



the corporate and executive coaching organisation

Emotional Intelligence for Leadership

A Key Success Factor for Corporate Coaching



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Corporate coaching is always about Emotional Intelligence. In the context of coaching for leadership there is no escaping its significance.

As organisations increasingly invest more in corporate and executive coaching, they are becoming more discerning about the quality of the coaching they undertake and of its strategic impact. They are seeking a competitive edge through developing leadership capability and this is particularly so in markets where product or service differentiation is difficult to achieve. Consequently, leadership becomes a key success factor when engaging a corporate coach and in determining the return on investment for any coaching activity.

As a goal-centric, results-orientated approach to professional and personal development, corporate coaching is ideally placed to help achieve corporate objectives within a strategic context through the development of values-based leadership within the organisation. Such coaching involves dynamic interaction through which the coach works with the client to identify options and take actions that move him or her towards clearly defined outcomes. A close alignment between coaching and strategic objectives is vital and much easier to achieve when this is addressed before a coaching engagement begins.

Emotional Intelligence for Leadership

The principles of Emotional Intelligence, established by Daniel Goleman, are now widely accepted as being crucial to a successful workplace. The five 'domains' of Emotional Intelligence, knowing your emotions, managing your own emotions, motivating yourself, recognising and understanding other people's emotions, and managing relationships, are accepted as being critical to good leadership.

High levels of Emotional intelligence are associated with self awareness, a participative management style, decisiveness, a willingness to "do whatever it takes", empowering others, and building and mending relationships. It helps a leader to be open to and to effectively manage change as well as to handle problem employees.

Emotionally intelligent leaders are more committed to their organisation, achieve greater success and are more effective in the workplace. So it no surprise that Emotional Intelligence is now recognised as the basis on which corporate leaders are recruited. Technical competence is taken as a given. It is the leader's ability to engage productively with all stakeholders that will determine their effectiveness in their leadership role.



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***Leadership
Coaching for
Emotional
intelligence***

Goleman has argued that teaching Emotional Intelligence competencies through traditional methods is ineffective. Cognitive learning methods draw on different areas of the brain to emotional learning which involves ways of thinking and acting that are central to an individual's sense of identity. People are thus more likely to resist being "taught" to be more emotionally intelligent.

It takes time to unlearn existing unhelpful behaviours and replace them with new ones, and a different development approach is therefore much more likely to succeed. Whilst coaching is not the only method that can be used to increase Emotional Intelligence it is one that provides ongoing support and challenge over a period of time and can thus have a significant impact.

Within an organisation a number of factors can highlight the need for leadership coaching. It could be identified through classroom-based training, through a performance appraisal or from 360° feedback. Times of change can throw up a need for new leadership styles. Leadership coaching can also be identified for individuals who have failed to achieve a promotion for which they are technically suited but lack the necessary people skills. The individual might request leadership coaching themselves.

One factor, however, that is very common is that of direct observation by stakeholders of an individual who should have leadership potential but is creating their own barriers to progress through their limited behavioural habits.

Successful leaders need a wide behavioural repertoire and the ability to select appropriately in any given situation. This requires behavioural flexibility and leaders need to understand and appreciate the perspectives of different stakeholders and be able to adjust their approach to different individuals or groups accordingly.

When deciding on the criteria for understanding the return on investment on a coaching programme, it is important to determine how these kinds of behaviour are identified, how an improvement will be recognised, and what the organisation will accept as return on investment.

***Emotionally
Intelligent
Leadership
Coaching success***

If you are considering engaging a corporate coach to work with leaders or would-be leaders within your organisation you could find yourself recognising many different situations where coaching would be effective and appropriate and here are some examples of clients we have recently worked with.

One individual had been identified for leadership coaching by a number of stakeholders from the senior leadership team. He was considered to be highly successful in his role but his tendency to ruffle feathers meant others regarded him "rough round the edges". He was inclined to be very opinionated, believed that he understood others' motivations and behaved as though his beliefs were true.



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Through coaching, he was able to appreciate that others' motivations might not be as he assumed and could then adapt his behaviour accordingly. His ability to influence others greatly improved through this understanding. The success of this coaching engagement was measured through feedback from senior stakeholders about the individual's improved ability to influence, positive comments about his improved flexibility of his approach, and, as a knock-on effect, a reduction in the number of complaints about his behaviour.

A second coaching client was a company director, again considered to be technically capable but, in this instance, considered to have a lack of gravitas, a quality believed by the company to be a clear differentiator for effective leadership. This lack of gravitas became apparent, for example, when he was chairing meetings but had little personal impact.

He was identified as a candidate for leadership coaching because he needed to be perceived as a credible leader within the organisation. His habit of being a "willing workhorse" meant that, in an effort to help out, he often took on tasks that were of a level far junior to his role, undermining his standing as a director.

Success was measured through changed perceptions of his leadership capability within the business and quantitatively measured by time spent on his own responsibilities rather than those of others in his team, with a consequent positive return on investment.

In a third example, the individual had been referred for leadership coaching because of an identified lack of flexibility in her approach. Once more, she was an individual who most certainly knew her stuff and this could make her personal style very challenging. Required to present information to the board on a regular basis, her approach could be abrasive and she took no account of the different needs of members of her audience. This single-minded approach was also apparent in her dealings with other stakeholders as well as in the coaching relationship.

Success in this case was immediately evident to the Board who would recognise a change in style and easily measured in terms of feedback from a range of stakeholders.

Leadership Coaching for great organisations

At The Corporate and Executive Coaching Organisation, we have worked closely with a client whose values-based approach to emotionally intelligent leadership provides the backdrop to all coaching assignments.

Starting with a clear mission, they developed a series of corporate values which define the behaviours expected of everyone within the company, how they interact with each other, and the experience that they want customers to have. They determined a sound understanding of the corporate context within which a culture of



excellent performance can thrive, and decided on strategic themes for organisational development which give a consistent focus for the corporate values.

Within this context, it was possible to determine key factors for success for coaching, focused on developing leadership capability which enables their mission, not only to be driven down through the organisation, but also driven back up again by very focused employees at all levels.

The impact on areas relating to Emotional Intelligence is unquestionable with 26% of respondents to a feedback survey reporting improved working relationships and 44% seeing a clear change in communication style following coaching.

The financial return on their investment in coaching has been impressive and the company has been able to quantify a clear financial impact derived from the measures determined at the outset.

Setting up a great coaching relationship

The success of a relationship between your organisation and your coaching partner is dependent on a number of factors. This begins with a discussion with the two organisations about why coaching has been chosen as part of the leadership development strategy. In our experience, coaching is not suited to all organisation cultures and, at CECO, we advise organisations if we believe coaching is not appropriate for them.

Each individual coaching relationship starts with a clear discussion including each individual client's sponsor to define the measures of success. This three-way relationship between sponsor, individual client and coach is a crucial part of ensuring that coaching achieves outcomes that are aligned with corporate goals.

Feedback and evaluation methods should also be agreed at the outset. The organisation will now have a firm foundation on which to build a coaching programme for leadership success.

In conclusion

It is useful to look at wider evidence for the value of corporate coaching. A study of Fortune 1000 companies showed quantifiable improvements:

- 53% of respondents reported improvements in productivity
- 39% of respondents reported improvements in customer service levels
- 32% of respondents reported improvements in retention of senior people who received coaching
- 23% of respondents reported improvements in cost reductions
- 22% of respondents reported improvements in bottom line profitability



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Whilst these figures are impressive, can they be said to relate to the impact coaching has had on Emotional Intelligence? In the same study, recipients of coaching reported improvements in their performance which can, most certainly, be considered to be related to Emotional Intelligence factors:

- 77% of respondents reported improvements in working relationships with direct reports
- 71% of respondents reported improvements in working relationship with the boss
- 67% of respondents reported improvements in teamwork
- 52% of respondents reported improvements in conflict reduction
- 37% of respondents reported improvements in working relationships with clients

Figures such as these demonstrate that the evidence for putting Emotional Intelligence at the heart of corporate and executive coaching programmes is significant. Its impact throughout an organisation can be seen in positive changes in communication, leadership behaviours, and business relationships. It can then, in turn, be clearly linked to organisational strategy through performance management, organisational change programmes, career management and succession planning.

Emotional Intelligence will continue to be a key focus for leadership in the coming years. As Daniel Goleman expands his thinking into the arena of Ecological Intelligence, we can expect to see Emotional Intelligence in the workplace and its wider community rising as a factor in corporate social responsibility strategies too. And it will be the Emotionally Intelligent leaders who will be at the forefront of these trends. As Goleman himself says: "Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas. But the reality is much more primal: Great leadership works through the emotions."

**About
Vicki Espin MA**

Director, The Corporate and Executive Coaching Organisation

- Corporate and Executive Coach
- Co-founder and Director of The Corporate and Executive Coaching Organisation
- Founder of Extraordinary Women UK Conference & Awards
- Author of Getting the best from your Corporate Coach (white paper from www.cecoach.com),
- Co-author of Your Life, Your Choice: You Chose the Life You Have, Now Choose Again! And 77 Habits of Highly Successful Coaches



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Vicki is a highly skilled, professional corporate and executive coach with more than 20 years' experience of working with UK and multi-national organisations representing a wide spectrum of business sectors. Acclaimed as one of the UK's top executive coaches, her work includes 1:1 coaching and team coaching with business leaders, the training of new coaches within organisations and of professional coaches.

Vicki was Director of Coach Development for the Coaching Academy, Europe's leading coach training organisation for 5 years (2000 - 2005) where she tutored more than 5000 aspiring coaches and is now one of just 11 Global Fellows of the Academy. Vicki holds an MA in Human Resource Strategy and a Post Graduate Certificate in Coaching Supervision.

Passionate about the appropriate training of coaches for organisations Vicki served for 2 years on the original steering group which designed and developed the National Occupational Standards for Coaching at Work. She also authored and delivers the ILM Level 7 Diploma and Certificate in Executive Coaching which won the Training Journal 2008 award for Best Coaching Programme and a 2009 National Training Award.

An accomplished speaker, Vicki has spoken at national and international conferences, and has co-authored publications on cultural diversity and personal development.

Vicki's inspirational style of coaching means that she approaches every client relationship with a unique energy that results in the forming of powerful and transformational partnerships which lead to the achievement of extraordinary results.

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