

The Executive Coaching


Handbook

Principles and Guidelines for a Successful Coaching Partnership

Developed by
The Executive Coaching Forum

Sixth Edition
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www.executivecoachingforum.com



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Additional feedback for subsequent editions has come from executive coaching professionals from all across the United States, and the world including Canada, Great Britain, Brazil, South Africa, Chile and others.

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The Need for a Handbook

The History and Future of the Handbook and Competency Model

Executive Coaching has become commonplace in leadership development in the U.S. and internationally. It is seen as a viable lever in developing high potentials, retaining top talent, readying executives for more demanding roles, and building a leadership pipeline. Organizations that use coaching report that they'll likely increase its use in the coming years.

Executive coaching continues to grow in popularity and prestige. In the past 20 years, significant progress has taken place in clarifying definitions and practice guidelines, yet there is still no widely agreed upon definition or set of professional standards. In 1999, when a group of Boston area executive coaches, leadership development consultants, and human resources professionals began meeting regularly to put guidelines in place for our own practices and organizations, we realized that we were creating a valuable resource for the field and a way to jump start the conversation about professional standards.

In 2000, we became the Executive Coaching Forum and published the First Edition of *The Executive Coaching Handbook: Principles and Guidelines for a Successful Coaching Partnership*. This Handbook was conceived as starting a dialogue in the field about what executive coaching is, when and how to use it effectively and ethically, and how to measure its efficacy. Next, we realized that there are many approaches to training for executive coaches but no agreed upon set of qualifications.

In 2005, we added the Competency Model to help define the knowledge areas, tasks and skills sets, attributes, and abilities that are critical for executive coaches to develop and exhibit in order to create effective experiences for clients. Research into the field of Executive Coaching has been significantly improved by the entrance of the Institute for Coaching at McLean/Harvard Medical School www.instituteofcoaching.org.

The mission of the Institute is to build the scientific foundation and best practices of leadership, wellness, and personal coaching. In the field of executive coaching, the Institute is a leader in driving and supporting research in best practices. Because we know the Institute will carry on the tradition of raising key questions for the field and providing a place to discuss them with old and new audiences, in the autumn of 2015 we published the 6th Edition of the Handbook and handed it off to the Institute for future distribution. We hope this 6th edition continues and expands this dialogue.

We wrote *The Executive Coaching Handbook* as a service, with the explicit intent to get the *Handbook* out to a broad array of users and practitioners to promote interest and progress in creating a well-respected profession. We have distributed the *Handbook* at

www.executivecoachingforum.com as an open source document, free of charge, requesting only that you send us notification if you use it, and that you don't charge for our work if you share it with others. The *Handbook* is used in hundreds of executive coach training programs and by tens of thousands of coaches in more than 40 countries.

The Guide will be available at

www.theexecutivecoachingforum.com until 2017.

It is also now available at www.instituteofcoaching.org.

Handbook Organization

The Executive Coaching Handbook is divided into four sections as follows:

Defining Executive Coaching describes executive coaching and the partnership required for maximum success. We believe executive coaching is most successful as a three-way partnership among coach, executive, and the executive's organization. Each partner has an obligation and responsibility to contribute to the success of the coaching process. Although the primary work is between executive and coach, coaching is always an organizational intervention and, as such, should be conducted within the context of the organization's goals and objectives.

Overarching Principles for Executive Coaching describes a set of values or goals that guide the coaching process. These principles provide a compass that the coach, the executive, and other members of the organization will use to set, maintain, and correct their course of action.

Guidelines for Practice provide procedural help for all coaching partners. These guidelines define the components of the process and outline the commitments that each partner must make.

Core Competencies of the Executive Coach lists a robust set of four knowledge areas fundamental to the work of executive coaching: psychological, business, organizational and coaching competencies; the tasks and skills sets aligned to the six phases of the coaching process; and the 10 attributes and abilities that promote superior performance. Each of these competency areas is separated into basic and advanced levels.

Defining Executive Coaching

What Is Executive Coaching?

Executive coaching is a developing field. As such, its definition is still the subject of discussion and debate among practitioners, researchers, and consumers. Executive coaching involves an executive, his coach, and his organizational context (as represented by the interests of his organization and supervisor, including the fact that the organization typically pays for coaching services). All are key stakeholders in the process. This fact by itself would appear to differentiate executive coaching from other interventions, such as career counseling and life coaching.

While both career counseling and life coaching can lend concepts and practice techniques that an executive coach might use, they focus solely on the individual client and his needs and goals. Executive coaching, in our view, focuses on the needs and goals of both the executive and the sponsoring organization. In that spirit, we offer the following definition of executive coaching.

Executive coaching is a one-on-one individualized process to benefit the leader and his/her organization. Working with goals defined by both the leader and the organization, a qualified and trusted coach uses various coaching methods and feedback data to develop the leader's capacity for current and future leadership. This coaching is guided by a coaching partnership to achieve maximum impact and the highest level of learning.

Definition of Terms

Individualized. The goals and specific activities are tailored to the unique aspects of the individual(s) and the organizational system.

Leader: We use the term broadly to mean any individual(s) who have the potential of making a significant contribution to the mission and purpose of the organization.

One-on-one: The primary coaching activities take place between the individual leader(s) and the coach.

Develop capacity: Developing new ways of thinking, feeling, acting, learning, leading, and relating to others builds individual and organizational effectiveness.

Feedback data: In order for the executive and her principal stakeholders to understand, clarify, and commit to appropriate coaching goals, various data collection methods are used to identify key factors and skills required in the organizational context. The appropriate use of interviews and standardized instruments assures accuracy and validity of data gathered from people representing a range of perspectives within the organization.

Qualified coach: Since there is no official licensing of executive coaches, it is important that the organization and executive are protected by knowing what competencies are required at basic and advanced levels for the coaching to be successful.

Trusted coach: A coach earns trust with an executive and an organization by the use of ethical practices and confidentiality. The coach maintains equal status with the executive so as to advise and guide outside of hierarchical constraints.

Coaching Partnership?

The coaching partnership is a win-win systems approach in which all partners in the effort plan the process together, communicate openly, and work cooperatively toward the ultimate accomplishment of overarching organizational objectives.

1. The executives, the coach, and other key stakeholders in the organization collaborate to create a partnership to ensure that the executive's learning advances the organization's needs and critical business mandates.

The executive coach can be either external to the organization or an employee of the organization...

2. The partnership agrees on ground rules, time frames, and specific goals and measures of success.
3. The coaching partnership uses agreed-upon approaches, including:
 - creation of a development plan
 - skill building
 - performance improvement
 - development for future assignments
 - exploration, definition, and implementation of the executive's leadership and the organization's business objectives.

(From Robert Witherspoon and Randall P. White, *Four Essential Ways that Coaching Can Help Executives*, Center for Creative Leadership, 1997.)

4. The ideal coaching process includes:
 - pre-coaching needs analysis and planning
 - contracting
 - data gathering
 - goal setting and development of coaching plan
 - implementation of coaching plan
 - measuring and reporting results
 - transitioning to long-term development.
5. The coach may use the following practices, among others:
 - problem solving and planning
 - rehearsal (role play) and on-the-job practice
 - feedback
 - dialogue
 - clarification of roles, assumptions, and priorities
 - teaching and applying a variety of management and leadership tools
 - referral to other developmental resources.
6. The focus of the partnership is on enhancing the executive's strengths and building the key competencies needed to achieve strategic business objectives.

7. The partnership involves key stakeholders in the coaching process (called “other partners”), including:
 - the executive’s manager
 - senior management
 - Human Resources and related in-house groups, such as Organizational Development or Organizational Effectiveness,
 - peers, including strategic business partners from other organizations
 - direct reports
 - other key people in the executive’s life.
8. Executive coaching is typically paid for by the organization that employs the executive.
9. A successful coaching partnership is guided by ethical guidelines, and proven practices that maintain the welfare of the executive and her coworkers.

Three Levels of Learning

Executive coaching involves three levels of learning:

1. Tactical problem solving
2. Developing leadership capabilities and new ways of thinking and acting that generalize to other situations and roles
3. “Learning how to learn”: developing skills and habits of self-reflection that ensure that learning will continue after coaching ends

The third level is an important and sometimes overlooked goal of coaching. Its aims are to prevent an executive's long-term dependency on his coach and teach habits of learning and self-reflection that will last a lifetime, enabling him to keep developing throughout his career.

What Is Different About Executive Coaching?

As all forms of coaching have grown in popularity over the past few years, it is important to differentiate and define the various forms so that leaders and organizations are aware of what is being purchased and delivered. As all forms of leadership coaching have moved into the mainstream of business, government and non-

profits, it has become more of a commodity, making it harder to distinguish between the different forms of coaching being offered and then sorting out what is form is most effective for the issues presented by the leader and the organization.

The practice of executive coaching may involve many of the coaching approaches and tactics described below. Thus over time, an executive coaching engagement may touch on many aspects of the executive's performance, leadership style, career or personal life issues.

However, two factors always distinguish executive coaching from these other types:

1. To be most effective systemically, it always involves a partnership among executive, coach, and organization.
2. The individual goals of an executive coaching engagement must always link back to and support strategic organizational objectives.

A discussion of some common coaching types follows.

Career Coaching

The career coach helps individuals identify what they want and need from their career, then make decisions and take the needed actions to accomplish their career objectives in balance with the other parts of their lives.

Group Coaching

Group coaches work with individuals in groups. The focus can range from leadership development to career development, stress management to team building. Group coaching combines the benefits of individual coaching with the resources of groups. Individuals learn from each other and the interactions that take place within the group setting. Often the coach observes the group interacting at work or in meetings and then feeds back to the group the dynamics and behaviors that are helping or hindering the team.

Peer Coaching

In this form of coaching a group of peers are trained to explore work issues with each other using the group to ask compelling questions, provide feedback and occasionally advice. The peer group is a stable and committed group. Sometimes a coach facilitates the group.

Performance Coaching

Performance coaches help employees at all levels better understand the requirements of their jobs, the competencies needed to fulfill those requirements, any gaps in their current performance, and opportunities to improve performance. Coaches then work with the employees, their bosses, and others in their workplace to help the employees fill performance gaps and develop plans for further professional development.

New Leader/Onboarding or Transition Coaching

Coaches of individuals assigned or hired into new leadership roles help these leaders accelerate their assimilation into and effectiveness in the new position... The goal of the coaching is to clarify with the leader's key constituents the most important responsibilities of her new role, her deliverables in the first few months of the new assignment, and ways in which she and her team are interdependent with others in the organization.

High-Potential or Developmental Coaching

The coach works with organizations to develop the potential of individuals who have been identified as key to the organization's future or are part of the organization's succession plan. The focus of the coaching may include assessment, competency development, or assistance planning and implementing strategic projects.

Coaching for 360 Debriefing and Development Planning

Organizations that use assessment or 360 feedback processes often utilize coaches to help employees interpret the results of their assessments and feedback. In addition,

coaches work with individuals to establish professional development plans based on feedback, assessment results, and other relevant data.

Targeted Behavioral Coaching

Coaches who provide targeted behavioral coaching help individuals to change specific behaviors or habits or learn new, more effective ways to work and interact with others. This type of coaching often helps individuals who are otherwise very valuable to their organizations modify or change a behavior that is counterproductive.

Legacy Coaching

The legacy coach helps leaders who are retiring from a key role to decide on the legacy they would like to leave behind. The coach also provides counsel on transitioning out of the leadership role.

Succession Coaching

The succession coach helps assess candidates for senior management positions and prepares them for promotion to more senior roles. Such a coach must have specific assessment technology skills. If not, the assessment and coaching would be provided by different people.

Although this type of coaching may be used in any organization that is experiencing growth or turnover in its leadership ranks, it is essential in family businesses in order to maintain the viability of the firm

Presentation/Communication Skills Coaching

This type of coaching helps individuals gain self-awareness about how they are perceived by others and why they are perceived in that way. Clients learn new ways to interact with others. The use of video recording with feedback allows clients to see themselves as others do. The coach may help clients change the way they communicate

and influence others by using a different vocabulary, tonality, and/or body language to convey their intended messages.

Team Coaching

One or more team coaches work with the leader and members of a team to establish their team mission, vision, strategy, and rules of engagement with one another. The team leader and members may be coached individually to build skills in facilitating team meetings and other interactions, build the effectiveness of the group as a high-performance team, and achieve team goals.

Personal/Life Coaching

The personal/life coach helps individuals gain awareness of and clarify their personal goals and priorities, better understand their thoughts, feelings, and options, and take appropriate actions to change their lives, accomplish their goals, and feel more fulfilled. This form of coaching may be integrated into an Executive Coaching engagement but only as part of a strategy approved by the organization.

Health Coaching

This is a fast growing form of coaching being used by insurance companies, health centers and organizations to ensure the well-being of individuals. It can be incorporated into an Executive Coaching engagement.

Overarching Principles for Executive Coaching

Overarching principles are the values that guide the coaching process. These principles provide a compass that the coach, the executive, and other members of the executive's organization will use to set, maintain, and correct their course of action.

1. Systems Perspective

Executive coaching is one of many approaches or types of interventions that can be used to promote organizational and leadership development. The goal of developing a single leader must always be pursued within the larger objective of organizational success. Since executive coaching should be conducted as one of the components of an overall plan for organizational development, executive and coach must both be aware of the larger organizational objectives.

Piecemeal executive coaching activities do not have the impact of full executive coaching unless they are conducted as part of the process described under Guidelines for Practice in this Handbook.

The coach must have expertise in organizational dynamics and business management in order to conduct the coaching with awareness and understanding of the systems issues. Approaching executive coaching from a systems perspective requires the coach to recognize and appreciate the complex organizational dynamics in which the executive operates. The coach ensures a systemic approach through continual awareness of the impact of the coaching process on everyone in the system and vice versa. Accordingly, the coach encourages a shift in the executive's viewpoint, from seeing himself as separate to recognizing his interdependence with other people and processes in the organization. This approach encourages respect for the complexity of organizational life and an ability to penetrate beyond this

complexity to the underlying structures. In effect, the coach helps the executive to see both “the forest and the trees”.

Coaching from a systems perspective enables both the coach and the executive assess development needs. Systems thinking also encourages all partners to appreciate the impact of the executive’s behavioral change on other facets of the organization.

Executive’s Commitments

- Explore changes in your own vision, values, and behaviors.
- Examine how your own behaviors and actions affect the systems in which you operate.
- Work in open exploration with your coach; help your coach to understand the forces of the organizational system.
- During the coaching process, take responsibility for your actions and remain aware of the impact of your behavioral changes on others and the organization as a whole.

Coach’s Commitments

- See the executive, his position, and the organization through multiple lenses and perspectives.
- Maintain an objective and impartial perspective by resisting collusion with the executive or the organization.
- Recognize and appreciate the complexity of the organizational structure in which the executive functions.
- Encourage the executive to explore both long- and short-term views.
- Recognize the interaction of all parts in the whole, especially how change in one of the executive’s behaviors may affect other behaviors and other people.
- Help the executive distinguish between high- and low-leverage changes. Encourage commitment to the highest-leverage actions to achieve results.

Other Partners' Commitments

- ❑ Identify and share organizational information that may help the coach and the executive recognize and understand the context, organizational forces, business-related issues, and financial constraints they must factor into the coaching.
- ❑ Guide the coach regarding organizational changes that may influence the coaching.
- ❑ Be willing to examine and possibly change aspects of the organizational system in order to improve both the executive's and the organization's performance.

2. Results Orientation

Executive coaching is planned and executed with a focus on specific, desired results. The executive, her coach, and the organization begin by deciding on the goals of the coaching. Key members of the coaching partnership sign off on a written coaching plan that specifies expected deadlines for accomplishing each goal. Appropriate measurements are applied to each goal, including follow-up and feedback reports. Specific activities, during the coaching sessions and in between, focus specifically on achieving the agreed-upon goals for the executive and her organization.

Executive's Commitments

- Take responsibility for focusing the coaching on the results you care about most.
- Commit adequate time between coaching sessions to work on the results.
- Prepare well for each coaching session.
- Monitor your own results and communicate with coaching stakeholders about your accomplishments and the gaps that still exist.
- Enlist support to attain results.

Coach's Commitments

- Push the executive and her organization to be specific about desired accomplishments and how results will be measured.
- Structure each coaching session with a results-driven agenda, following up on previous meetings and the actions taken between sessions.
- Facilitate communication between the executive and the organization about what the executive is working on, her progress, and her support needs.
- Plan follow-up meetings to track progress toward coaching goals. Drive these meetings even in the face of the organization's work demands.
- Continually check in with the executive to update coaching goals based on changes in her role, the business environment, and priorities.
- Focus coaching sessions on specific issues and action items that contribute to the coaching goals.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Communicate directly about the goals you expect the executive to achieve.
- Hold the executive and the coach accountable to the agreed-upon goals.
- Give constant feedback, both positive and negative, to help both the executive and coach stay on track.
- Demonstrate your confidence in the executive.
- Follow through with the commitments you make as part of the coaching to provide support, attend meetings, communicate with others, and remove barriers.

3. Business Focus

Executive coaching is primarily concerned with the development of the executive in the context of organizational needs. The coaching objective is to maximize the executive's effectiveness and his contribution to the organization. The coach develops an understanding of the broader business context in which the executive operates, with particular emphasis on key business initiatives directly relevant to the executive. The executive and coach then agree upon specific results that best reflect the organization's business objectives.

Executive's Commitments

- As soon as coaching begins, inform your coach of any relevant information about your company, its business strategy, your key initiatives, and how your role fits into the overall strategy.
- Regularly update your coach on any changes in business direction or outlook that might influence business strategy, your role, or your measures of success. Adapt your development needs as appropriate.
- Take ultimate responsibility for aligning your coaching with the organization's business focus.

Coach's Commitments

- Strive to maximize the executive's contribution to the organization's needs.
- Maintain an ongoing awareness of the executive's business and leadership development objectives, market outlook, competition, products and services, and clients or customers.
- Understand the indicators of success and key business metrics that determine how the organization evaluates the executive's performance and results.
- Be flexible in adapting the executive's development needs to changing business priorities.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Provide the coach with the information necessary to understand the context for the coaching. Such information may include an overview of the organization,

strategic and business planning documents, organizational charts, and key business initiatives.

- ❑ Whenever possible, inform the coach of changes in the organization that may affect the executive, including mergers and acquisitions; restructuring or downsizing; changes in leadership, key roles and relationships; and relevant business initiatives.

4. Partnership

Although executive coaching focuses primarily on individual work with an executive, it is ultimately an organizational intervention. The executive and his coach are obviously at the center of the process, but other stakeholders are also involved. They may include the executive's manager, his direct reports, other executives, external parties as well as Human Resources and those responsible for executive development, training, organizational development,. The time commitment and level of involvement will vary for each stakeholder. However, for the coaching outcome to be of the greatest benefit for the organization as a whole, all stakeholders must see themselves as partners in the coaching process.

Executive's Commitments

- Assume ownership of your learning. Use your coach as a consultant to help you maximize your unique learning style.
- Be forthright about what is and isn't working in the coaching process.
- Engage wholeheartedly in the agreed-upon coaching assignments.
- Take required actions for learning, and reflect on the results.
- Welcome other members of the partnership into your coaching process and solicit their advice, feedback, and support.

Coach's Commitments

- Involve stakeholders in identifying goals for the executive's coaching.
- Communicate openly about the progress of the coaching with the executive and other stakeholders (within the limits of agreed-upon confidentiality).
- Involve the partners in appropriate coaching activities.

Other Partners' Commitments

- View the coach as a partner with the organization, working to increase both organizational and executive learning.

- ❑ Provide feedback, within the confines of confidentiality agreements, to both the coach and the executive in the initial data-gathering phase and throughout the coaching.
- ❑ Invest in a successful outcome by becoming familiar with and consistently applying the overarching principles and guidelines set out in this Handbook.

5. Competence

Because executives have such high levels of responsibility within their companies, executive coaching requires highly skilled and experienced professional coaches. These coaches maintain high levels of competence and exercise careful judgment in determining how best to serve their clients' needs, choosing the most appropriate methods from their range of expertise.

We believe that competence of an executive coach is not determined by any arbitrary academic degree or coaching certification (although many such degrees or certifications may represent completion of education, training, and objective evaluation on some of the following relevant topics and capabilities). Rather, effective executive coaches are knowledgeable and competent as specified in the competency model contained in this handbook, starting on page 48.

Executive coaches recognize the limitations of their expertise and provide only those services for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience. They constantly strive to increase their competence through continuing education and staying up to date with best practices in coaching.

Executive's Commitments

- Identify your own criteria for a coach, including style, training, and specific areas of competence, expertise, and experience.
- Be willing to work with partners in your organization to identify a coach appropriate for your needs and the organization's needs.
- Take an active role in your own development by providing feedback to the coach on how the coaching is progressing and what gaps still exist.
- Communicate with stakeholders of your coaching about progress and results.
- Provide your organization and your coach with feedback, both positive and negative, about the effectiveness of the coach and the coaching process.

Coach's Commitments

- Consistently operate at the highest level of competence.
- Accurately represent to clients your training, experience, areas of expertise, and limitations.
- Understand the requirements of each coaching engagement. Be objective and flexible in choosing methods to meet these requirements.
- Be aware of your limitations; decline assignments that are beyond your experience, knowledge, capability, or interest, or where there is not a good match between you and the executive.
- Maintain a network of contacts with other qualified professionals so that you may refer clients when you are not the best possible resource.
- Acquire a thorough knowledge of your client organization's core business.
- Extend your knowledge and skills through continuing education and other professional development activities.
- Properly apply psychological and organizational assessment techniques, tests, or instruments. Use only those for which you are qualified or certified.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Maintain high standards in screening and recommending executive coaches.
- Select coaches based on their competence and fit with the executive's and the client organization's needs.
- Monitor the effectiveness of coaching in the organization and provide feedback to both the coaches and the executives.
- Evaluate the competency of coaches and their results to determine their future use in your organization.
- If you are responsible for providing coaching referrals or information to your organization, keep current on best coaching practices.

6. Integrity

Upon beginning executive coaching, the executive is placing significant trust in the coach and other partners involved in the coaching process. He is allowing himself to be vulnerable and open. To ensure that he remains receptive to feedback, new ideas, and learning, the organization, coach, and other stakeholders must establish and maintain a psychologically safe and respectful environment.

The relationship between the executive and his coach is sensitive and often private. To maintain this relationship, all stakeholders must be clear and accurate in their presentation of issues, organizational information, coaching goals, and ground rules for confidentiality. All partners must adhere to clearly articulated guidelines and rules of engagement. Breaches of trust or actions that run counter to agreements and guidelines are extremely serious, especially if the executive suffers negative consequences such as a loss of reputation, income, or relationships. All parties must therefore function at the highest levels of integrity and candor when involved in executive coaching activities.

Executive's Commitments

- Trust your coach and the coaching process once you are assured of appropriate safeguards. Remain open, willing to learn, and appropriately vulnerable.
- Take an active role in establishing appropriate guidelines for your coaching.
- Adhere to agreements of confidentiality, anonymity, and information sharing not only about you, but also about everyone involved.
- Work within the coaching contract and its learning goals, unless all parties revise these goals. (For example, do not treat a developmental coaching contract as a job-search opportunity.)
- Be honest and candid with your coach about you and your situation.
- Follow up on your commitments.
- Provide your coach and the organization with forthright and constructive feedback about the coach.

Coach's Commitments

- Develop and adhere to a set of professional guidelines, especially in the areas of confidentiality, conflict of interest, and expertise.
- Abide by the organization's existing values, ethical practices, confidentiality and proprietary agreements, business practices, and Human Resource policies.
- Honor the relationship you have established with both the executive and the organization, seeking resolution when conflicts arise.
- Strictly apply existing standards for dealing with personal data, or provide such standards if the organization does not have any.
- With the executive, plan for organizational requests for information about him and his coaching progress, including status updates, feedback data, and input for reviews.
- Act in the executive's best interests and well-being.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Provide coaching guidelines, standards, and business practices that meet the needs of all parties.
- Present your perspective accurately on the need for coaching, the executive's situation, the organizational context, performance concerns, and organizational goals for coaching.
- Inform all parties if the goals or information you have provided change significantly during the course of the coaching.
- Establish and adhere to standards for the learning contract, including purpose and objectives, timelines, scope and types of assessment, measures of success, identification and roles of stakeholders, confidentiality agreements, use of personal and coaching information, and distribution of information.
- Establish a problem-resolution process for coaching issues, especially ethical concerns.
- Provide both executive and coach with ongoing feedback and support.
- Function within the learning and business agreements. Avoid putting the coach or executive in difficult positions by requesting feedback or personal data, input for performance reviews, or promotion discussions.

7. Judgment

Executive coaching is a balance of science, art, and expert improvisation. No matter how many guidelines are developed and followed, successful coaching requires that you continually step back, evaluate the situation, weigh the options, and apply good judgment. An executive's influence is determined not only by her attributes and skills, but also by how others perceive her, plus her match to the needs, circumstances, and culture of the organization. All coaching partners offer different perspectives which, combined with good judgment, provide the executive with a dynamic learning experience.

There is no recipe for the perfect coaching experience. Along the way, unpredictable challenges, conflicts, and opportunities arise. Whether these situations help or hinder the executive's development depends upon the judgment stakeholders apply in an ever-changing work environment.

Executive's Commitments

- Maintain an open mind and be willing to change your mind when appropriate.
- Focus on the greater good.
- Weigh all perspectives.
- Ask for help.
- Be flexible.
- Try new approaches.
- Accept the credit and blame when they are yours. Admit your strengths and weaknesses to be able to deal with them effectively.
- Make decisions by balancing hard data with intuition.
- Be honest and direct.
- Take reasonable risks.

Coach's Commitments

- Always maintain a high level of professionalism.
- Do not mix personal and professional relationships that could bias your judgment in a coaching situation.
- Avoid any activities that could result in a conflict of interest.
- Build and maintain a communication network with all coaching partners.
- Listen attentively, with an open mind.
- Be honest and direct about your intentions and points of view.
- Prevent misunderstandings by explaining your activities beforehand whenever they could be misunderstood.
- Do nothing that could be misinterpreted as an impropriety within the standards of the executive's organization.
- Tailor your approach to the priorities and preferences of the executive and the coaching partnership.
- Bring the members of the partnership together to facilitate decision-making.
- Hear all relevant perspectives and mediate conflicts.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Focus on the development and success of the organization and the executive.
- Be honest and direct about your goals and perspectives on the organization and the executive.
- Consider all available information before making a judgment.
- Be open-minded.
- Be flexible. Support the executive and coach in following through with the decisions they make within the coaching process.

Guidelines for Practice

These guidelines provide procedural help for all partners in the coaching process. They define the components of the coaching and outline the commitments that each partner makes.

1. Managing Confidentiality

The executive and other members of the organization must be able to open up and share information with the coach and one another without fear that the information will be passed on without their approval. Because each coaching situation is unique, it is important for all partners to develop a formal, written confidentiality agreement before the coaching begins. This agreement specifies what information will and will not be shared, in what circumstances, with whom, and how. The agreement helps all coaching partners remain sensitive to confidentiality issues from each others' points of view. Coaching partners should communicate with other members of the partnership before sharing any information with anyone outside the partnership.

Coach's Commitments

- ❑ **Guidelines:** Work within the proprietary and confidentiality guidelines noted in the organization's financial, legal, and business contracts and documents.
- ❑ **Organizational information:** In general, within the boundaries of the law, keep all organizational information confidential unless it is otherwise available to the public.

Exception to this guideline: You may be required to reveal to the appropriate representatives of the organization, and possibly to legal authorities, any information regarding illegal or unethical improprieties or circumstances that pose a physical or emotional threat to any individual, group, or organization.

- ❑ **Information about the executive:** Do not share with anyone except the executive himself any details regarding that executive unless members of the coaching partnership have agreed otherwise.

Exception to this guideline: You are often obligated to provide the organization with a summary of your conclusions on the executive's current and potential

ability to serve in his role. Share this summary with the executive and get his input as appropriate. Obtain a detailed agreement from all partners on what this summary will and will not include before the coaching begins.

- ❑ **Feedback from others about the executive:** You may often get feedback, usually under promise of anonymity, from members of the organization or other people familiar with the executive. Members of the coaching partnership should agree on the anonymity and confidentiality of such information before it is collected. You should also obtain agreement, before coaching begins, on exactly how anonymously the feedback will be reported: no identification, identification by category of person (work group, level, etc.) or by specific name. You are obliged to the people from whom you obtain this feedback to be clear up front about the terms of this anonymity and confidentiality and to work strictly within these terms.
- ❑ Ensure that no confidential information coming out of the coaching process is shared electronically unless access to that information is controlled.
- ❑ Ensure that all coaching notes, assessments and reports are either destroyed at the end of the engagement or that there is a plan to store information in a secure manner. Coaching documents do not have the confidentiality provisions that doctors, therapists or lawyers have.

Executive's Commitments

- ❑ Respond to feedback from others in non-defensive ways, without second-guessing who might have said what or retaliating for feedback that is difficult to hear.
- ❑ Before coaching begins, work with all partners on how the confidentiality of each of the following types of your information will be managed. Come to agreement on what will or will not be shared, with whom, by whom, when, in what form, and under what circumstances:
 - assessment results
 - coaching goals
 - job hunting and career aspirations
 - 360-degree feedback
 - performance appraisals
 - interpersonal conflicts
 - details of coaching discussions
 - proprietary or organizationally sensitive information

Other Partners' Commitments

- ❑ Identify an internal resource who can advise coaches and stakeholders on questions of confidentiality and other sensitive topics, and who can help resolve these issues.
- ❑ Keep confidential any information you have learned about the executive unless otherwise agreed before the coaching begins.
- ❑ Ensure that no confidential information coming out of the coaching process is shared electronically unless access to that information is controlled.
- ❑ Before coaching begins, consider how the confidentiality of each of the following types of information will be managed. With the executive and coach, agree on what will or will not be shared, with whom, by whom, when, in what form, and under what circumstances:
 - assessment results
 - coaching goals
 - job hunting and career aspirations
 - 360-degree feedback
 - performance appraisals
 - interpersonal conflicts
 - details of coaching discussions
 - proprietary or organizationally sensitive information

2. Pre-coaching Activities

Certain activities can

- *determine if coaching is appropriate in the first place,
- *help select the most appropriate coach, and
- *prepare both coach and executive for the process.

This important set of behind-the-scenes activities, usually conducted by HR, includes sourcing, selecting, and orienting coaches, consulting with executives on their needs, matching coach to executive, and establishing procedures to satisfy organizational needs. The intent of these pre-coaching activities is to ensure the best possible experience and outcomes for the executive and the organization.

Executive's Commitments

- Consult with appropriate stakeholders to determine if executive coaching is a viable option for you. Consider your organization's overall development focus, your specific learning needs, and the skills and experience of available coaches.
- Conduct exploratory interviews with several coaches before selecting the one who is best for you.
- Determine whether you or other appropriate people in your organization should handle the financial contract.
- Provide your coach with the necessary background information about your organization, specific business documents, and personal information.
- Begin the coaching process with a willingness to learn.

Coach's Commitments

- Participate in the organization's process for selecting, matching, and orienting executive coaches.
- Provide the organization and the executive with requested background information about you and your practice, your rates, business practices, and references.

- Partner with the Human Resources staff and other stakeholders as needed.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Establish business practices and standards for executive coaching.
- Develop a coach selection and orientation process.
- Identify procedures to analyze coaching needs and match the executive with the most appropriate coach.
- Provide feedback to the coaches you do not select.
- Work with the executive to provide guidance and support in determining coaching needs, requirements, and desired outcomes.

3. Contracting

The purpose of contracting in executive coaching is to ensure productive outcomes, clarify roles, prevent misunderstandings, establish learning goals, and define business and interpersonal practices. There are two separate contracts: the Learning Contract and the Business/Legal/Financial Contract.

The Learning Contract includes:

- Purpose and objectives
- Timelines
- Scope and types of assessment
- Schedule and structure of coaching sessions and additional contact.
- Guidelines on interpersonal behaviors between coach and executive, e.g. honesty, openness, and real time feedback.
- Assignments between coaching sessions.
- Milestones
- Measures of success
- Identification and roles of stakeholders
- Confidentiality agreements
- Guidelines for the use of personal and coaching information
- Guidelines for the communication and distribution of information

Business/Legal/Financial Contracts include:

- Purpose and objectives
- Executive coaching standards and guidelines
- Organizationally sponsored proprietary and confidentiality statements
- Guidelines for relevant business practices
- Total costs of service
- Who is paying for coaching services
- Fee and payment schedules
- Guidelines for billing procedures

- Agreements on expense reimbursements
- Confirmation of the coach's professional liability insurance

Executive's Commitments

- Actively participate in establishing and monitoring the contracts.
- Adhere to the learning contract and use it to gauge progress and success.

Coach's Commitments

- Incorporate your own standards and guidelines in the organizations' contract.
- Actively use the learning contract to plan and deliver coaching and to assess progress and results.
- Negotiate the terms of the contracts in good faith or have the appropriate representative(s) from your practice do so. Comply with the terms of the contract in full, or renegotiate as necessary.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Establish and disseminate standards for learning contracts in your organization.
- Expedite the contracting and payment process in your organization in support of the executive and the coach.

4. Assessment

The assessment phase of executive coaching provides both the coach and the executive with important information upon which to base a development plan. The assessment is customized, taking into account the needs of the executive and the norms and culture of the organization. The coach can select from among a wide variety of assessment instruments, including personality, learning, interest, and leadership style indicators. Observing the executive in action in her usual work setting provides assessment data, as does interviewing her, her peers, direct reports, manager, and other stakeholders. Another tool used is a standardized 360-degree assessment instrument.

Assessments are sometimes used without follow up coaching. This process can be appropriate for gathering data, receiving feedback, and creating a development plan for an executive. It is often conducted without an executive coaching partnership as recommended in this Handbook. At minimum, a qualified coach should be engaged to deliver the assessment feedback and help the executive draft a development plan. Without follow up coaching, however, it can be difficult for the executive to implement change in herself or in the system.

If coaching is then added to help an executive follow through on development plans, it may be necessary to include others in further data gathering, review, and goal setting.

In addition to assessing the executive, it is also valuable to assess the team that the executive leads. The highest level executives may also want organizational assessments. Such additional assessments are an important part of the systems perspective of executive coaching. By understanding the team and organizational environment, the executive and her coach can better determine what to change and how to achieve that change.

Additional assessments include such variables as the organizational culture, team communication, organizational trust, quality, employee satisfaction, efficiency, and profitability. Not all executive coaches are qualified to administer such assessments.

Executive's Commitments

- Maintain an open attitude toward feedback and other assessment results, considering all information as the perceptions of others.
- Invest the time required to expedite the assessment phase.
- Partner with the coach to identify situations, such as meetings and events, which might provide helpful data on you and your organization.
- Ask questions and digest feedback to make the best use of assessment information.
- Refrain from immediate changes and public reactions to the feedback until you've had a chance to absorb and consider the data.
- Draft a grateful response to assessment respondents, sharing general themes and your plans to address development needs.

Coach's Commitments

- Be knowledgeable in a broad range of assessment methodologies.
- Alert the executive to the strengths and limitations of the assessment process and tools.
- Administer only those instruments for which you have been fully trained/certified or otherwise adequately prepared.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the executive by protecting the assessment data.
- Provide a safe, supportive environment and time in which to deliver assessment feedback.
- Allow time for the executive to absorb the feedback and discourage immediate changes and public reactions to the feedback.
- Help the executive use her assessment data to create a development plan.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Help the executive expedite the assessment phase, i.e. encourage respondents to engage fully and on time.
- Respect the agreed-upon level of confidentiality for executive coaching data.
- Provide information about the executive and the organization.
- Partner with the coach and executive to identify ways for the coach to directly observe the executive and the organization.

5. Goal Setting

Executive coaching is driven by specific goals agreed upon by all members of the coaching partnership. Such goals are based on feedback data that identify skills, behaviors and knowledge that the executive needs to develop to achieve specific business results. Initial goals are established when coaching begins and are revised or refined as coaching progresses. Based on whether they should be achieved within weeks, months, or over a longer time period, goals can be divided into short-, mid-, and long-term targets.

Goal achievement is measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Executive's Commitments

- Collaborate with and listen to your stakeholders to become aware of how others perceive your needs for change and development.
- Be honest about your own priorities for coaching.
- Clarify specifically what you will need to do so that others perceive you as achieving your goals.
- Invest time in the coaching and in on-the-job efforts to achieve the goals.

Coach's Commitments

- Facilitate collaboration between the executive and his stakeholders to identify and agree upon coaching goals.
- Accept responsibility only for coaching activities that are based on specific, measurable goals.
- Help members of the coaching partnership gather valid and reliable data as a basis for establishing goals and measuring their achievement.
- Document the coaching goals and help the executive communicate them to all partners.
- Assess coaching progress and adjust goals based on interim results and changing priorities.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Be honest and direct about your goals for the coaching.
- Collaborate with the executive and other partners to agree on specific, measurable, achievable, challenging, time-bound, and practical goals.
- Base the goals on accurate about the executive's performance and organizational priorities.
- Provide ongoing feedback to both executive and coach on the executive's progress toward his goals.
- Support the executive's efforts to achieve his goals.
- Allow the executive to take the agreed-upon time to achieve his goals before changing his responsibilities or the resources he needs.

6. Coaching

The quality of the coaching relationship is a key element of success. The coach creates a safe environment in which the executive can feel comfortable taking the risks necessary to learn and develop. Drawing from a broad knowledge base and a solid repertoire of learning tools, the coach offers guidance and activities that help the executive meet her learning goals. Conversations explore the executive's current work situation to find practical, business-focused "learning lab" opportunities.

The coaching activities are based on principles of adult learning: awareness, action, and reflection. Using data gathered from the assessment phase of the process, the coach engages the executive in discussion and activities designed to help the executive:

- enhance self-awareness of the implications of her typical behaviors
- learn skills, build competencies, change behaviors, and achieve results
- Reflect on the effects of skill improvement and ways to further improve skills and behaviors.

Learning tools and activities may include, but are not limited to, purposeful conversation, rehearsal and role-plays, videotaping, supportive confrontation and inquiry, relevant reading, work analysis and planning, and strategic planning.

After the assessment is complete and goals are established, additional forms of coaching or development besides executive coaching may be required as part of the executive's learning. These types of coaching and development activities include, among others, career coaching, management development training, personal coaching, presentation skills training, and coaching on dressing and grooming. When the coach has expertise in these areas and they fall within the scope of the learning contract, the coach may provide the assistance directly. If the coach is not qualified, or the additional coaching is beyond the scope of the learning contract, the

coach may make appropriate referrals or work with other members of the organization to obtain the additional help.

Executive's Commitments

- Maintain an open attitude toward experimenting with new perspectives and behaviors.
- Be vulnerable and take risks.
- Focus on your growth within the context of your current and future organizational role.
- Apply learning gained through coaching to your day-to-day work.
- Seek feedback from others in the organization about the results of your efforts.
- Provide feedback to your coach about the helpfulness of the coaching.

Coach's Commitments

- Adhere to the standards and guidelines for practice outlined in this Handbook.
- Maintain the coaching focus on the executive's learning goals.
- Prepare relevant action items for all coaching meetings.
- Role-model effective leadership practices.
- Apply adult learning principles during coaching.
- Participate actively in all meetings with the executive and other stakeholders.
- Offer truthful and relevant feedback.
- Create an environment that supports exploration and change.
- Make appropriate referrals to other resources when you are not the best source for additional assistance.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Maintain a supportive and patient attitude toward the change process.
- Provide feedback to both the executive and the coach on progress and concerns.

- ❑ Offer to mentor, coach, role model, and support the executive from your own perspective within the organization.
- ❑ Assist the executive and coach in finding additional resources within or outside the organization when help beyond the scope of the coaching or the coach's area of expertise is needed.

7. Transitioning to Long-Term Development

A successful executive coaching process serves as a catalyst for the executive's long-term development. Near the end of the coaching contract, the executive and his coach develop a plan for the executive to continue his development. Such a plan identifies future areas of focus and action steps. The coach may also recommend a range of internal and external resources relevant to the executive's long-term development needs.

In most cases, transitioning includes handing off the development plan to the executive's manager or another stakeholder who agrees to support and monitor future progress in partnership with the executive. The coach, executive, and other stakeholders incorporate into the long-term plan a regular review of progress toward objectives or goal reassessment.

Executive's Commitments

- When the coaching process is complete, discuss with your coach, how well you feel your development needs have been addressed.
- Identify any areas where gaps might still exist or further progress could be made.
- Identify areas that may become more critical in your anticipated future roles.
- Participate in formulating a long-term development plan identifying specific areas of focus and action steps.
- Identify a manager or other organizational stakeholder who will take responsibility for supporting your future development.
- Hold yourself accountable for adhering to your action plans, including a regular review of progress with your manager or other stakeholder.
- Provide feedback to your coach on his effectiveness,
- Provide your organization with a forthright assessment of the coach's capabilities and organizational fit.

Coach's Commitments

- Use your knowledge and expertise to guide the executive and other stakeholders in developing a long-range plan that targets areas of focus and action steps.
- Encourage commitment from the executive's manager or other stakeholders to his future development, including regular progress reviews
- Recommend internal and external means of development that best fit the needs of the executive and the organization.

Other Partners' Commitments

- Support the executive's future development, including a long-term development plan.
- Facilitate internal and external means of development for the executive including, but not limited to, rotational assignments, stretch assignments, mentoring opportunities, task force leadership or participation, and internal or external seminars or courses.
- Share constructive feedback about the executive's progress toward development objectives.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the coach and the coaching process for future use in the organization.
- Provide feedback to the coach on his effectiveness.

Core Competencies of the Executive Coach^{© 2005}

By

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Judy Otto, and Lew Stern*

Why a Competency Model?

What are the essential competencies of the effective executive coach? Over the past 15 years a number of writersⁱ and coaching organizations have broached this issue. Unfortunately, commercial concerns and a lack of research in the field make it difficult to resolve this question. Some organizations like the International Coach Federation and coaching training companies have developed their own competency models. Most opt for simplicity and focus on steps in the coaching process along with key behaviors. Because we are non-commercial, we opted for a very comprehensive approach.ⁱⁱ We wanted to lay out the detail so users can delineate the competencies needed for selection, assessment, development, and evaluation of executive coaches. Also, this model has been and will continue to be used to design curriculum for coaching programs in academia as well as commercial companies. It is also intended to be a resource to companies hiring external executive coaches. As with all the work of the Executive Coaching Forum, we want to stimulate dialogue and research on this important topic.

Defining Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is a one-on-one, customized development process benefiting the leader and his/her organization. Working with goals defined by both the leader and the organization, a qualified and trusted coach uses various coaching methods and feedback data to develop the leader's capacity for current and future leadership. This coaching is guided by the coaching partnership (leader, organization, and coach) to achieve maximum impact.

Competency Descriptions Overview

Drawing on our own experiences as executive coaches, managers of coaching in organizations, coaching researchers and educators, we began a process of attempting to articulate the knowledge, skills, tasks, and attributes of competencies for coaches. We then noted the basic or foundational level as well as an advanced perspective for each competency or attribute.ⁱⁱⁱ In doing so, we are trying to capture the premise that individual coaches will demonstrate a varying level of effectiveness within each competency as a function of their natural gifts and their current level of development. A practicing executive coach needs to demonstrate all competencies at a foundational level while many situations demand an advanced level as well.

The Core Knowledge Competencies

The practice of Executive Coaching demands a broad and deep array of knowledge including **Psychological Knowledge, Business Acumen, Organizational and Coaching Knowledge**. Developing mastery in these content areas takes place over one's career.

Psychological Knowledge: knowledge of psychological theories and concepts relevant to the practice of executive coaching as well as social intelligence or emotional intelligence.

Basic	Advanced
<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality theories • Models of human motivation • Adult development theories, including moral, intellectual, emotional, relational, and spiritual development • Models of adult learning • Models of career development • Models of personal and behavioral change • Work/life balance • Stress management techniques • Social psychology and how social factors impact individual and group behavior • How to identify individuals in need of psychological or medical referral • Models of emotional intelligence • The role of gender differences in adulthood • Models and methods of 360 degree feedback • Models of personal and leadership style (e.g., MBTI, DISC, Birkman) 	<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The psychology of transitions between developmental stages • Models of substance abuse • Clinical diagnoses and how they play out in workplace (e.g., narcissism) • Conflict resolution and mediation • Family systems theory • Abnormal psychology/ psychopathology • Psychological assessment methods and tools (e.g., 16PF, Strong Interest Inventory, Firo B)

Business Acumen: knowledge of how different types of businesses work, their functional areas, business models, industry knowledge along with specifics about a given company.

Basic	Advanced
<p data-bbox="363 457 621 493"><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul data-bbox="253 499 743 1770" style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Business practices and concepts</i> • <i>Basic financial concepts (e.g., income and balance sheets)</i> • <i>Business functions and their interdependencies</i> • <i>The strategic planning process and its relationship with team and individual goal setting</i> • <i>Current information technologies</i> • <i>The role of information technology in business (e.g. E.R.P., enterprise management)</i> • <i>Process improvement technologies</i> • <i>Global capitalism and global firms</i> • <i>The differences between regulated and non-regulated businesses</i> • <i>The differences between for-profit and not-for-profit businesses</i> • <i>The key leadership roles of organizations (e.g. COO, CFO, CTO, CEO, Executive Director, Board Chair, etc.)</i> • <i>Knowledge of current business events, issues and trends</i> • <i>Management principles and processes</i> • <i>Human resource management</i> 	<p data-bbox="950 457 1208 493"><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul data-bbox="839 499 1347 1260" style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Merger and acquisition issues</i> • <i>Several specific industries and their technologies</i> • <i>The use and abuse of technology</i> • <i>Leading edge business practices</i> • <i>Governance structures and practices and how they interface with business operations</i> • <i>Management of the supply chain/network</i> • <i>Product lifecycles</i> • <i>Government regulations (e.g. compliance, approval, and other governmental regulations and processes)</i> • <i>How boards operate in relationship to senior management</i> • <i>Re-engineering and downsizing</i>

Organizational Knowledge: understanding the context of organization(s), organizational structures, systems, processes, and how to assess all of these elements of the organization

Basic	Advanced
<p data-bbox="363 401 620 436"><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul data-bbox="253 443 760 1793" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="253 443 760 594">• Basic organizational structures, systems/processes e.g. matrix functional, divisional and associated behavioral patterns <li data-bbox="253 600 760 669">• Organizational assessment and diagnosis <li data-bbox="253 676 760 793">• Organizational design and development principles and practices <li data-bbox="253 800 760 917">• The impact and role of organizational cultures and subcultures <li data-bbox="253 924 760 1075">• The phases of team development and the characteristics of effective team leadership <li data-bbox="253 1081 760 1117">• Models of leadership <li data-bbox="253 1123 760 1192">• Leadership development programs and processes <li data-bbox="253 1199 760 1268">• Organization development methodologies <li data-bbox="253 1274 760 1323">• Organizational systems theory <li data-bbox="253 1329 760 1446">• The nature and role of organizational politics, power and influence <li data-bbox="253 1453 760 1522">• Organizational change management theories/practices <li data-bbox="253 1528 760 1564">• Consulting theory and practices <li data-bbox="253 1570 760 1640">• The role of ethics in business and in organizational consulting <li data-bbox="253 1646 760 1715">• Models of the learning organization <li data-bbox="253 1722 760 1793">• Models of succession and leadership transition 	<p data-bbox="948 401 1205 436"><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul data-bbox="837 443 1344 1352" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="837 443 1344 560">• The processes of executive talent management and succession planning <li data-bbox="837 567 1344 758">• The tasks, challenges, and success factors associated with executives coming into new roles or assignments (“on-boarding”) <li data-bbox="837 764 1344 997">• The nature of and processes associated with organizational learning (e.g. knowledge transfer, knowledge management, information sharing, etc.) <li data-bbox="837 1003 1344 1121">• The distinctive characteristics of family- owned and family-operated enterprises <li data-bbox="837 1127 1344 1197">• The processes associated with organizational design principles <li data-bbox="837 1203 1344 1320">• The practices associated with changes in organizational designs <li data-bbox="837 1327 1344 1352">• Diversity management issues

Coaching Knowledge: knowledge of theory, research, and practice in the field of executive coaching

Basic	Advanced
<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The history of executive coaching ▪ Executive coaching models and theories ▪ The definitions of coaching and executive coaching as a specialty practice ▪ Seven overarching principles for executive coaching: systems perspective, results orientation, business focus, partnership, competence, integrity, and judgment ⁱⁱ ▪ Seven guidelines for practicing the different phases of executive coaching by the coach, the executive, and the executive's organization: managing confidentiality, pre-coaching activities, contracting, assessment, goal setting, coaching, and transitioning to long-term development ⁱⁱ ▪ The underlying principles and approaches of the different types of coaching and how they differ from and/or can be incorporated into executive coaching ▪ The distinction between executive coaching and other models of coaching 	<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evolving trends in the practice of executive coaching ▪ How coaching models can be developed and customized to emerging needs and trends

Coaching Knowledge (Continued)

Basic	Advanced
<p data-bbox="203 275 461 310"><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="253 354 932 468">▪ The role of manager as coach and the impact of executive coaching on the development of that capability <li data-bbox="253 474 902 588">▪ The roles coaches can play and when and how to effectively apply them (e.g. trainer, mentor, advisor, etc.) <li data-bbox="253 594 919 745">▪ The differences between executive coaching and other helping methods for executives (e.g. counseling, consulting, therapy, mentoring, etc.) <li data-bbox="253 751 911 865">▪ How coaching theories and methods apply to various situations of individual coaching clients <li data-bbox="253 871 911 984">▪ How to tailor the coaching process to adapt it to the unique needs and circumstances of the coachee and the organization <li data-bbox="253 991 867 1062">▪ Measurement of coaching outcomes and process <li data-bbox="253 1068 870 1140">▪ Research findings on executive coaching (past and emerging) <li data-bbox="253 1146 911 1182">▪ The core competencies of executive coaches <li data-bbox="253 1188 857 1302">▪ The wide variety of available coaching resources (books, articles, internet sites, tools, etc.) <li data-bbox="253 1308 911 1421">▪ How to maintain and implement a continuous plan for one's own professional development 	

Coaching Tasks and Skills

The executive coaching process can be divided into six phases: **Building and Maintaining Coaching Relationships, Contracting; Assessment; Development Planning; Facilitating Development and Change; and Ending Formal Coaching and Transitioning to Long-term Development.** Each of these phases, as outlined below, has a set of tasks and associated skills.

Building and Maintaining Coaching Relationships	
<p>Basic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build and sustain trust ▪ Hold the coachee, his/her boss, and HR accountable ▪ Identify and manage resistance and conflict ▪ Influence with and without authority ▪ Maintain confidentiality on sensitive organizational and individual issues ▪ Hold multiple perspectives ▪ Solicit feedback on one's own performance as the coach ▪ Utilize the coaching relationship as a tool to help the coachee ▪ Maintain the balance of the close coaching relationship and professional boundaries ▪ Make and explain observations about what goes on in the coaching relationship and its similarities and differences to the coachee's other relationships ▪ Appropriately challenge the coachee and deal with the his/her defensiveness without impairing the coaching relationship 	<p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide guidance on diverse cultures and cross-cultural issues ▪ Use earned trust to challenge values, assumptions, and business practices ▪ Work with a diverse group of clients and stakeholders (cultures, races, genders, styles, ethnicity, etc.) ▪ Hold sessions with senior management and Organizational Effectiveness/HR staff to share observations, organizational knowledge, data, and themes relating to leadership and organizational issues.

Contracting	
<p>Basic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate the readiness of the coachee for coaching ▪ Engage all appropriate constituents in goal setting and agenda setting for the coaching (coachee, boss, HR, others) ▪ Obtain commitment and support from all appropriate constituents ▪ Establish guidelines for confidentiality ▪ Establish the boss's and HR's role in the coaching ▪ Facilitate agenda-setting and goal-setting meetings between the coachee, his/her boss and the HR professional ▪ Develop realistic and challenging coaching goals ▪ Set realistic time frames for accomplishing the coaching goals ▪ Re-contract when appropriate ▪ Tailor the coaching process to the unique needs of the coachee and organization 	<p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Play multiple roles without crossing key boundaries or compromising the guidelines for practice ▪ Challenge the coachee's commitment ▪ Contract with the boss for feedback to him/her ▪ Negotiate and write three forms of coaching contracts: the learning contract with the coachee, his/her boss and HR professional; the business/legal/financial contract with the coachee's organization; and the personal/relationship contract with the coachee ⁱⁱ ▪ Manage times of low and high demand in one's own coaching practice so as not to negatively impact client service

Assessment	
<p>Basic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design assessment plans ▪ Administer and interpret 360 degree feedback instruments and measures of personal and leadership style (e.g., MBTI, DISC) ▪ Interview the coachee and his/her key constituents ▪ Unobtrusively observe/shadow the coachee in his/her work environment ▪ Gather data from multiple sources, aggregate them and present the results and implications in a useful format ▪ Use the results of assessment tools and instruments to evaluate the coachee's strengths, weaknesses, abilities, tendencies, preferences, behavior patterns, emotions, thinking styles, opportunities, constraints, and other factors important to the coaching ▪ Use the results of assessment tools, instruments and other methods to evaluate the coachee's organizational context (e.g. characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, constraints, etc.) ▪ Refer when appropriate to Employee Assistance Programs, career counselors, or other specialists for the administration, scoring, and interpreting of assessments ▪ Identify the coachee's learning style 	<p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design and develop 360-degree assessments: surveys, interviews, observations, and focus groups ▪ Administer and interpret assessment instruments in the service of the coaching contract (personality, developmental stage, ability, interest, culture, climate, efficiency, quality, etc.) ▪ Interview the coachee's spouse and family ▪ Design and implement systems and tools for the measurement and evaluation of coaching interventions ▪ Conduct specialized assessments: customer needs and satisfaction, benchmarking, team effectiveness, etc.

Development Planning

Basic

- Partner with Human Resources
- Conduct debriefing and feedback sessions with the coachee of the assessments and 360-degree results
- Establish specific coaching goals (behavioral, cognitive, skills, business, relationships, etc.)
- Help the coachee design and create action plans and a coaching time table
- Help the coachee, his/her boss, and HR to review assessment results within agreed-upon guidelines for confidentiality and translate those results into actionable coaching strategies
- Establish qualitative and quantitative measures of results for the coaching goals
- Determine what can be achieved in coaching and recommend appropriate training and other methods to achieve other developmental goals
- Quickly identify the need for, and make referrals to other helping professionals
- Gain commitment for the coachee's self-management of coaching action plans
- Help the boss to provide useful feedback and to coach the coachee as his/her manager

Advanced

- Involve other development resources in coaching interventions (mentors, trainers, consultants, therapists, physicians, etc.)
- Continually build and manage a network of referral sources to other relevant professional services and providers

Facilitating Development and Change	
<p>Basic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take the coachee's point of view and offer alternative points of view ▪ Show accurate empathy ▪ Listen actively and respectfully ▪ Communicate clearly, concisely, and directly ▪ Provide constructive feedback ▪ Observe the coachee's behavior in coaching sessions and provide real-time feedback ▪ Offer specific strategies and suggested behavior changes ▪ Demonstrate and serve as a role model in the coaching for new work methods and ways of communicating ▪ Create and raise awareness ▪ Design assignments that encourage experimentation, reflection, and learning ▪ Ask powerful questions ▪ Support and confront appropriately ▪ Challenge assumptions ▪ Solicit solutions ▪ Swiftly translate ideas into action plans ▪ Develop management, executive and leadership skills ▪ Provide learning resources as needed (reading, models, etc.) ▪ Involve the boss as the ongoing coach ▪ Measure and monitor the coaching process and results ▪ Address new issues and learning opportunities as they arise 	<p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deal with multiple parts of the coachee's life that affect his/her job performance and satisfaction (spiritual, physical, emotional, etc.) ▪ Spontaneously design and improvise unique combinations of approaches to meet the special needs of individual executives ▪ Incorporate other specialty knowledge and techniques in the coaching intervention (financial analysis, market analysis, innovation, total quality management, group process consultation, family businesses, etc.) ▪ Use video, audio, and other feedback techniques in the coaching ▪ Help to design organizational structures ▪ Identify opportunities for organizational improvements ▪ Share knowledge and expertise appropriately to help the coachee develop solutions for complex business challenges ▪ Mediate interpersonal and inter-group conflicts

Facilitating Development and Change (Continued)	
<p>Basic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be aware of and recognize one's own part as the coach in the coachee's problem or situation through various methods (e.g., peer supervision, consultation, etc.) ▪ Coach the boss to better support the coachee and his/her business and coaching objectives 	<p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use stress management and relaxation techniques ▪ Manage and supervise other coaches and members of the executive's organization in the application of the guidelines for coaching practice ▪ Identify coaching research needs and design and conduct research to fill those needs ▪ Present and share knowledge of and experience with coaching with other professionals through publications, conferences, seminars, and other vehicles

Ending Formal Coaching & Transitioning to long-term development	
<p>Basic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the appropriate ending point in the formal coaching process • Initiate discussion with the coachee, his/her manager, and others in the organization about bringing the formal coaching to an end • Work with the coachee to identify ongoing developmental supports and resources in his/her environment and to establish a transition/ending plan • Work with the coachee to establish post-coaching developmental goals and a plan for meeting those goals • Work towards and encourage the coachee's independence • Encourage the coachee to continue learning on his/her own • Conduct formal ending meeting with the coachee, his/her manager, and HR • Leave open the possibility for future coaching as the need arises and within the guidelines of the coaching contract 	<p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collect feedback on personal effectiveness as a coach to inform one's own coaching practice ▪ Work with emotional issues that may arise in the coachee concerning ending the formal coaching ▪ Work with emotional issues that may arise in oneself as the coach concerning ending of the formal coaching ▪ Encourage the coachee to join with others in peer coaching relationships

Attributes and Abilities

A number of underlying attributes and abilities facilitate effectiveness as a Coach especially the following nine categories: **Mature Self-confidence; Positive Energy; Assertiveness; Interpersonal Sensitivity; Openness and Flexibility; Goal Orientation; Partnering and Influence; Continuous Learning and Development; and Integrity.**

Mature Self-confidence	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears comfortable with himself/herself • Shows maturity; demonstrates that she or he has gained wisdom from personal and professional experience • Shows confidence; places an appropriate value on his or her own abilities and perspectives • Shows humility; demonstrates awareness that success usually follows from the efforts of a group or team of other individuals, not solely from one's own efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a sense of comfort around senior management or others in power; views him/herself as a peer to senior managers. • Demonstrates courage; is willing to take on situations that may involve significant risk • Thinks independently; considers options or perspectives that may go against prevailing views • Has experienced and learned from a variety of personal and work challenges

Positive Energy	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows energy, optimism and enthusiasm • Effectively manages his/her emotions • Demonstrates resilience; bounces back after mistakes and failures • Demonstrates an appropriate sense of humor • Helps the coachee to appreciate her or his strengths and ability to overcome barriers • Helps the coachee to imagine new possibilities • Conveys hopefulness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses humor to defuse tense situations • Manages her or his own stress in unusual coaching situations so as not to allow it to interfere with the coaching process or relationship

Assertiveness	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asserts him/herself and appropriately says “no” to set limits • Confronts coachees and others who are not following through on commitments • Speaks directly with others even when discussing difficult or sensitive issues • Addresses conflict with others directly and constructively • Communicates in ways that reflect respect for one’s own worth and the worth of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to challenge or confront even the most senior leaders

Interpersonal Sensitivity	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows empathy with others • Is sensitive to how her or his style impacts others or fits with the needs of others • Demonstrates an interest in people; shows curiosity about the lives, goals, experiences, and perspectives of others • Shows compassion and demonstrates concern for the needs and emotional well-being of others • Demonstrates tact; gives difficult or critical information to others in a respectful and supportive fashion • Learns and remembers other people's most important concerns • Uses active listening techniques (e.g., maintaining full attention, periodically summarizing, being non-judgmental) to reflect and acknowledge the other person's feelings and concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is continually alert to subtle behaviors providing clues about others' interest, engagement, and concern • Asks questions to elicit concerns and feelings suggested by subtle nonverbal behavior or group dynamics

Openness and Flexibility	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to understand and appreciate perspectives that differ from her or his own • Tailors his/her own approach to fit the preferences and needs of the coachee • Demonstrates flexibility; changes course or approach when the situation demands it • Understands and relates to individuals and groups from a variety of cultures with values different from her or his own culture • Seeks out and uses feedback to enhance the coaching engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates comfort with a very high level of ambiguity

Goal Orientation	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets challenging but achievable goals for himself/herself • Helps coachees to identify and set realistic and challenging goals • Is highly motivated toward the pursuit of his or her goals • Shows resourcefulness; seeks out, or helps others seek out solutions under difficult or challenging conditions • Demonstrates stability; stays on tasks for extended periods of time • Shows persistence; does not give up when faced with a challenge • Demonstrates the ability to organize work; effectively plans and manages resources and time when pursuing a goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages multiple and sometimes conflicting goals and their attainment • Translates complex goals into parallel tracks of actions and their associated measures of success

Partnering and Influence	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully plans and tailors his or her own words in ways that achieve a desired impact • Presents arguments that address others' most important concerns and issues • Involves others as partners in a process, to gain their support and buy-in • Shows interest in and comfort with the context in which the coaching is taking place (for-profits, not-for-profits, health care organizations, the public sector, marketing, finance, sales, R&D, etc.) • Shares some of the values of those in the context in which the coaching is taking place and has a fundamental comfort with private enterprise and/or public endeavors • Demonstrates inclusiveness by encouraging the participation of multiple stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is perceived by others as being of the stature of an executive or senior consultant • Understands, anticipates and manages highly political situations • Formulates effective strategies by carefully considering the concerns, motivations, interrelationships, and preferred styles of all key players • Asks powerful questions that facilitate reflection or problem solving

Continuous Learning and Development	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks feedback to enhance overall coaching effectiveness • Assesses and addresses gaps in his/her own knowledge and skill • Undertakes study and learning to enhance skills that will contribute to her/his coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does formal research on his/her own effectiveness as a coach • Teaches and coaches others in executive coaching • Seeks out peers for mutual supervision and consultation • Assists other coaches, organizations, and professionals in other areas to avail themselves of different coaching resources and referral sources • Demonstrates commitment to his or her own continuous learning

Integrity	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes and holds an ethical stand regardless of financial or other pressures • Carefully maintains appropriate confidentiality in all dealings • Determines what is appropriate through careful contracting in his or her coaching and consulting relationships, with the goal of meeting the needs of all stakeholders. • Demonstrates personal integrity; “walks the talk” • Appears genuine, honest and straightforward regarding her or his agenda and needs • Focuses on and puts the client’s needs ahead of her or his own needs • Makes and keeps commitments to others • Avoids a coaching workload that compromises the quality of the coaching service • Respects the established relationships between the client and other providers of coaching, consulting, and/or other services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps all members of the coaching partnership to challenge their integrity and impact on the business

ⁱ Sherman, Stratford & Freas, Alyssa (2004/November). The wild west of executive coaching. *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 82 – 90. Hunt (2004), Successful Executive Coaching from the Consumer's Perspective. *Creative Consulting: Research in Management Consulting, Vol. 4*, Greenwich, CT: IAP Press. pp. 165 – 200.

ⁱⁱ We use the term “competency” here to as it was originally suggested by Boyatzis (1982, in *The Competent Manager*, New York: Wiley-Interscience) as: an underlying characteristic of an individual, which is causally related to effective or superior performance in a job. This definition was further articulated by Spencer, McClelland & Spencer (1994, *Competency Assessment Methods*, Boston: HayMcBer Research Press) as “motives, traits, self-concepts, attitudes or values, content knowledge or cognitive or behavioral skills” (p. 6).

ⁱⁱⁱThis articulation process began with each of us listing those competencies that seemed particularly significant in our own experiences. We then compared lists, added and deleted items, and refined terminology until we were comfortable that we had an inclusive or complete list of appropriate competencies. Such a process of course has a number of limitations from a research perspective and as such, we offer this model as the shared perspective of a varied group of experienced professionals in the field. We hope that future research will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence that demonstrates a direct relationship between specific coaching competencies and coaching results.