



“Even if executive coaching costs \$50K (which it doesn’t), it’s barely a rounding error to invest in the coaching of a key player who has responsibility for millions of dollars and for key human resources. Coaching is a success if one direct report, who used to be intimidated to speak up, comes up with an innovative idea.”

- CEO, Fortune 100 Company

“I’ll bet most of the companies that are in life-or-death battles got into that kind of trouble because they didn’t pay enough attention to developing their leaders.”

- Wayne Calloway
Chairman, Pepsi Co.

Executive Coaching: An Investment In Creating Masterful Leadership

Gail Schaper-Gordon, Ph.D.

As a result of the chaotic and transformational business environment of the ‘70’s and ‘80’s, the art and science of management has also been radically transformed. Consequently, executive coaching has become a highly valued resource within corporate life. Our firm has been coaching top leadership since 1986.

Regardless of how you look at it, you are your primary instrument of interpersonal influence, organizational impact, and personal accomplishment and fulfillment. So, elevate your game. Get a coach.

The Management Landscape Has Undergone a Sea Change

<u>The Industrial Age</u>	<u>The Information Age</u>
⊖ Please superiors	⊖ Delight customers
⊖ Command-and-control	⊖ Empowering and participatory
⊖ Stable	⊖ Agile
⊖ Meddle	⊖ Enable
⊖ Conforming	⊖ Outside-the-box action
⊖ Need-to-know	⊖ Open and transparent
⊖ Fiefdoms	⊖ Interdependent networks

In the prior Age, management skills stemmed from a *heroic military model* — plan, control, delegate, coordinate, and motivate. As the Information Age hurtles forward toward the next millennium, within a business environment characterized by permanent whitewater, the high impact leadership competencies are now dramatically different:

⊖	The Explorer:	Forges a vision and is an agent of change
⊖	The Beacon:	Instills trust and inspires passionate commitment to the vision
⊖	The Advocate:	Clearest voice in support of visionary, strategic, and values-driven behavior
⊖	The Facilitator:	Creates a consultative and teaming work style within the culture

“A key goal of successful introspection is authentic self-confidence. That is, not the overbearing bravado of a command-and-control manager, but an openness to facing uncertainty, ambiguity, and paradox. The most effective leaders are able to be both vulnerable and quietly self-confident at the same time, more open about their weaknesses than their strengths (which speak for themselves).”

- Mark Brenner, Ph.D.
Chairman, TGCP

“This company is not going to be successful unless we have people who can learn from experience. We need our people to act independently, be accountable, and be responsible for managing their own piece of the business. It takes a certain amount of reflection to do that successfully.”

- Joseph Galerneau
V.P. of Executive Training
AT&T

- ⊞ **The Partner:** Encourages a collegial, supportive, and collaborative workstyle
- ⊞ **The Coach:** Brings out the best in the organization’s people, in terms of their aspirations, potential, performance, and contribution

This set of six leadership roles, when used, creates extraordinarily powerful leverage for the executive. Do you know how far from criterion you are on each of the six? Do you know the best ways to close the gap?

Well, just as in sports and in the performing arts, it’s now increasingly becoming the case in business that the more successful you are, the more likely it is that you will use a coach to deepen and extend your success. Tune up your game.

High Performing Executives vs. Under Performing Ones

We now actually understand a great deal about what differentiates the successful leader from the under-performing one. Successful people are *aggressive learners*. They are individuals who:

- ⊞ Constantly **seek feedback** and are extremely analytical about their successes and failures
- ⊞ Possess a finely tuned capacity for **self-reflection** and **self-awareness**
- ⊞ Seek a wide **variety of experiences**, out of both a sense of curiosity and the sense that experience is the best medium for self-discovery
- ⊞ Constantly **strive to learn something new and different** by searching for comparisons, contrasts, and generalizable insights
- ⊞ Find ways to **apply new learnings** to new situations
- ⊞ Use strengths to modify weaknesses

The bad news is that only about 10% of us are by nature active learners. The good news, though, is that much of what it takes to be an aggressive learner is coachable.

So, What Does It Take?

Much of what our coaching model focuses on is building a set of skills that helps the candidate become a more agile learner. Increasingly greater agility is pursued in four different spheres, each of which has a marked influence on a person's learning curve and on their performance as a leader.

I. **Mental Agility.** The candidate discovers ways to more consistently:

- ⊞ embrace complexity
- ⊞ confront ambiguity
- ⊞ expand their interests and perspectives
- ⊞ pursue complexity out of heightened curiosity
- ⊞ view penetrating questions as more important than answers

II. **Interpersonal Finesse.** The candidate develops more techniques with which to:

- ⊞ self-reflect and augment self-awareness
- ⊞ catch their own counter-productive behavior and modify it
- ⊞ vary their role and style to the situation
- ⊞ embrace conflict and harness it for creative ends

III. **Change Mastery.** The candidate's executive repertoire is broadened when they:

- ⊞ learn how to behave as strategically as possible
- ⊞ employ hypothetical modeling in their thinking and problem-solving
- ⊞ embrace the underlying spirit of continuous improvement
- ⊞ come to understand how critical tenacity is in any change initiative

IV. **Goal Orientation.** The candidate hones a high-impact results orientation by adding or refining the following capabilities:

- ⊞ create a presence and inspire others by consistently acting "on purpose" (i.e., acting strategically)
- ⊞ address their own performance and others' in a systematic, developmental, and strategic way
- ⊞ differentiate among the various levels of priorities and act accordingly (i.e., the two-by-two matrix of *Urgent x Important*)
- ⊞ deliver on promises and expectations