



# The New World of Leadership Coaching

We have all been through annual employee reviews, but what would you think if, during your review, your supervisor said, “You could benefit from having a professional coach”?

In days past, this statement would bring heart palpitations to emerging leaders and even seasoned executives, whose first thoughts were that they had failed, were performing poorly, or heading down the road of being replaced.

However, contrary to the band aid approach that organizations have used for engaging coaches in the past, today’s coaching engagements are strengths-based and future-focused. Professional coaching today is designed to further develop already strong employees and emerging leaders to assure the long-term success of the organization.

Today coaching is recognized as a growth opportunity for both employees and organizations. Employees benefit from objective skills assessment and customized teaching that allows them to develop new lifelong skills and expertise. Likewise, coaching benefits the organization in supporting and strengthening both the current structure and succession plans for the future.

It’s no wonder that companies worldwide are using coaches more than ever. Of 181 global firms The Conference Board surveyed in 2016, 69% say they expect to rely more heavily on coaching in the coming years.

## TODAY’S COACHING ENGAGEMENTS

Similar to sports coaches, professional coaches focus their clients on the development of specific skill sets and functional outputs to move them forward in their careers. The coaching process begins with a thorough assessment and continues through skills practice and on-going self-assessment.

First, coaches gather feedback on the employee’s performance from supervisors, co-workers and staff. Then, using a process of guided self-reflection, the employee and the coach work together to determine which new skills will assure future success. They develop a specific and measurable plan of improvement and determine an appropriate



timeline. Coaches provide a supportive environment to explore feedback and skill development planning while offering guidance, motivation and expertise. They extend encouragement, provide new insights and offer counsel through each step of learning.

Importantly, coaches partner with employees to overcome our human nature to procrastinate or to shy away from the unfamiliar. The structured, scheduled coaching engagements – either in person, on line, or via telephone - serve to hold the employee accountable to their commitments and allow them to develop at the anticipated trajectory.

The flip-side of the coaching assessment is that it reconfirms what is already being done well. Armed with this information, the coach offers insights on new opportunities for an employee to leverage their strengths in knowledge, expertise and skills that had not yet been realized.

Beyond helping employees learn new skills, coaching may help to improve self-confidence and morale. According to a report by the Coaching Federation, 80 percent of professionals who received coaching reported an improvement in their self-esteem, and 63 percent saw a positive change in their overall wellness.

Today's healthcare leaders are leveraging professional coaches in three key scenarios: supporting new managers, further developing leaders and planning leadership succession.

## EXPERTISE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR NEW MANAGERS

The first time an employee is promoted to a leadership role is both exciting and feeling vulnerable.

A natural tendency is for the new manager to dig into what's comfortable - getting to know the technical aspects of the job. Too often, this comes at the expense of the larger picture of the new role: learning to lead the team to deliver their best work, and to achieve departmental goals.

### Coaches collaborate with new managers to learn under-developed or missing skills, such as:

- Staff management capabilities
- Motivation techniques
- Understanding financial reports and budgets
- Communication techniques
- Behavior management and relationship development
- Navigating change within a department or organization
- Introspection and self-awareness
- Methods to gain perspective on a problem or issue
- Strategic planning

Bolstering new managers with the support of an experienced, professional coach can make or break these newly appointed leaders. It may well set the stage for a life time of successful leadership contributions.

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR EMERGING LEADERS

It is often said that certain people are born leaders. It's as if they came from the womb knowing how to be a leader. In truth, there's a difference between a charismatic personality and a leader who knows how to bring a team together to accomplish goals and to keep the group mission focused.

**Contrary to the notion of a born leader, coaches teach that leadership is a process of learning and using specific skills, such as:**

- ▶ Gaining the confidence of the team
- ▶ Building trust
- ▶ Communicating clearly and consistently
- ▶ Keeping the team focused in the same direction

As organizations compete in larger marketplaces, leadership development has evolved from sporadic, open-ended career advice from a mentor; to skills-focused work with a trained professional coach for a pre-determined period. Coaches serve as objective third parties from outside the organization who help employees to gain focus and clarity about what needs to be accomplished as well as the strategies and tactics to achieve it.

## A KEY COMPONENT TO SUCCESSION PLANNING

The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) reports that the turnover rate in the healthcare C-suite is steady at 18%, which is costly and disruptive to organizational goals. This is corroborated by other recent reports of unprecedented turnover throughout hospitals, which are on pace to turn over half their overall staff every five years, according to Fierce Healthcare. High turnover rates present organizations with problems beyond recruitment and retention, however, since changes to top leadership can have a ripple effect throughout the leadership pipeline.

Identifying the next set of leaders and preparing for their transitions is vital for success. While it may be intimidating to think about replacing trusted colleagues, it's important to ensure the organization can survive and thrive in their absence. To begin succession planning, stakeholders need to ask:

- » What if a key leader leaves unexpectedly due to illness, or injury?  
(Or, even wins the jackpot!)
- » Who will take the reins of leadership and keep essential initiatives moving forward?
- » Who will step in when a leader departs the organization?
- » Who will replace the successor?

In succession planning scenarios, coaches collaborate with stakeholders to identify the skills desired for the planned scenario and then set specific and measurable goals for the successor to learn within a set timeline.

**Professional coaches help transitioning leaders to develop into the senior executives of tomorrow through:**

- Increased self-awareness
- Growth in self-confidence
- Creative idea generation
- Informed risk-taking
- Improved decision-making
- Courage to face challenges with solutions.

While coaching is just one component of comprehensive succession planning, it serves a vital role in both organizational stability and individual success.

## CONCLUSION

Organizations around the world are recognizing new ways to leverage professional coaches. Coaching has undergone a transformation into an opportunity to nurture emerging leaders, to further develop advancing leaders and to assure long term stability in organizational leadership.

Deloitte University Press reports “Fully 89 percent of executives in this year’s survey rated the need to strengthen, reengineer, and improve organizational leadership as an important priority. The traditional pyramid shaped leadership development model is simply not producing leaders fast enough to keep up with the demands of business and the pace of change.”

**Deloitte observed that “high-performing organizations spend up to four times as much on leadership development than average organizations and their C-suites and Boards are actively involved in developing leaders.”**

No longer is executive coaching just about fixing problems. It’s about creating stronger leaders across the leadership development continuum who will move their organizations ahead in the complex and competitive healthcare environment.

### For more information contact:

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### RESOURCES:

<https://www.conference-board.org/>  
<https://coachfederation.org/blog/21025-2>  
<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/HumanCapital/gx-dup-global-human-capital-trends-2016.pdf>  
<http://www.ache.org/pubs/Releases/2017/2017-Hospital-CEO-Turnover-Rate.cfm>  
<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/healthcare/ache-reports-continued-high-turnover-among-healthcare-ceos>