

Executive Coaching Process

Strategic Coaching Network’s (SCN) Coaching Process has five distinct phases to ensure that the coaching relationship is successful for the individual and for the organization. The phases are:

1. Contracting for Success

Based on the strategic context of the coaching relationship as defined in dialogue with the executive(s) responsible for contracting coaching services an agreement that meets both organizational and individual expectations is developed. This agreement is developed through dialogue between: the contracting executive; the executive, manager, or team members being coached; and SCN executive coaches. This contract typically includes the following components:

- Confidentiality agreement to ensure that the privacy of the executive client-coach relationship is protected
- Specifying the individual or team business results expected, including any desired behavioral changes
- Benchmark criteria for core competencies and behaviors required for success
- Leadership and management models to be used
- Understanding of organizational vision, values, and strategies
- Agreement on how success will be measured, including specific metrics and measurement systems used
- Selection of executive coach based on executive’s needs and rapport with coach
- Costs and time frames are agreed upon with the contracting executive
- Schedules and locations (for in-person sessions) for coaching sessions are agreed upon between the client and coach
- Client and coach responsibilities and ground rules for the relationship

2. Diagnostics and Assessments

This phase provides a behavioral or performance mirror for the executive, to help them understand how they see themselves and how others see them. This feedback will assist the executive in achieving greater self-awareness and determine the gap between current levels of performance and the future desired levels. Leadership or management competencies are usually defined by the organization, although SCN can provide prospective on desired leadership and management traits based on our extensive “best practices” research. Assessments and diagnostic tools are chosen based on client and organizational needs. Appropriate diagnostic tools might include:

- Face-to-Face Interviews (with the client, client manager, staff, team members, peers, customers, etc.)

- 360⁰ Feedback Surveys
- Recent performance appraisals
- Shadow coaching (the coach accompanies and observes the executive during their daily routine, meetings, presentations, etc.)
- Personal Interest, Attitudes and Values Assessments
- Behavioral Styles Assessments
- Emotional Competency Assessments
- Leadership Assessments
- Team Basics (for assessing team performance)

3. Feedback, Goal Setting, and Action Planning

An initial feedback and planning session is set-up with the executive or team members being coached. The feedback from the Diagnostic and Assessment phase is presented and the coach assists the individual or team in understanding the data. The coach will point out any inconsistencies, and ask clarifying questions where needed. After the coach and executive agree on current performance levels and behaviors, the dialogue shifts to identifying the future desired performance and behavior paradigms and standards.

Next, the coach assists the executive in identifying or creating their own goals, objectives, beliefs, and paradigms and determines how well the executive is aligned with organizational goals and paradigms. Differences are discussed and the executive sees their performance in the context of the overall organization. The coach supports the executive in understanding underlying beliefs and values that lead to current performance.

The executive then has the opportunity to commit to changing their performance and create new paradigms that allow them to be in alignment with organizational values and goals. The executive works with their coach to develop SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Tangible).

Finally, the executive, with process support and context from the coach, creates an initial action plan to achieve development goals. The action plan can include the following:

- Developmental SMART goals
- Benefits (to the executive and to the organization) of achieving the developmental goals
- Obstacles and potential road blocks to success
- Critical success factors (those initiatives which must go well to achieve the stated goals) are identified
- Strategies and action steps to achieve goals
- Opportunities to leverage current strengths
- Steps to align individual with corporate values
- Support (internal and external) needed to achieve goals
- Additional training or mentoring needs
- Time frames and milestones
- Agreement for follow-up and reporting progress
- Identify elements of the plan to share with contracting executive, manager, or others

4. Coaching for Success

The executive, coach, and contracting executive agree on the action plan and the executive begins to take action. The coach supports the executive by providing challenge to accelerate learning at a pace that is still comfortable for the executive. Weekly coaching sessions provide the opportunity for authentic dialogue to review progress. Achievements are celebrated. Breakdowns are reviewed and analyzed to gain insights for removing future impediments to progress. The coach may support the executive in reframing their view of an event in order to see the event from a new, more empowering, perspective. The coach and executive identify what is working, what is not working, and opportunities for improvement. The initial plan is refined as needed. Additional support needs are identified and the coach assists the executive in getting the support required. The coach provides perspective, context, and process to ensure the executive's success. Learning and developmental techniques may include:

- Traditional training
- E-Learning
- Reading and self study
- Shadow coaching
- Action Learning techniques
- Role plays, Simulations, and Practice Sessions
- Journaling
- Accountability
- Tracking tools for performance metrics

5. Reassess, Refine, and Achieve Sustainability

After an initial period (usually three to six months) assessments that gauge progress toward defined goals are conducted. Often an assessment conducted at the beginning of the process is repeated. Milestones achievements are reviewed. Organizational alignment and impacts are assessed. Any changes needed to ensure continued progress are implemented. The executive also provides feedback on the value of the coaching services received, and identifies areas for improvement. The step is repeated until the goals are achieved. At the completion of this stage the executive has fully integrated the learning into their behavior and is able to self-manage their new way of being.