What is Executive Coaching?

Executive Coaching is about change and transformation. It is about growth, development & changing behaviours. In essence:

* ***Coaching is essentially a conversation*** – a dialogue between a coach and a coachee – with a productive, results-oriented context. Coaching involves helping individuals access what they know. A coach assists, supports and encourages individuals to find the answers.
* ***Coaching is about learning*** – A coach can observe patterns, set the stage for new actions and then work with the individual to put these new, more successful actions into place. Through various coaching techniques such as listening, reflecting, asking questions and providing information, coachees become self-correcting (they learn how to correct their behaviour themselves) and self generating (they generate their own questions and answers).
* ***Coaching is more about asking the right questions than providing answers***. A coach engages in a collaborative alliance with the individual to establish and clarify purpose and goals and to develop a plan of action to achieve these goals.
* ***Provide people with the opportunity to strengthen their leadership practice***. Coaching supports people in their current roles and also supports people exploring future development and opportunities.

Coaching can be used for a wide variety of personal and professional development including (this list is not exhaustive):

* Developing skills & knowledge in specific/targeted areas
* Improving performance & effectiveness
* Personal development
* Managing change and transition
* Building a positive workplace culture
* Conflict management
* Performance management including managing underperformance
* Career coaching

**Benefits**

Coaching as a learning and development initiative has a number of benefits. At an organisational level, coaching builds organisational capability and transforms culture.

At an individual level coaching can help to:

* Unearth and tap potential and creativity
* Coordinate career and personal life
* Increase the ability to adapt to change and transition
* Improve confidence and decision making
* Remove performance fears and anxiety
* Eliminate unhealthy work stressors
* Increase self awareness
* Improve the ability to reflect & learn from actions.

**Manage Expectations**

Executive Coaching is designed to provide coachees with a greater capacity to change behaviour create new knowledge and produce results with a greater confidence in their ability to do so. Coaches are not magicians though, and it is up to individuals to engage in the process willingly to get the most out of it. This often means between session work. The responsibility for taking action and learning rests with the coachee.

Starting Your Coaching Program

CfOD has a team of expert, highly qualified and experienced coaches. Integral to our process is the appropriate matching of the right coach for each coachee. It is essential that the right chemistry and ‘fit' is achieved to ensure maximum benefit of any coaching program. Ultimately our coaching methodology focuses on aligning individual and organisational goals to improve individual and team performance.

**Comprehensive Coaching Support**

Your coaching program will consist of much more than high level support during the scheduled session time. Your coaching program with CfOD is a comprehensive professional development support program that includes:

* A series of face-to-face confidential and personally focused experiences.
* Telephone and email contact with your coach as required throughout the program.
* Use of our rooms and access to our significant online resources and library.
* A dedicated Project Manager responsible for integrating all aspects of the coaching program, including administration and client-coach-coachee relationship management. Your CfOD Project Manager is your ‘go-to’ person for the duration of the program.
* Review of any of your relevant work documents, such as resumes, or important business cases at any time throughout the program.
* Support with suggested reading material and other professional development options.
* Session preparation by your coach before, after and in between sessions to ensure professional support at the highest level.

**Making the Most Out of Your Executive Coaching Program**

Executive coaching is a collaborative partnership, a partnership between you, your organisation and an executive coach. Coaching is about learning and discovering processes to assist you in moving forward in new ways that will work for you. Coaching is not something that is “done” to you, nor does someone show you every step of the way. From a business perspective, the purpose of this partnership is twofold:

1. Facilitate both your and your organisation’s learning,
2. Achieve identified professional and/or business outcomes.

The following elements will help you make the most out of this partnership:

1. **Make time**

Making time in your diary for coaching is one of the most important strategies in getting the most out of your coaching program. Sit down with your coach at the beginning of the program and schedule your sessions. Coaching is not about finding time to squeeze in an hour and hope that you get there or a phone call every now and then. You need to give yourself time to reflect on the session. In order to maintain commitment to successful outcomes, coaching should be made a priority.

1. **Schedule intentions**

Scheduling your intentions is a great way to keep the momentum going. If it isn’t in your calendar, chances are it’s not going to happen. In order to make sure that you have the time, schedule coaching sessions, between session work and time to reflect in your diary. It is important not to just set the intention, but to also schedule and honour that intention.

1. **Accept constructive feedback**

Consider constructive feedback as a great gift. It will not only guide you but you will become the kind of leader others want to be. Constructive feedback is often the most powerful catalyst for real change. Knowing what success looks like can help you make significant, often fast actions. If you can solicit it and embrace it you show people that you are a mature leader. People admire others who can take feedback and improve, a leader who balances humility and confidence.

1. **Set clear, measurable goals**

Work with your coach to set yourself some goals. Based on those goals, you and your coach can develop a plan; include timelines, resources and measurements of progress. Early in the program, there may be several things that you'd like to work on. It is fine to have a big picture with a list of things you want to accomplish however, it is important not to take on too much and become overwhelmed. Set priorities for the coaching program, knowing that when you focus you can accomplish something meaningful quickly. The goals should reflect what you most want to accomplish.

1. **Stay on track**

Checking in with trusted people in your organisation will help you keep perspective and it is good to know if they are seeing progress. Sit down with your supervisor and talk about where you've been and where you're going. Talking to your supervisor and other trusted people is often is a real ego boost - you get more encouragement and support than you expect by checking in with them. Also remember, the coaching process is dynamic and it changes as new challenges arise. You should stay flexible, and look at these challenges as opportunities to grow. If you have a plan in place, you are able to use it as a guideline while dealing with new challenges as they arise.

1. **Use the tools and resources the coach provides**

Your coach may use a variety of resources, as well as tools to help you learn and build new skills. You may also come across resources that are helpful to you, share these things with your coach. Once you are really engaged in the coaching process, you often find that you get excited about learning and information you previously might not have noticed.

1. **Stay in touch**

Think of your coach as a partner. You owe it to yourself to create a strong partnership that is resourceful. Contacting your coach regularly is a great way to make your coach your partner in your professional development. That doesn’t mean that you need to communicate every day, or every week but you should agree on how much and how often. Time sensitive issues come up, and your coach will want to help with timely advice or consultation. Even after you've finished a coaching program, you may want to stay in touch with your coach from time to time. Your coach would be happy to hear from you.

1. **Focus on successful outcomes**

Even though you don’t know exactly what you want when you start your coaching program, if you have some outcomes in mind and you expect success then you will get what you want and more out of your coaching program. At the end of your coaching program you should feel proud of what you've accomplished and confident about the future. When you find yourself in a challenging place, focus on what you really want out of the coaching program. If you trust the coach, believe in the process, and have faith in yourself, you will be amazed at how you feel when you've completed the work.

**Summary Tips for Success**

To get the most out of your coaching experience:

* Be honest with your coach about your issues and challenges. Dissembling just wastes time and energy in coaching. It may be uncomfortable, but a good coach can not only handle it but make your honesty about yourself an asset.
* Investing in your coaching program whole heartedly will really benefit you and your organisation. Evidence exists that coaching has a five-to-one return on investment.
* Coaching is not a substitute for counselling or therapy. Deep psychological issues should be handled by a professional mental health provider.
* Finding a coach that knows about coaching is most important. Finding a coach that knows about your business is of secondary importance.
* Make sure your coach does a good assessment and understands your areas of concern.

And make the following commitments:

* Assume ownership of your learning. You have a unique learning style, use your coach as a consultant to help maximise this.
* Be upfront with your coach about what is and isn’t working in your coaching sessions
* Engage wholeheartedly in the agreed upon coaching assignments
* Take the required actions for learning and reflect on those actions
* Experimenting with new perspectives and behaviours will help you grow so maintain an open attitude towards your coaching sessions
* Willingly be vulnerable and take risks
* Focus on your own growth within the context of your role
* Transfer learnings you have gained though coaching to your day-to-day work
* Exchange feedback with your coach about the helpfulness of coaching
* Seek feedback from others in your organisation about your progress.