

Executive Access Leadership Event: Coaching for Breakthrough Performance

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Excerpts from an Executive Access Leadership Event conducted by John Mathews, Director, Institute of Executive Coaching, Australia on 20 Jan'06 at Delhi. This event is a part of an ongoing effort by Executive Access to contribute to the growth of its clients as well as the HR fraternity.

John Mathews took the participants through a journey of self-introspection on their inner potential and shared his techniques for leveraging their experiences, skills and knowledge for accomplishing their goals in an entirely new way. John defined Coaching as “a collaborative, solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of performance, life experience, self-directed learning and the personal growth of people from normal (non-clinical) populations.”

Converting road blocks into flyovers

John explained that $\text{Performance} = (\text{Potential} - \text{Interference})$ and encouraged the participants to check out what was causing the interference in the realization of their true potential. This interference could be internal or external. In both cases the control is in the hands of the individual who has to learn to be aware of the interference and perform in spite of it. A lot of participants discovered that current reality was overwhelming them in terms of lack of ideal systems, processes and people. The key learning was the realization that each individual has to find creative ways of using interferences and constraints as flyovers and not treat these as road blocks.

Many organizations hit road blocks by overwhelming teams with short term focus. This could be due to market realities or simply because of a Kiss Up and Kick Down approach. Coaching can help the leadership as well as the individuals in the team cope up with the current reality and yet be able to take action in alignment with their Goals.

Discover your true potential through John's adaptation of the GROW model

The GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, Wrap up) model of John works best with a trained Coach who takes the participants through a series of questions that ultimately give clarity of purpose and action to the practitioner. However, in the absence of a trained coach, you can try GROW as a Coach with a partner and experience the difference yourself. Reverse the roles and let your partner be the coach next and remember to share your experience with us at rajiv@executiveaccess.co.in.

Goal

What is your Goal? What would you like to achieve? What is the most pressing issue you need to address today? What would be your ideal situation? What would that enable you to do? What would you like to be different when we are finished? What is happening that you don't want? What do you want instead? What would be the result of all that? How important is this to you?

Reality

What is the reality of the current situation? What do you feel, see & hear happening? How often does this happen? How do you know this is accurate? What have you tried so far? What other factors affect the situation? What is the result of all that?

Options

How can you make this happen? What is the first thing you can do? What else would you do? What's another way? If you get "I don't know" try: "Yes you do". What's one more thing you could do? What would you tell me to do if I was in your situation? What are all the possible actions? (Don't think about whether they are realistic at this stage). Who might be able to help? Note: Use "good", "great" etc between each question.

Wrap Up

What options do you think will work best? What action has the most clarity and energy for you? What specifically are you willing to do now (in the next 24 hours)? What obstacles do you expect to face? How will you overcome them? How committed are you to this goal (on a scale of 1 to 10). What support might you need? How and when can you get that support? What are the next steps you are committing to take?

The Spiritual Quotient

Employees give their best when their values are aligned with the values of the leaders and are not overwhelmed by the short term goals or the current realities. This would require an environment where people are encouraged to be authentic and where they are made aware of their potential and are motivated to leverage the learnings from their past experiences in a collaborative manner.

A Coach makes the journey smoother through his experience and knowledge. A good Coach has the techniques and the expertise to bring out the best in the individuals and teams. This is the reason that best of the Athletes, CEOs and even Politicians appreciate the value of Coaching around the world.

The CEOs need to acknowledge that they too need coaching before they expect the employees to follow suit. The short term pressure usually comes from the top and this is the prime factor in defocusing the employees from long term goals which in turn becomes a block in the way of breakthrough performance. The CEOs as well as the individuals in the team need to learn to cope with the short term challenges and yet take action for achieving long term goals. This is where a Coach is needed the most.

Coaching to be the next big thing

Coaching is going to be the next big thing in the armoury of the CEOs and HR Directors in India. Between 25% and 40% of Fortune 500 companies, use executive coaches.

Returns on investment in coaching are estimated at over six times. One of the great things about coaching is the power it has to help the participant reflect on any barriers to achievement in an entirely new way.

India is moving from a talent abundance market to a talent shortage market in several sectors. Executive Access surveys indicate a major shift from Employers market to an Employees' market in the last few years. Talent acquisition, retention and upgrading are proving to be the main constraints to growth. Increased levels of executive search assignments, recruitment ads, innovative incentives to employees with world class working environment, increased investments on training are all indicative of this phenomenon.

What does it mean to coach beyond performance? It means that you are able to tap into the very essence of a group or individual, to their core values, to their sense of identity so that they are motivated and sustained from within. When this happens, even if a person doesn't get immediate results, they persist because they believe in the Truth that they experience at the core of their being. If Nelson Mandela was only results oriented, he would have given up after a few years in prison when there were no apparent results from his initial efforts. Since his motivation came from a deeper place, based on values, identity, truth, and justice, he was able to persist even when nothing seemed to be happening on the outside. To coach beyond performance does lead to sustainable results but it also leads to much more. It unleashes the potential of individuals and groups to live their life purpose.

