

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: EIGHT REASONS TO NOT HIRE AN EXECUTIVE COACH

Please don't hire a coach. That may sound odd coming from a successful, committed executive coach who provides Strategic Executive Coaching® to senior executives and Strategic Team Coaching® to senior leadership teams. However, there are times to not hire a coach:



Psychotherapy



Nomad



Resistance



Embarrassed



Messenger



Last resort



Not for me!



No strategic link

1. If what the individual needs is psychotherapy—or psychotherapy plus coaching—do not think that coaching alone will be a one-stop solution. Coaching plus therapy is often helpful. But even if the coach has a psychology background, professional boundaries must be respected. The executive coaching contract is for coaching.
2. If the executive has been moved from job to job around the company (nomad syndrome) without any track record or signs of potential success, this is a serious red flag. It is possible this person might benefit from coaching, but some due diligence would be prudent before going down that path.
3. Leaders who are resistant to feedback and/or follow-up are often resistant to change. Truly engaging in an executive coaching relationship as the coachee is a lot of work; it is not for the faint-hearted. And it is not a magic bullet that will cure all ills with minimal input. We coaches expect dedication to the process in order for it to work.
4. If the leader is embarrassed or ashamed of being coached, if they see coaching in a negative light, this does not augur well for achieving the desired improvement in effectiveness. The first step is to see coaching as a positive and to acknowledge that coaching can be beneficial for an executive, the team, and the organization.
5. A coach should never be a messenger or a mouthpiece for the coachee's boss. If the boss does not have in hand a development plan for the coachee, the boss is the one who needs the coaching—bosses need to be accountable for the development of their people.
6. If management has already decided to let someone from the leadership team go, do not hire a coach as a "last ditch" effort to try to turn a poor manager into a good one, particularly if they have not received any feedback on such issues. This sets the wrong tone and a very bad message about the company's dedication to executive development.
7. If the senior leadership of the company says: "Coaching is great, but not for me or my peers," that is trouble. As with all cultural values, the tone is set at the top. The belief that coaching is just for others misses the point of what it means to build a culture of coaching in a company.
8. If the potential coachee's stakeholders do not perceive any value to coaching this individual, don't do it. Boss, direct reports, board members, and peers need to understand how this person's contribution to the company would be improved. If they do not see the strategic link, then coaching is the wrong solution.

Are you wondering if executive coaching is the best solution for change? Do you need help in achieving clarity about what to expect from coaching in a complicated situation?