foundation that is being laid for impact will have its effect at some time in the future. How therefore can this be measured?

Certainly, the satisfaction of the coachee and/or client is one measure of success, but does that really gauge the sustainability or long-term success of the impact or merely the success of the coaching relationship?

Research Supporting Coaching

In the book "How the Top 20 Companies Grow Great Leaders," M
Effron and colleagues found that companies with stronger
leadership practices outperformed their industry peers in the long
term measure of both financial growth and return. One practice
that the authors discovered that separated the top companies from
others was the use of executive coaching. This study found that 47%

of the top companies regularly assign coaches to their high potential employees. On the other hand, just 10% of the remaining 300 firms surveyed made a similar claim.

Further, the book by **D B Peterson and K Kraiger**, titled, "The Human Resources Program Evaluation Handbook," (2004) outlined a study by McGovern at al (2001) which examined the ROI of coaching. They examined 100 mid- to senior-level managers at large organizations who participated in coaching. The executives estimated their coaching to be worth 5.7 times the initial investment, based on a conservative formula for estimating ROI by Phillips (1997). Significant organizational and personal benefits were found.

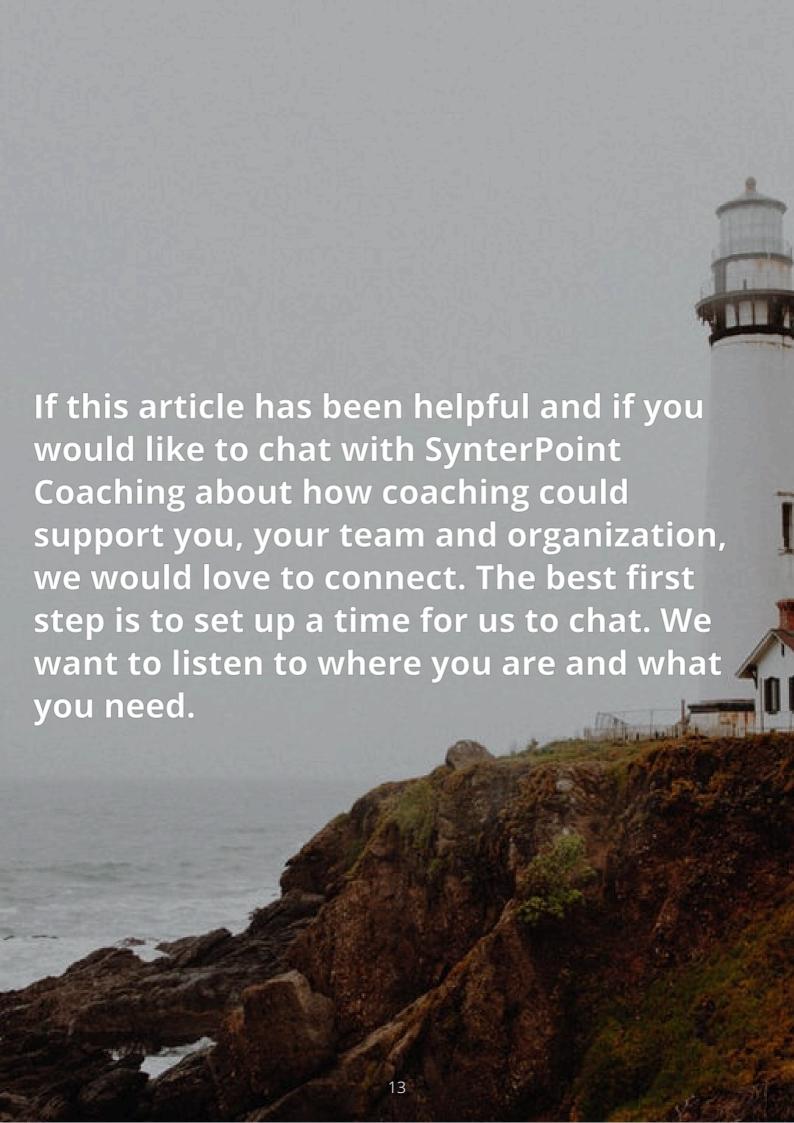
For example, organizational benefits for coaching included:

- **better productivity** (reported by 53% of participants)
- better quality (48%)
- organizational strength (48%)
- customer service (39%)
- retention (32%)
- improvements in **cost reduction** (23%)
- profitability (22%)

Among personal benefits, they reported:

- improved relationships with direct reports (77%)
- better relationships with peers (63%)
- better teamwork (67%)
- increased job satisfaction (61%)

Overall, this kind of evidence for example, suggests that leadership coaching provides a powerful tool to accelerate the performance of successful executives and managers, and in turn, the corporation. Furthermore, the authors recommend that if corporations wish to remain in the forefront, it is imperative that executive coaching be among the developmental tools in a training arsenal.



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