

# The Executive Coaching Handbook

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Principles and Guidelines for a  
Successful Coaching Partnership

Developed by  
The Executive Coaching Forum

Fourth Edition  
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[www.executivecoachingforum.com](http://www.executivecoachingforum.com)



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# The Executive Coaching Handbook

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## The Need for a Handbook

### *Why A Handbook and Now a Competency Model*

Executive Coaching is becoming commonplace in leadership development and as a transition tool on an international basis. It is seen as viable lever in the retention of top talent. Twenty years ago, it was a one-off activity, now organizations that use coaching report that they'll likely increase its use in the next five years, and numerous large and small companies say they will introduce executive coaching within two years. Coaching grows in popularity and prestige. Yet, there still is no widely agreed definition or set of professional standards. This *Handbook* was conceived as a step in establishing guidelines by starting a dialogue in the field about what is executive coaching, what is its purpose, how do we make sure it's being practiced well and ethically, and how do we know it really works. We have added the Competency Model to help define the knowledge areas, tasks and skills sets, attributes, and abilities that are critical for executive coaches to use in their work to be successful and to create effective experiences for clients.

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 had a valuable resource for the field and a way to jump start the conversation about professional standards. We published *The Executive Coaching Handbook* both in print and on the web 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. The *Handbook* is used in hundreds of coaching training programs and by thousands of coaches in over 25 countries. We distribute the *Handbook* at the website below as an open source document, free of charge, with the request that you send us notification if you use it, and that you don't profit from our work.

([www.executivecoachingforum.com](http://www.executivecoachingforum.com))

### *Recent Trends*

In the past five years, we have seen the field of coaching become intensely interested in establishing credentials and standards. In the past 10 years, consumers have become savvier, the coaching engagements more packaged, and the process better managed. Coaching is now commonly bundled with leadership development programs and introduced as a key element in leadership transitions. The field is maturing into a profession, and standards are beginning to be fleshed out. substantive university-based academic programs are becoming commonplace in graduate schools across the world, and practitioners are presenting themselves and their expertise as part of a profession

with unique requirements. Our *Handbook* has been part of this journey and highly influential, we hear, in establishing the training curricula. We hope you benefit from this guide and that you share your learnings and insights with others in the field. Please let us know if you use the *Handbook* and provide your comments. (Contact Judy Otto by emailing her: [otto.judy@gmail.net](mailto:otto.judy@gmail.net))

### *Future Trends*

Now, coaching is accepted as a viable, impactful leadership development tool. Coaching will likely increase as baby boomers mature and new leaders need to take their places and define what leadership looks like in the new business order. Just as the demand will increase to meet the needs of emerging leaders, the supply of experienced semi-retired executives and development professionals will increase. The market will mature further with customers looking for more robust coach credentials, simpler pricing structures, more common contracting procedures, and protocols to manage coaching interventions. There will be fewer independent coaches and more firms offering coaching, as consumers want one-stop shopping, and a third party to watch over the coaches' activities with clients. This will increase barriers to entry for executive coaches and create clearer definition between coaches who work in organizations and business systems, and those who do life and career coaching with individuals. There will be greater networks amongst coaches using their alumni connections from their coach training and from working together in systems, so that collaboration and sharing of leads and opportunities are more likely. All of this speaks to consolidation of the field.

There will be more and better-trained internal coaches within companies, an increase in peer coaching amongst colleagues, group coaching sessions, and more virtual or phone/video conference coaching. There will be an increased drive to train and measure line managers on their coaching abilities as well. All these factors will drive prices down and make coaching more prevalent in organizations.

Some issues have been challenges from the beginning of executive coaching such as:

- How do you measure effectiveness of an individual coaching intervention or an overall program?
- How do you establish definable, comparable metrics of success?
- How do you match coaches and executives?
- Where do we draw the lines of confidentiality?

- How do you meet the needs of the individual and the organization if they are in conflict?
- What is coach/client chemistry and how much of a role does it play in success?

These and other questions need to be further explored as part of making executive coaching an even more compelling route to performance enhancement. It will be exciting to watch and participate in the next phase of growth and maturity of the field.

### *Current State of Research*

The first Global Coaching Convention took place in Dublin, Ireland in July 2008. More than 60 leaders in coaching who represented dozens of coaching and related organizations represented 22 countries from around the world. Nine working groups spent a year leading up to the Convention. More than 200 people from all aspects of coaching from around the world worked as part of those groups, which led to the development of White Papers. Recommendations came out of that exploration to further the field of coaching as a professional discipline. One of those Working Groups was on Coaching Research. The White Paper on the topic was published as part of the Appendix to the GCC's Declaration for Coaching, which is available at:

<http://www.pdf.net/Files/Dublin%20Declaration%20on%20Coaching.pdf>

One outgrowth of the call for research on key questions about coaching is that the Foundation of Coaching sponsored the first International Research Conference on Coaching at Harvard University in September 2008. More than 100 research questions were identified with recommendations on how they might be studied. Forty world leaders on coaching research developed these recommendations at the conference. Those topics are available at: <http://www.coachingresearchforum.org/>

Although there is an enormous need to generate useful, reliable and valid data about executive coaching and coaching in general, in the past few years much research has begun. We know more about what kinds of coaching are being done by whom in what ways, but little about the factors that make significant differences in the outcomes of executive coaching. We also know very little about the satisfaction with its practice, or what coaches, their leaders, and their organizations do or don't do that differentiates the better practices of coaching from the least effective. Although controlled experimental studies are often difficult to conduct in executive coaching situations, many other research designs can and do add to the evidence we need to inform best practices and help coaches and the people they coach know what to do to get the desired results.

### *Sources of Information on Executive Coaching Research*

See the White Paper referenced above, the **Resources** page, and the **Links** page on theexecutivecoachingforum.com website. Below are journals that publish current research.

*Academy of Management Journal*  
*Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*  
*Australian Psychologist*  
*Career Development International*  
*Coaching at Work*  
*Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*  
*Competency and Emotional Intelligence Quarterly*  
*Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*  
*Counselor Education and Supervision*  
*Harvard Business Review*  
*Human Resources Executive*  
*Human Resources Planning*  
*Individual Psychology*  
*Industrial and Commercial Training Intermediar*  
*International Coaching Psychology Review*  
*International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*  
*International Journal of Evidence-based Coaching and Mentoring*  
*International Journal of Mentoring and coaching*  
*Journal of Business Research*  
*Journal of Business Strategy*  
*Journal of Management Development*  
*Journal of Managerial Psychology*  
*Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*  
*Journal of Positive Psychology*  
*Leader to Leader*  
*Leadership & Organizational Development*

*Leadership Quarterly*  
*Management Learning*  
*Management Review*  
*Organizational Development Journal*  
*Organizational Dynamics*  
*People and Organizations at Work*  
*People Management*  
*Performance Improvement Quarterly*  
*Proceedings of the ICF Coaching Research Symposiums*  
*Public Personnel Management*  
*Public Service Executive*  
*Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*  
*Selection and Development Review*  
*Social Behaviour and Personality: An International Journal*  
*Supervisory Management*  
*The Annual Review of High Performance Coaching and Consulting*  
*The Coaching Journal*  
*The Coaching Psychologist*  
*The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*  
*The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*  
*The Occupational Psychologist*  
*Training and Development*



### *Major Questions in Executive Coaching Research*

A partial listing of important research questions to date can be drawn almost directly from the definition of coaching as stated in this *Handbook*. Executive coaching is viewed as a multiparty set of relationship-based activities involving the client, her coach, and her organization. The goal is to enhance the capability of the executive and her ability to help the organization achieve short- and long-term goals. Each component of the definition suggests a range of largely unexplored research questions that can be organized under six topics:

1. The executive
2. The executive coach
3. The relationship between executive and coach
4. The executive coaching process
5. The organizational context of executive coaching
6. Coaching outcomes

(See Hunt and Weintraub, 2002, for a more thorough discussion of these questions.)

#### *1. The Executive*

- Who is most likely to benefit from executive coaching? Who is not?
  - What role do emotional maturity, personality, personal values, psychological defenses, intelligence, career stage, life stage, and other individual attributes of the executive play in executive coaching?
  - How does/should executive coaching relate to other aspects and roles of the executive's life (such as family and health)?
- What kinds of learning and development needs is executive coaching best suited for?
  - Can a useful typology of such needs be developed and validated?
- How can executives maximize the positive impact of executive coaching?
- What role does/should organizational position and role (CEO, VP) play on executive coaching processes and outcomes?
- What role does/should gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation play in executive coaching processes and outcomes?
- How are the expectations that executives bring to coaching shaped?

- How do executive clients define success in executive coaching?

## 2. *The Executive Coach*

- What are the appropriate qualifications for an executive coach?
- Should executive coaches be certified? If so, how?
- How should executive coaches be trained or developed?
  - What is the impact of experience and training in organizational leadership, organizational development, individual development, and consulting/counseling techniques?
- How do the executive coach's personality, life stage, career stage, and values influence his effectiveness as a coach?
- How does the executive coach's gender, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation influence coaching processes and outcomes?
- How does the executive coach define success in executive coaching?

## 3. *The Relationship between Executive and Coach*

- What factors influence the initial match between the executive and her coach?
- How can/should the coach handle the executive's expectations of or assumptions about coaching?
- What role do conscious and unconscious aspects of the relationship between executive and coach play in the success or failure of the coaching?
- How does/should the relationship between executive and coach evolve over time?
- What ethical issues can and will emerge in the relationship between executive and coach?

## 4. *The Executive Coaching Process*

- What critical success factors are required for successful contracting between executive and coach? Under what conditions?
- What assessment processes are best suited to particular executives, executive issues, organizational contexts, and desired outcomes?
- What goal-setting processes are best suited to particular executives, executive issues, organizational contexts, and desired outcomes?

- What coaching activities or techniques are best suited to particular executives, executive issues, organizational contexts, and desired outcomes?
- What is the role of planned versus unplanned (emergent) learning opportunities in the success of executive coaching?
- How long should coaching last? How frequently should executive and coach meet to achieve the desired outcomes with specific issues and within particular organizational contexts?
- What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of executive coaching that takes place in person, by telephone, or via the Internet?
  - When should such communications tactics be used? When should they not be used?
- What theoretical frame or frames of reference are best suited to guide the executive coaching process? Under what circumstances?
  - Experiential learning (action, reflection, feedback)
  - Adult development
  - Social systems interventions
  - Psychodynamic
  - Emotional intelligence
  - Competency modeling
- What role does confidentiality play in executive coaching? What is/should be the limits of confidentiality?
  - How does confidentiality influence the potential for organizational or team learning?
- How can executive coaching best relate to other forms of leadership development such as job rotation, task force assignments, and classroom-based executive education?
- How should multiple coaching needs within the same team be handled? By one coach working with multiple team members, or multiple coaches each working with an individual team member? What factors influence the choice between the two options?
- When should team coaching supplement or supplant individual coaching? Under what conditions?

## 5. *The Organizational Context of Executive Coaching*

- What factors (industry, location, size, organizational culture, and business economics) shape an organization's use of executive coaching?
- How does executive coaching relate best to the larger organizational system within which the coaching takes place?
  - How should executive coaching fit with other human resources and leadership development structures and processes?
- How does the context of the referral for executive coaching influence the executive, executive coach, coaching process, and outcome? What is the impact of:
  - A culture of trust or mistrust?
  - A strong focus on performance?
  - An organization's values or mission?
  - Downsizing or other restructuring measures?
- How does the relationship between the executive and his immediate boss influence executive coaching?
  - How can the executive coach best improve this relationship?
  - When should the executive coach try to influence this relationship?
- When should an executive consider bringing in a coach to help other individuals or an executive team?
- What ethical responsibilities does an executive have when bringing in a coach to work with an individual or team?
- How should the organization monitor the executive, the coach, the coaching process, and coaching outcomes?

## 6. *Coaching Outcomes*

- How does the coaching process change the executive?
  - How does executive coaching influence the executive's behavior, personal development, career development, leadership style, family life, and health?
- Does executive coaching help the executive's performance on the job? If so, under what conditions?

- Does executive coaching improve the following competencies, and under what conditions?
  - Strategy definition and execution
  - Vision setting and communications
  - Role relationships
  - Teamwork
  - Organizational and team learning
  - Product, process, or organizational innovation
- What kind of learning takes place as a result of executive coaching?
- Does coaching influence the executive's ethical decision making and actions? If so, how?
- Is remedial executive coaching to prevent derailment possible? If so, under what conditions?
  - What are the limits of remedial coaching?
- How do organizations change by virtue of executive coaching?
- How can ROI for executive coaching best be assessed?
  - Is it possible to assess ROI for executive coaching?
  - Is it desirable and helpful to executives, organizations, and society to assess ROI?
  -

### *A Summary of the Research*

We have presented a rather daunting list of potential research questions. Obviously, the list can be prioritized, at least to a degree. Some studies are capable of addressing multiple questions. When undertaking research, it is clear that we cannot just ask, "Does executive coaching work?" or "What is the ROI on executive coaching?" Research in executive coaching is every bit as complex as in the field of counseling in general, which has been underway for decades. Both are complex, relationship-based interventions in which intervener, client, relationship, problem or goal, and context all play a role. They are also interventions in which society has a considerable economic and moral stake.

The reality remains, however, that as a multibillion-dollar enterprise, executive coaching cannot rely on practice wisdom as its only guide. Executives, their families, and their

employing organizations have a compelling need for solid answers to most of the questions above. Similarly, researchers, particularly those from management and industrial/organizational/consulting psychology, have a tremendous opportunity in providing answers to such questions. The failure to adequately describe the outcomes, individual and organizational, of executive coaching and, in particular, the processes that lead to those outcomes, creates the potential that executive coaching will be guilty of providing “flawed advice” (Argyris, 2000).

The research effort requires both theory building and the theoretical testing of research designs. Theory building will be most useful if it is rooted in the data, an approach to research that builds “grounded theory” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Because grounded theory relies on the very careful reporting of data from cases, it should benefit from the strength of the field, the work of its practitioners. Careful and systematic reporting of cases will be much more useful in the long run than publications that are heavy on theory but short on data.

### *The Executive Coaching Forum*

The purpose of the Executive Coaching Forum (TECF) is to establish definitions, guidelines, and standards for executive coaching, a practice area tightly defined by the population it serves and the nature of the three-party contract among executive, coach, and sponsoring company. Our charter is to improve leadership and organizational effectiveness by establishing best practices and advancing the understanding of executive coaching among all members of the coaching partnership and among the general public.

We are a small group of professionals who coach and manage coaching programs. We are intensely interested in how the field develops and in participating in that process. We are not a membership organization, nor do we rate coaching training programs, nor evaluate coaches or coaching interventions. We maintain the Executive Coaching *Handbook* and the website ([www.executivecoachingforum.com](http://www.executivecoachingforum.com)) to participate in the dialogue of creating standards and guidelines to advance the field of executive coaching.

### *Background*

In the spring of 1999, a group of executive coaches and executive development and human resource professionals in the Greater Boston area began a regular series of meetings. As we discussed how to develop and maintain the highest standards for the practice of executive

coaching, we developed principles and guidelines for use in our own practices and organizations. Our goal in this *Handbook* is to share these proposed standards with the greater community. We hope to stimulate a continuing dialog and process that enhances the professionalism of executive coaching.

For the past 10 years, TECF has expanded the distribution of this *Handbook* to the World Wide Web for anyone supplying, receiving, seeking, learning, managing, or supporting executive coaching. Our website [www.executivecoachingforum.com](http://www.executivecoachingforum.com) has provided a variety of free resources since May of 2001. They include this *Handbook*, links to other executive coaching resources, executive coaching tools for executives, their organizations, coaches, and Human Resource professionals, and a comprehensive competency model. At the end of 2008, we are getting more than 6000 visits a month to our site from all over the United States and dozens of other countries. Executive coaches are likely to present our *Handbook* to establish their methods and ethics with prospective clients. Many Fortune 500 companies and other organizations, large and small, in many industries, use this *Handbook* and other TECF resources regularly.

### *Future Development of Executive Coaching Standards and Guidelines*

We plan to continually revise and improve *The Executive Coaching Handbook* based on your experience and feedback. We recognize that we are practicing in a newly defined arena and look forward to a time when we can make use of valid and reliable outcome studies, stories, and examples from practitioners. Future standards for executive coaching should continue to draw on related fields, including organization development and consulting psychology.

In the many conversations that have led to the drafting of this document, we uncovered myriad issues still to be addressed. . Our hope is that this *Handbook* will continue to enhance executive coaching and address the issues arising out of this developing professional field for the mutual benefit of leaders, organizations, and the people they serve.

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[executivecoach@comcast.net](mailto:executivecoach@comcast.net)*Handbook Organization**The Executive Coaching Handbook* is divided into five 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.



**Overview of Guidelines for Each Member of the Executive Coaching Partnership** is a quick-reference guide for executives, coaches, and other interested parties in the executive's organization.

**Core Competencies of the Executive Coach** lists a robust set of four knowledge areas that underpin the work of coaching, the tasks and skills sets aligned to the six phases of the coaching process, along with the 10 attributes and abilities that promote superior performance. Each of these competency areas is delineated into basic and advanced levels.

### **The Fourth Edition**

Major changes to the fourth edition of the *Handbook* include:

- updates to the introduction, trends, and research sections
- a comprehensive Core Competency Model for Executive Coaches ©2005

These additions bring *The Executive Coaching Handbook* materials up to date, and expand the horizons of the dialogue about what executive coaching is and how to do it well.

### **Contributors to this Handbook**

The Fourth Edition ©2008 was edited by Susan Ennis, Robert Goodman, Judy Otto and Lew Stern. Judy Otto oversaw the editing and production. Along with this team, Bill Hodgetts, James Hunt and Richard Mansfield co-authored the *Core Competencies of the Executive Coach* ©2005.

Original drafters of *Handbook* are Susan Ennis, Judy Otto, Lewis Stern, Michele Vitti, and Nancy Yahanda. Other Human Resource and Management Consulting professionals from leading organizations in the Greater Boston business community also provided input to the first edition. They include Betty Bailey, Wendy Capland, William Hodgetts, Mary Jane Knudson, Kitty Lawrence, Lynne Richer, Casey Strumpf, and Ellen Wingard. Additional feedback for subsequent editions has come from executive coaching professionals from New Hampshire to Alabama and Tennessee, Minnesota and Ontario to Texas and California, and Great Britain to Chile.

Larissa Hordynsky and Lew Stern edited the original version of this *Handbook*.

To help TECF improve its offerings and enhance executive coaching as a viable development solution, please review our website at [www.executivecoachingforum.com](http://www.executivecoachingforum.com).

E-mail your feedback and suggestions on the *Handbook* to Judy Otto [otto.judy@gmail.net](mailto:otto.judy@gmail.net)

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

### Definition of Terms

**Experiential.** The development of the leader(s) is accomplished primarily by practical, on-the-job approaches rather than through classroom or more abstract methods.

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

**Leader development process:** Executive coaching focuses on developing the executive's ability to influence, motivate, and lead others. Rather than relying on tactical problem solving or basic skill acquisition, executive coaching develops strategic thinking skills.

**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.

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

**Data from multiple perspectives:** 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.

**Mutual trust and respect:** Adult learning works best when the executive and the coach, along with other members of the organization, treat each other as equals, focus on their mutual strengths, and believe in each others' integrity and commitment to both coaching and the organization.

### 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 eliminate 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 a Coaching Partnership?

The coaching partnership is a win-win approach in which all partners 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 external to the organization or an employee.

2. The partnership is based on agreed-upon ground rules, time frames, and specific goals and measures of success.
3. The coaching partnership uses tailored goals and 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 coaching process can, but need not necessarily, include:
  - 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 applies several of 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 using 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
    - Organizational Development or Effectiveness
    - Executive Development
    - peers, including strategic business partners from other organizations
    - direct reports
    - other key people in the executive's life.
  8. Executive coaching is paid for by the organization that employs the executive.
  9. A successful coaching partnership is guided by clear personal values, ethical guidelines, and experiences that establish the credibility of the coaching process and maintain the welfare of the executive and her coworkers.

## What Is Different About Executive Coaching?

As coaching has grown in popularity over the past few years, it is only natural that some authors have tried to differentiate among types of coaching. Some of these categories define coaching type by its *goals* or *ends*. Career coaching, for instance, is defined as coaching

designed to help individuals make enlightened career choices. Other attempts at categorization make distinctions based on the *means* used in a particular kind of coaching. As an example, presentation and communication skills coaching employs video feedback.

The practice of executive coaching may involve many of the types of coaching described below. Thus, an executive coaching engagement may over time touch on the executive's career or personal life issues involving work/life balance, and use video feedback to work on some particular behavioral or communication problem. Two factors always distinguish executive coaching from these other types, however:

- It always involves a partnership among executive, coach, and organization.
- The individual goals of an executive coaching engagement must always link back and be subordinated to strategic organizational objectives.

A discussion of some common coaching types follows.

### **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.

### **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.

## **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.

## **Newly Assigned Leader Coaching**

Coaches of individuals assigned or hired into new leadership roles help these leaders to “onboard”. 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 to integrate the team she will lead with the organization. The major focus of this type of coaching is on helping the new leader to assimilate and achieve her business objectives.

## **Relationship Coaching**

The relationship coach helps two or more people to form, change, or improve their interactions. The context can be work, personal, or other settings.

## **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 to Provide Feedback 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 make career decisions and 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 successful in their current jobs or are taking on new responsibilities that require a change in specific behaviors.

### **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 potential candidates for senior management positions and prepares them for promotion to more senior roles. This type of coaching may be used in any organization that is experiencing growth or turnover in its leadership ranks. It is especially helpful in family businesses to maintain the viability of the firm. Since assessment is often part of this intervention, clear expectations and groundrules for confidentiality are essential. It may be necessary in some companies to use separate consultants for assessment and coaching.

### **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 videorecording with feedback allows clients to see themselves as others do. The coach helps clients change the way they communicate and influence others by changing their words, how they say those words, and the body language they use 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 facilitate team meetings and other interactions, build the effectiveness of the group as a high-performance team, and achieve team goals.

## Overarching Principles for Executive Coaching

Overarching principles are the values or aspirational goals 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 objectives.

Often the components of the executive coaching process are single, discrete activities in a larger organizational development initiative. These components include pre-coaching needs analysis and planning, contracting, data gathering, goal setting, coaching, measuring and reporting results, and transitioning to long-term development. Such coaching activities do not usually 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 enough expertise in organizational dynamics and business management 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 helps coach and the executive assess development needs. By thinking in terms of the big picture and core issues, both partners will understand long- and short-term strategies and how all the pieces of the organization fit together into a whole. 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 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 the ultimate goals of the coaching. Then they agree on specific results for each goal. 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. Actual 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, executive development, and action items that contribute to the coaching goals.

#### **Other Partners' Commitments**

- ☐ Communicate directly about what you most want and need the executive to do.
- ☐ 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 trust 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. Successful executive coaching links a business focus with human processes by closely aligning the executive's development with critical business needs.

#### 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 enough information 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 her coach are obviously at the center of the process, but other stakeholders are also involved. They may include the executive's manager, her direct reports, the Human Resources business partner or generalist, the individual responsible for executive development, training, or organizational development, and other executives or consultants. 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 coaching sessions.
- ☐ Engage wholeheartedly in the agreed-upon coaching assignments.
- ☐ Take required actions for learning, and reflect on those actions.

### Coach's Commitments

- ☐ Maintain the highest level of professionalism in serving both the executive and the organization as your clients.
- ☐ Communicate openly about the progress of the coaching with the executive and other stakeholders (within the limits of agreed-upon confidentiality).
- ☐ Invest in the professional and personal success of the executive and in the success of her organization.

### 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

Executive coaching requires the use of highly skilled and experienced professional coaches. These coaches maintain high standards 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 in the Core Competencies of the Executive Coach defined in this Handbook:

Four knowledge areas that underpin the work of coaching, the tasks and skills sets aligned to the six phases of the coaching process:

Psychological Knowledge

Business Acumen

Organizational Knowledge

Coaching Knowledge

Coaching Tasks and Skills

- Building and Maintaining Coaching Relationships
- Contracting
- Assessment

- Development Planning
- Facilitating Development and Change
- Ending Formal Coaching & Transitioning to long-term development

Ten Attributes and Abilities that promote superior performance.

- Mature Self-confidence
- Positive Energy
- Assertiveness
- Interpersonal Sensitivity
- Openness and Flexibility
- Goal Orientation
- Partnering and Influence
- Continuous Learning and Development
- Integrity

Each of these competency areas is delineated into basic and advanced levels. They fully understand and adhere to the principles and guidelines in this Handbook.

Finally, competent executive coaches are perceived by the executives they coach as capable, independent, practical, and interested in the executive and his/her business, flexible, and able to serve as a good role model.

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 client interactions, continuing their education and staying up to date with best practices in coaching.

#### Executive's Commitments

- ☐ Determine your own criteria for a coach, including style, training, and specific areas of competence, expertise, and experience. Apply these criteria to selecting the best coach for you.
- ☐ 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 and refer clients when you are not the best possible resource.
- ☐ Update your knowledge of the client organization's core business as well as best practices in coaching.
- ☐ 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 for assignments.
- ☐ If you are responsible for providing coaching referrals or information to your organization, keep current on the reputation of coaches and best coaching practices.
- ☐ 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.

Core Competencies of the Executive Coach lists a robust set of four knowledge areas that underpin the work of coaching, the task and skill sets aligned to the six phases of the

coaching process, along with the ten attributes and abilities that promote superior performance. Each of these competency areas is delineated into basic and advanced levels.



## 6. Integrity

Upon beginning executive coaching, the executive is placing significant trust in the coach and the organization. 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 in their presentation of issues, organizational information, coaching goals, coaching activities, 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 performance-improvement feedback.

### **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.
- ☐ Help the organization to develop guidelines on how its managers and employees will learn in their jobs. Follow and embellish an organization's learning contract. Strictly apply existing standards for dealing with personal data, or provide such standards if the organization does not have any.
- ☐ Discuss with the executive organizational requests for information about him and his coaching, 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 on the need for coaching, the executive's situation, the organizational context, performance concerns, and organizational goals for coaching in a realistic and forthright manner.
- ☐ 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 practices.
- ☐ 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 for well-balanced decisions. 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' exercise in an ever-changing work environment.

### Executive's Commitments

- ☐ Maintain an open mind and be willing to change it.
- ☐ 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 judgments they make about the coaching.
- ☐ Be balanced in your judgments regarding the coaching: short vs. long term, work vs. personal life, data vs. intuition, and individual vs. organizational good.

## 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 inappropriately or 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 which circumstances, with whom, and how. The agreement helps all coaching partners remain sensitive to confidentiality issues from each other's 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. Present any feedback to the executive in verbatim or summary form.

### **Commitments of the Executive and Other Partners**

- ❑ Members of the organization who, as a result of coaching, learn confidential information about the executive, keep that information confidential unless otherwise agreed before the coaching begins.
- ❑ The executive responds 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. This non-defensive response maximizes the trust the executive will share with others in the future.
- ❑ All members of the coaching partnership ensure that no confidential information coming out of the coaching process is shared electronically unless they can control access to that information.
- ❑ Before coaching begins, all partners consider how the confidentiality of each of the following types of information will be managed. They 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
- ❑ The organization identifies an internal resource who can advise coaches and stakeholders on questions of confidentiality and other sensitive topics, and who can help resolve these issues.

## 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 standards for practice. 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.
- ☐ Handle all business and financial contract requirements yourself, or make sure appropriate people in your organization handle them.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Apply criteria for analyzing coaching needs and matching the executive with the most appropriate coach.
- ☐ Provide feedback to the coaches you do not select.
- ☐ Consult with the executive to provide guidance and support in determining coaching needs, requirements, and desired outcomes.
- ☐ Partner with coaches to ensure their best fit with the organization and the executive.

### 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 three major components of contracting: the Learning Contract, the Business/Legal/Financial Contracts, and the Personal Contract between the executive and the coach.

**The Learning Contract** includes:

- Purpose and objectives
- Timelines
- Scope and types of assessment
- 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

**Personal Contracts** between the coach and the executive include:

- Guidelines on honesty, openness, and reliability between executive and coach
- Understanding of the coach's theoretical and practical approach and how coaching sessions will be structured
- Agreements on scheduling, punctuality, and cancellation of meetings
- Scoping of how much pre-work coach and executive will do before each coaching session
- Guidelines on giving and receiving feedback
- Understanding of when the coach will be available to the executive and vice versa, and how contact will be made
- Agreements on follow-up and documentation
- Confirmation of locations and times for meetings and phone calls

### **Executive's Commitments**

- ☐ Actively participate in establishing learning and personal contracts.
- ☐ As your organization deems appropriate, participate in establishing, monitoring, and administering business/legal/financial contract(s) with the coach.
- ☐ Adhere to the learning contract and use it to gauge progress and success.
- ☐ Adhere to the personal contract and hold the coach to it as well.

### **Coach's Commitments**

- ☐ Share your own standards and guidelines for contracting with the executive and organization while respecting and agreeing to use the organization's standards.
- ☐ Actively use the learning contract to plan and deliver coaching and to assess progress and results.
- ☐ Use the personal contract as the set of guidelines to follow in all interactions with the executive; hold the executive to the guidelines as well.
- ☐ 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 reestablish them as mutually agreeable between your practice and the executive's organization.

**Other Partners' Commitments**

- ☐ Establish and disseminate standards for learning contracts in your organization.
- ☐ Actively participate in establishing and supporting the executive's learning contract.
- ☐ Respect the personal contract as established between the coach and executive.
- ☐ Ensure that the coach has and uses business/legal/financial contractual information.
- ☐ 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 developmental action 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 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. In some cases, the coach administers a formal 360-degree assessment.

There are times when an executive or her organization chooses not to initiate a full executive coaching process. Sometimes, rather than providing full coaching, the executive participates in feedback debriefing/development planning. This process can be appropriate for gathering data, receiving feedback, and creating a development plan. It is often conducted without an executive coaching partnership as recommended in this Handbook. Without that partnership, however, it can be difficult for the executive to implement change in herself or in the system.

When separate assessment and development planning has been done and coaching is added after the fact, it may be necessary to include others in further data gathering, review, and goal setting. When assessment and planning are done without a formal coaching phase, some coaching should accompany the presentation and review of the results. This will help the executive not only understand the data and their implications, but also make the best use of the information to increase self-awareness and identify development areas with the greatest potential for success.

In addition to assessing the executive, it is also valuable to assess the team and organization with and within which the executive works. 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. These systems factors may indicate how the organization operates, the results achieved, or predictive measures of likely success. They can be assessed through direct observation, questionnaires, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and other methods. The data collected on the organizational system are often valuable to share with others besides the executive. If the larger assessment is contemplated, the coaching partnership needs to decide ahead of time how to deal with the data and include these decisions in the learning contract.

### **Executive's Commitments**

- ☐ Maintain an open attitude toward feedback and other assessment results, considering all information as hypotheses to be proved or disproved.
- ☐ Invest the required time to expedite the assessment phase.
- ☐ Partner with the coach to identify situations, such as meetings and events, which might provide on you and your organization.
- ☐ Ask questions and digest feedback to make the best use of assessment information.

### **Coach's Commitments**

- ☐ Be knowledgeable in a broad range of assessment methodologies.
- ☐ 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 in which to deliver assessment feedback. Deliver feedback in ways that encourage the executive to act upon her assessment.
- ☐ Offer a clear context for the strengths and limitations of the testing process.

- ☐ Help the executive use her assessment data to create a development action plan.

#### **Other Partners' Commitments**

- ☐ 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. These goals focus on achievements and changes the executive can target, both for himself and for his organization. Initial goals are established when coaching begins and 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.

Goals are based on valid and reliable data that exemplify how the executive should learn new skills, change his behavior, work on organizational priorities, or achieve specific business results. After a specified time period, progress is measured against goals, and they are updated to adapt to the executive's changing capabilities and the organization's evolving priorities. 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 on the job based on the established 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.



- ☐ Document the coaching goals and 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 valid and reliable data 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 practical activity of coaching is 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:

- enhance self-awareness of the implications of typical behaviors
- learn skills, build competencies, change behaviors, and achieve results
- reflect on ways to improve and refine 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, coaching on dressing for success, organizational development consultation, process reengineering, and video coaching. 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, other arrangements are made. 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.
- ☐ Willingly be vulnerable and take risks.
- ☐ Focus on your own growth within the context of your current and future organizational role.
- ☐ Transfer learning gained through coaching to your day-to-day work.
- ☐ Exchange feedback with your coach about the helpfulness of the coaching.
- ☐ Seek feedback from others in the organization about the results of your 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

Upon completing the coaching sessions, the executive and his coach take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the executive will be able to continue his development.

Applying the results of the coaching within the context of the executive's long-term development is an important part of this process. It usually includes the joint preparation of a long-term development plan identifying 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 monitor future progress in partnership with the executive. The coach, executive, and other stakeholder incorporate into the long-term plan a regular review of progress toward objectives or goal reassessment. A successful executive coaching process serves as a catalyst for the executive's long-term development.

### Executive's Commitments

- ☐ When the coaching process is complete, discuss its results with your coach, including how successfully you feel your development needs have been addressed.
- ☐ Identify any areas where gaps might exist or further progress could be made.
- ☐ Identify any areas that may become more critical to address 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 monitoring 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 performance, strengths, and development needs.

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Recommend internal and external means of development that best fit the needs of the executive and the organization.
- ☐ Communicate with the executive's manager or other stakeholders to ensure commitment to his future development, including regular progress reviews.
- ☐ After the coaching ends, make yourself available for questions and clarification.
- ☐ Check in with the executive occasionally, as appropriate, to maintain the relationship.

### **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 performance, strengths, and development needs.

## Overview of Guidelines for Each Member of the Executive Coaching Partnership

### Executive's Guidelines

#### Managing Confidentiality

- ☐ Partner with the coach and other members of your organization to write a confidentiality agreement that specifies what information will and will not be shared, in which circumstances, with whom, and how, including guidelines on electronic forms of communication.
- ☐ Whenever there is a question regarding how information is or should be handled, communicate directly with other members of the coaching partnership to come to an agreement.
- ☐ 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.

#### Pre-coaching Activities

- ☐ Consult with your stakeholders to determine if executive coaching is right for you, establish the appropriate goals, and select the best coach.
- ☐ Work in partnership with others to make sure all business and financial contracts are expedited.
- ☐ Inform your coach about you, your organization, and your situation, and begin the process with a willingness to learn

#### Contracting

- ☐ Actively participate in establishing a learning contract and a personal contract for your coaching.
- ☐ As appropriate in your organization, participate in establishing, monitoring, and administering business/legal/financial contract(s) with your coach.
- ☐ Adhere to the learning and personal contracts. Use them to guide what you do in activities related to your coaching, including how you gauge your progress and success.

## Assessment

- ☐ Invest the needed time to expedite your assessment.
- ☐ Maintain an open attitude toward feedback and other assessment results.
- ☐ Work collaboratively with your coach to identify and ask questions about situations that might provide insight into you and your organization.
- ☐ Make the best use of feedback and other assessment information to change you and your organization as needed.

## Goal Setting

- ☐ Collaborate with stakeholders to understand how others perceive your needs for change and development.
- ☐ Be honest about your own priorities for coaching.
- ☐ Clarify what you need to do to achieve your goals.
- ☐ Invest the time in coaching and on the job to achieve your goals.

## Coaching

- ☐ Be open and willing to try new things and take appropriate risks.
- ☐ Focus on what you need to do to learn and take action within the context of your work role.
- ☐ Exchange feedback with your coach and others in your organization about your performance and how the coaching has helped you achieve the desired results.

## Transitioning to Long-Term Development

- ☐ Work with your coach and others in your organization to identify improvements and opportunities for further progress.
- ☐ Participate in formulating a long-term plan for your continued development.
- ☐ Establish an agreement with an appropriate person in your organization to support and monitor your future development.
- ☐ Follow through with your plan and invest the time needed to achieve your long-term development goals.



- ☐ Communicate with your coach and the appropriate people in your organization about the effectiveness of the coach and the coaching process.

## Coach's Guidelines

### Managing Confidentiality

- ☐ Work within the proprietary and confidentiality guidelines of the organization's contracts and documents.
- ☐ In general, within the boundaries of the law, keep all organizational information confidential unless it is otherwise available to the public.
- ☐ Do not share with anyone except the executive herself any details regarding that executive unless members of the coaching partnership have agreed otherwise.
- ☐ When getting feedback from others about the executive, be clear up front about the terms of confidentiality and work strictly within these terms.

### Pre-coaching Activities

- ☐ Participate in the organization's selection and orientation process for coaches.
- ☐ Provide the needed information about you and your practice.
- ☐ Partner with the executive and other members of the organization to facilitate decision making and communication regarding the coaching.

### Contracting

- ☐ Share your own standards and guidelines for contracting with the executive and organization while respecting and agreeing to use the organization's standards as feasible.
- ☐ Actively use the learning and personal contracts to plan and deliver coaching and to assess progress and results.
- ☐ Negotiate the terms of the contracts in good faith and comply with them in full, or reestablish them as mutually agreeable and in a timely fashion.

### Assessment

- ☐ Be knowledgeable in a broad range of assessment methodologies. Administer only those for which you have been fully trained or otherwise adequately prepared, offering a clear context for their strengths and limitations.

- ☐ Deliver feedback in a safe, supportive environment and in ways that encourage the executive to constructively act upon the assessment.
- ☐ Help the executive use the assessment data to create a development action plan.

### **Goal Setting**

- ☐ Facilitate collaboration between the executive and her stakeholders to identify and agree upon specific and measurable coaching goals.
- ☐ Document the coaching goals and communicate them in writing to all members of the coaching partnership.
- ☐ As the coaching progresses, adjust goals based on interim results and changing circumstances and priorities.

### **Coaching**

- ☐ Adhere to the standards and guidelines for practice outlined in this Handbook.
- ☐ Maintain the coaching focus on the goals that have been agreed upon by the partnership.
- ☐ Participate actively in all meetings with the executive and her stakeholders, preparing relevant action items, role-modeling, applying adult learning principles, and creating an environment that supports exploration and change.
- ☐ Offer truthful and relevant feedback during coaching in helpful and supportive ways.

### **Transitioning to Long-Term Development**

- ☐ Facilitate, guide, and make recommendations for a long-term development plan for the executive based on the coaching experience and your expertise.
- ☐ Communicate with the executive's manager and/or stakeholders to ensure commitment to the executive's future development.
- ☐ After the coaching ends, make yourself available for questions and clarification. Check in with the executive occasionally, as appropriate, to maintain the relationship and her learning momentum.

## Other Partners' Guidelines

### Managing Confidentiality

- ☐ Actively participate in agreeing on what information will or will not be shared, with whom, by whom, when, in what form, and under what circumstances.
- ☐ Keep any information learned about the executive as a result of the coaching confidential, unless otherwise agreed before the coaching begins.
- ☐ Ensure that no confidential information coming out of the coaching process is shared electronically unless you can control access to that information.
- ☐ Identify an internal resource who can advise you and the coach on questions of confidentiality and other sensitive topics and can help resolve these issues.

### Pre-coaching Activities

- ☐ Establish and follow standard practices for selecting, matching, and orienting coaches for specific projects.
- ☐ Work in partnership with the executive and coach to determine coaching needs, requirements, and desired outcomes.
- ☐ Clear any barriers for coaching contracts and activities to be completed.

### Contracting

- ☐ Ensure that standards for learning contracts are established and disseminated in your organization; become familiar with those standards.
- ☐ Actively participate in establishing and supporting the executive's learning contract.
- ☐ As appropriate, actively participate in establishing and supporting business/legal/financial contract(s) for the coaching.
- ☐ As appropriate, facilitate the formal contracting and payment process in your organization.

### Assessment

- ☐ Respect the agreed-upon level of confidentiality for information that comes out of the executive coaching process.

- ☐ Provide honest, accurate, and complete information about the executive and the organization.
- ☐ Participate in identifying and facilitating ways for the coach to directly observe the executive and the organization.

### **Goal Setting**

- ☐ Be honest and direct about your goals for the coaching.
- ☐ Collaborate with the executive and other members of the partnership to agree on appropriate coaching goals.
- ☐ 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, allowing him to take the agreed-upon time to achieve them before changing his responsibilities or the resources he needs.

### **Coaching**

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Make suggestions and help the executive get the support he needs from others in the organization.

### **Transitioning to Long-Term Development**

- ☐ Actively participate in creating a long-term development plan for the executive.
- ☐ Facilitate internal and external means of development.
- ☐ Share ongoing constructive feedback with the executive about his progress toward development objectives.
- ☐ Evaluate the effectiveness of the coach and the coaching process; provide the coach and others in the organization with feedback to maximize the effectiveness of future coaching.

# Core Competencies of the Executive Coach

By

*Susan Ennis, Robert Goodman, William Hodgetts, James Hunt, Richard Mansfield,  
Judy Otto, and Lew Stern*

## ***Why a Competency Model?***

What are the essential competencies of the effective executive coach? This is a challenging and important question. A number of writers have addressed this question over the past decade.<sup>i</sup> Unfortunately, commercial concerns and a lack of research in the field make it difficult to find a reasonable answer. The danger for consumers is that, given the lack of standards, they may be vulnerable to fads and sales pitches without a clear sense of how to evaluate executive coaches and the coaches' ability to meet the consumers' needs. Our goal in offering this work is to provide an initial framework of executive coaching to define the needs in specific situations and develop criteria for coach selection, not dissimilar to any good human resource selection process. In addition, we also hope to stimulate further research and dialogue on this critically important topic. The competencies we will describe here are based on our collective experience and judgment as executive coaches, executives, educators, and consumers of executive coaching services. The competencies must be considered tentative – to be refined as further research becomes available.

## **Defining Executive Coaching**

Our systems-oriented definition of executive coaching is<sup>ii</sup>:

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

A discussion of competencies has to begin with the question, “competent for what?” In this work we consider those competencies that we believe are necessary to effectively execute the tasks described in this “baseline” definition. Clearly such a set of tasks requires a broad set of competencies.<sup>ii</sup> Examination of the definition suggests that the competent executive coach will likely possess or display psychological knowledge, business acumen, organizational knowledge, knowledge about coaching, coaching skills needed to perform essential coaching tasks, and a set of personal attributes that serve as a foundation for these competencies and skills.

## Construction of this Competency Description

Drawing on our own experiences as executive coaches, managers of coaching in organizations, and/or coaching researchers and educators we began a process of attempting to articulate these competencies, skills and attributes. Ultimately, we developed four competency areas including “psychological”, “business”, “organizational” and “coaching” competencies.<sup>iii</sup> We stress that it is quite likely that few coaches are highly effective across every single one of the competency anchors listed under each of these areas. It is also the case that certain coaching engagements will draw more on one or more competencies or skill sets than other sets. However, in our experience, significant competence in each of the four areas is in all likelihood essential.

While the need for some competencies may vary from situation to situation, we also articulate here a set of personal *attributes* that are likely to be important regardless of context. Similar to the growing awareness on the part of leadership-development researchers and practitioners of the importance of emotional intelligence in that area, our experience suggests that emotional intelligence competencies are important to the effectiveness of executive coaches as well.<sup>iv</sup>

Finally, the reader will note that we consider each competency or attribute from a basic or foundational level and from a more advanced perspective as well. In doing so, we are trying to

capture the simple premise that individual coaches will demonstrate a varying level of effectiveness within each competency as a function of both their natural gifts and their current level of development and that competency at the basic level is essential while an advanced level can be helpful in many situations.

We realize that research on this area is continuing apace and that these competency descriptions are subject to further scrutiny and debate. Matching coach, executive, and organization still requires a bit of intuition on the part of those involved because of the state of research in the field and because of the ambiguous nature of many coaching assignments. In spite of these limitations, given the growth of executive coaching, we believe it is critically important to assist executives, organizations, coaches and coaching educators and researchers by providing focus and language and by so doing try to help move the dialogue forward.

## Potential Uses of this Model

Executive coaching, by its very nature, must manage the expectations of a variety of stakeholders. Consistent with that reality, we believe these competency descriptions should be of assistance to the following audiences:

1. Organizations that contract with executive coaches to provide services to their employees. Typically, within an organization that utilizes the services of executive coaches, one or more individuals are responsible for sourcing coaches. This description of competencies should be useful as part of the application process, in the interviewing of potential coaches and as a strategy for organizing a database of coaching capabilities. The list should be useful in assessing coaches' references as well. Finally, those responsible for matching executives and coaches can use this model as an initial screening tool to assess the kind of issues with which the executive needs help and the skills and attributes required to offer that help.
2. Executives who are choosing a coach. The executive who is considering coaching can be operating at something of a disadvantage without some sense of the universe of competencies from which he or she can draw. The executive using this list of competencies should consider her or his issues and needs and make sure that in the interview process she or he checks to see whether the coach appears to have the right competencies.
3. Executive coaches planning their own development. Most executive coaches are life-long learners, or should be. Those wishing to guide their development intentionally can consider their strengths and weaknesses by considering each of these competencies.



Likewise, the executive coach can also use the competencies to consider the kinds of coaching cases to which he or she is best suited.

4. Designers of training programs and curricula for future executive. There are now a number of executive coaching training institutes and academic programs and more are likely to start up over the next decade. Too often, training and education for coaches offers little more than a few days of workshops with some follow up coaching. As this list of competencies implies, it makes little sense to expect that an individual can become an effective executive coach in one week, or one month for that matter. Those teaching executive coaches or running institutes or programs should grapple with the serious challenge of helping their clients develop a broad and deep set of organizational, psychological, business, and coaching competencies.

### **Please Provide Feedback on this Document**

*Thank you for your interest in Core Competencies of the Executive Coach. As you will read, this effort to articulate the competencies of effective executive coaches was based on an on-going dialogue involving individuals with significant experience as executive coaches, coaching practice managers, educators, and supervisors of coaches, and researchers and authors on the topic. It was undertaken as part of our effort to support quality practices in the field. We ask that in return for this service, you provide us your feedback. Please e-mail [otto.judy@gmail.com](mailto:otto.judy@gmail.com), and let us know your role, how you have made use of this document, and your own perspective on the competencies of an effective executive coach. We thank you in advance for your help.*

## The Core Competencies

### Psychological Knowledge

In laying out the competencies and knowledge essential for the effective executive coach, it is important to differentiate between *formal* psychological knowledge – that is, knowledge of psychological theories and concepts relevant to the practice of executive coaching – and *tacit* psychological knowledge, sometimes also referred to as social intelligence or emotional intelligence. This section describes the formal psychological knowledge necessary for effective executive coaching.

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

## Business Acumen

Executive coaches need business acumen in order to understand the goals and work context of their coachees. Business knowledge also gives executive coaches credibility with their coachees and others in the coachees' organization. In addition to general business knowledge, coaches need to acquire knowledge of the specific businesses of their coachees.

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

## Organizational Knowledge

Executive coaches work with coachees who must accomplish their work goals and advance their careers within the context of their organization(s). Therefore, it is important for executive coaches to understand organizational structures, systems, processes, and how to assess all of these elements of the organization in which the coachee works.

Basic	Advanced
<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic organizational structures, systems and processes including functional, divisional and matrix organizational forms as well as the behavioral patterns associated with each</li> <li>• Organizational assessment and diagnosis</li> <li>• Organizational design and development principles and practices</li> <li>• The impact and role of organizational cultures and subcultures</li> <li>• The phases of team development and the characteristics of effective team leadership</li> <li>• Models of leadership</li> <li>• Leadership development programs and processes</li> <li>• Organization development methodologies</li> <li>• Organizational systems theory</li> <li>• The nature and role of organizational politics, power and influence</li> <li>• Organizational change management theories and practices</li> <li>• Consulting theory and practices</li> </ul>	<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The processes of executive talent management and succession planning</li> <li>• The tasks, challenges, and success factors associated with executives coming into new roles or assignments (“on-boarding”)</li> <li>• The nature of and processes associated with organizational learning (e.g. knowledge transfer, knowledge management, information sharing, etc.)</li> <li>• The distinctive characteristics of family- owned and family-operated enterprises</li> <li>• The processes associated with organizational design principles</li> <li>• The practices associated with changes in organizational designs</li> <li>• Diversity management issues</li> </ul>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The role of ethics in business and in organizational consulting</li><li>• Models of the learning organization</li><li>• Models of succession and leadership transition</li></ul> |  |
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## Coaching Knowledge

Executive Coaches need to have specific knowledge of theory, research, and practice in the developing field of executive coaching.

Basic	Advanced
<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The history of executive coaching</li> <li>▪ Executive coaching models and theories</li> <li>▪ The definitions of coaching and executive coaching as a specialty practice</li> <li>▪ Seven overarching principles for executive coaching: systems perspective, results orientation, business focus, partnership, competence, integrity, and judgment <sup>ii</sup></li> <li>▪ 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 <sup>ii</sup></li> <li>▪ The underlying principles and approaches of the different types of coaching and how they differ from and/or can be incorporated into executive coaching</li> <li>▪ The distinction between executive coaching and other models of coaching</li> </ul>	<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evolving trends in the practice of executive coaching</li> <li>▪ How coaching models can be developed and customized to emerging needs and trends</li> </ul>

Coaching Knowledge (Continued)

Basic	Advanced
<p><i>Understanding of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The role of manager as coach and the impact of executive coaching on the development of that capability</li> <li>▪ The roles coaches can play and when and how to effectively apply them (e.g. trainer, mentor, advisor, etc.)</li> <li>▪ The differences between executive coaching and other helping methods for executives (e.g. counseling, consulting, therapy, mentoring, etc.)</li> <li>▪ How coaching theories and methods apply to various situations of individual coaching clients</li> <li>▪ How to tailor the coaching process to adapt it to the unique needs and circumstances of the coachee and the organization</li> <li>▪ Measurement of coaching outcomes and process</li> <li>▪ Research findings on executive coaching (past and emerging)</li> <li>▪ The core competencies of executive coaches</li> <li>▪ The wide variety of available coaching resources (books, articles, internet sites, tools, etc.)</li> <li>▪ How to maintain and implement a continuous plan for one's own professional development</li> </ul>	

## 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. Many of these tasks can also be viewed as specific skills that an executive coach can develop and hone.

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



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

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

Development Planning	
<b>Basic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partner with Human Resources</li> <li>▪ Conduct debriefing and feedback sessions with the coachee of the assessments and 360-degree results</li> <li>▪ Establish specific coaching goals (behavioral, cognitive, skills, business, relationships, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Help the coachee design and create action plans and a coaching time table</li> <li>▪ 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</li> <li>▪ Establish qualitative and quantitative measures of results for the coaching goals</li> <li>▪ Determine what can be achieved in coaching and recommend appropriate training and other methods to achieve other developmental goals</li> <li>▪ Quickly identify the need for, and make referrals to other helping professionals</li> <li>▪ Gain commitment for the coachee's self-management of coaching action plans</li> <li>▪ Help the boss to provide useful feedback and to coach the coachee as his/her manager</li> </ul>	<b>Advanced</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involve other development resources in coaching interventions (mentors, trainers, consultants, therapists, physicians, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Continually build and manage a network of referral sources to other relevant professional services and providers</li> </ul>

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

Facilitating Development and Change (Continued)	
<b>Basic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 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.)</li><li>▪ Coach the boss to better support the coachee and his/her business and coaching objectives</li></ul>	<b>Advanced</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Use stress management and relaxation techniques</li><li>▪ Manage and supervise other coaches and members of the executive's organization in the application of the guidelines for coaching practice</li><li>▪ Identify coaching research needs and design and conduct research to fill those needs</li><li>▪ Present and share knowledge of and experience with coaching with other professionals through publications, conferences, seminars, and other vehicles</li></ul>

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

## Attributes and Abilities

A number of underlying attributes and abilities facilitate performance of the Coaching Tasks described in the previous section. An individual who demonstrates the following nine categories of attributes may be more likely to be effective as an executive coach: **Mature Self-confidence; Positive Energy; Assertiveness; Interpersonal Sensitivity; Openness and Flexibility; Goal Orientation; Partnering and Influence; Continuous Learning and Development; and Integrity.** An effective executive coach may further develop these attributes and abilities as a result of the demands and opportunities of the coaching role.

Mature Self-confidence	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appears comfortable with himself/herself</li> <li>• Shows maturity; demonstrates that she or he has gained wisdom from personal and professional experience</li> <li>• Shows confidence; places an appropriate value on his or her own abilities and perspectives</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates a sense of comfort around senior management or others in power; views him/herself as a peer to senior managers.</li> <li>• Demonstrates courage; is willing to take on situations that may involve significant risk</li> <li>• Thinks independently; considers options or perspectives that may go against prevailing views</li> <li>• Has experienced and learned from a variety of personal and work challenges</li> </ul>

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



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

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

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

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

Partnering and Influence	
Basic	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carefully plans and tailors his or her own words in ways that achieve a desired impact</li> <li>• Presents arguments that address others' most important concerns and issues</li> <li>• Involves others as partners in a process, to gain their support and buy-in</li> <li>• 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&amp;D, etc.)</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Demonstrates inclusiveness by encouraging the participation of multiple stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is perceived by others as being of the stature of an executive or senior consultant</li> <li>• Understands, anticipates and manages highly political situations</li> <li>• Formulates effective strategies by carefully considering the concerns, motivations, interrelationships, and preferred styles of all key players</li> <li>• Asks powerful questions that facilitate reflection or problem solving</li> </ul>

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

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

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<sup>i</sup> 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.

<sup>ii</sup> 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).

<sup>iii</sup> This 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.