



MARKS & ASSOCIATES Coaching

A senior manager is confronted with a never-ending parade of challenges; some of which may be handled well and others may be just beyond their experience and skill level. Even when the tasks are well known and have been previously successfully accomplished, as decision complexities increase the overall impact can make it difficult to resolve problems efficiently or even successfully. It may not be an issue of isolated skill sets, but the magnitude that must be handled.

Good managers may find themselves in areas where their footing is not as secure as they would like. It might be the result of internal or external change factors or it might be tied to vision issues, strategic focus changes, quality of performance issues or many other factors. Interpersonal conflicts, communications problems, building or running successful teams, managing merger integration's and a range of other real-life issues can give a manager headaches that do not easily go away.

There are a couple of ways to resolve these issues. The first is to make sure the managers have the skill sets necessary to successfully execute their jobs. The second is to provide managers with a specific support mechanism that has only one goal -- the success of the manager both internally in their firm and externally in the market. That is what an Executive Coach from Marks & Associates brings to your people. An executive coach focuses on the needs of your individual managers to help them realize their potential. The use of a coach allows a manager to meet the requirements of personal and professional life. We help increase productivity, improve interpersonal relations, focus career growth, improve conflict resolution skills and improve morale. Perhaps most importantly, by working with a manager on the personal and professional components of their lives and jobs, we work towards retaining top talent.

Managers face a complex mix of issues on a daily basis. Understanding and managing resource issues, dealing with the merging of strategies and tactics, removing self-imposed or externally developed roadblocks, development of leadership styles, running new and highly motivated teams or trying to get the most out of older, mature teams are all taxing and can be confusing. The Marks & Associates Executive Coach provides an experienced, highly skilled, pragmatic resource to the manager. Someone with whom the manager can discuss issues, problems, and opportunities or from whom they can acquire new skill sets to help them balance their business and home lives.

Good coaches must have three main attributes. First, they must have real-life experience dealing with problems similar to those your manager will encounter. Academic grounding is important, but it is not enough. Many "coaches" do not have the actual business experience to give pragmatic guidance or advice. Further, it is much easier for a manager to

be able to trust the advice and counsel of a coach if they know that the coach has walked in the similar shoes and succeeded. Second, they must have the necessary diagnostic coaching techniques to help the manager find their way through the forest of often contradictory information and options confronting them. The diagnostics might include personality testing, skills assessment, and goal matching exercises, role-playing or simply listening. Third, they must be able to help the manager navigate confidently across a broad array of issues by supporting the manager's change management skills and by providing the right resource set.

For a successful, strong relationship between a coach and the manager, it must be grounded in trust, confidence in the abilities of the coach and the knowledge that confidentiality is respected, unless the manager indicates otherwise. Our approach goes one step further. A primary coach will always provide the principal contact with the manager. However, we have broad capabilities in our group of coaches who have deep experience in specific issues. So while one coach remains the principal contact at all times, we can bring in a psychologist with extensive experience in managing interpersonal relationship conflict, a coach who has worked with many organizations in the aftermath of mergers or a range of other issues for specific situations. And, because our focus is primarily with banks and other firms in the financial services industry, there is no learning curve for our coaches to master business terminology or concepts. In many cases, we will have as much knowledge about the day-to-day business issues as your managers.

Approach

We conduct an initial one-on-one, face-to-face meeting between the coach and the manager to discuss issues and goals. At this time we identify access channels for the manager to reach the coach and set expectations from both the manager's and coach's perspectives. At the conclusion of the meeting the coach will write a summary report for the manager, which recaps what the coach understands about the goals, problems and issues. The coach will also outline broad approaches to each major topic area. Once the manager and coach agree that the right topics are on the table, at least for the beginning discussions, the coach will have regular sessions with the manager about the issues. Prior to each coach/manager formal conversation the manager will fill out a short "current issues" form and e-mail it to the coach. This will act as a broad, but nonrestrictive, agenda for the upcoming discussion. If the manager feels uncomfortable with it, the coach will skip it. Any time the manager has a question or wants to talk through an issue, all they need do is call or email the coach. No forms are necessary.

The number and type of meetings between the coach and the manager will depend upon the agreed upon terms of the engagement. Other resources may be introduced into the relationship. Sessions are 100% confidential.

Some of the issues, which might be addressed in coaching sessions, include:

Professional issues:
Managing change

Leadership skills
Organizational skills
Time management
Relationship management with clients
Diversity awareness
Follow-through
Negotiating with peers, superiors, subordinates for what you want/need
Team building and working within teams successfully
Psychological and managerial issues in downsizing or mergers and acquisitions
Anger or organizational conflict management
Interpersonal communications skills
Delegation upward and downward
Focus and attention to details
Fear of selling or public speaking

Personal issues:

Fear of failure or success
Work/home-life balance
Merging personal and organizational goals
How home life issues impact work and the reverse
Job satisfaction
Self-confidence
Developing personal power
Increasing emotional self-awareness
Navigating ethical issues
Stress management
Perfectionism
Procrastination

Using a coach is not hiring another manager or paying twice for productivity. Its intent is to make your managers more effective, focused and able to contribute value to the organization and themselves. Allowing a manager to use an executive coach on an ongoing basis is like giving them a support structure with no penalty. It is a substantial benefit, one that gives to both the manager and the organization value in the short and long-term.



Furthering the interests of coaching clients worldwide.

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