

## Ten Reasons for Executives and other Leaders to Hire a Professional Coach

Over the past seven years of working with executives and other leaders, the benefits they realize from working with a professional coach have become clear. In fact, my clients have articulated many of them to me. I hope that by reading this insight, other executives and leaders will be encouraged to reach out and benefit from a professional coach.

I always said during my 25+ years in the corporate world, that executives “put their pants on one leg at a time, like the rest of us.” This, of course, was to emphasize that executives are human, too. What makes them different is that they face grander business challenges than most of us. They have huge responsibilities and very little honest, unconditional support. In the Jay Leno format of going from bottom to top, I offer the following ten reasons for executives and other leaders to work with a professional coach. For the purposes of this list, I will use the term “executive” to include leaders who may not be in executive positions and “he” to include male and female executives..

### 10. Deal more effectively with difficult relationships and conflict

Along with being an executive comes the inescapable challenge of dealing with people, and along with that comes difficult relationships and conflicts. It’s the reality of “the buck stops here.” A professional coach helps the executive separate the emotion from the reality. Having done this, the executive can move forward with actions that productively resolve the issue.

### 9. Learn to define your boundaries and stick to them

Executives have incredible demands on their time and energy. Because they feel the pressure, they often get sucked into solving problems that are outside their responsibility. A professional coach helps the executive define his boundaries and lay out a plan to stick to them. This often results in increased delegation, which allows proteges or peers to grow into new levels of responsibility.

### 8. Get clear around your values, goals and options

Over time, the danger exists for an executive’s values to be subsumed by the corporate values. If this happens, the executive finds himself frustrated and unfocused. With the help of a professional coach, an executive can clarify his values, examine the extent to which he is honoring them, and assess the alignment of his values with the corporation’s.

### 7. Have unconditional support/partnership

Executives are in the middle of organizational politics, and it is often a competitive environment. What may seem like support from a colleague can quickly change, if the organizational structure or climate changes. A professional coach is truly a working partner with the executive and, as such, always keeps the executive’s interests foremost. It is one relationship the executive can count on.

6. Gain new perspectives

We all know the old saying, “You can’t see the forest for the trees.” Executives often find themselves in the middle of the proverbial forest and can’t see the best way out. A professional coach helps open the aperture so that the executive can explore various perspectives on a situation. The executive becomes more creative in resolving problems and defining direction.

5. Identify patterns or beliefs that may be holding you back

It is often said that we don’t see the world as it is, but as we are. Embedded beliefs and paradigms sometimes cloud the way executives see and respond to a situation. The paradox is that those same beliefs and paradigms prevent the executive from being able to identify them on his own. A professional coach holds an outside view that can break through the cloud and help an executive identify the limiting patterns and beliefs.

4. Develop the courage and stamina to ask for what you want

As strange as it may seem, executives may find themselves in a situation where they back off from asking for what they want. This is a well-documented phenomenon for female executives, in particular. The executive may be overly concerned about the impression he may give or the impact of his request on another person. The underlying cause is usually fear of something. A professional coach can help the executive identify and handle the fear.

3. Be held accountable for what you say you want

Executives are accustomed to being held accountable for business results. They are less accustomed to being held accountable for results in other part of their lives, especially if there is no one monitoring the progress. The professional coach acts as the accountability partner to keep the executive on track.

2. Receive objective, non-biased feedback

Executives often don’t hear the truth; they hear what others think they want to hear. Because a professional coach is a partner, the coach’s responsibility is to tell the truth as he sees it. In the trusted relationship, the executive is free to take the feedback, discuss it and learn from it.

1. Vent and be totally honest in a safe, risk-free environment

Executive have frustrations that cannot be voiced in the organizational environment for a variety of reasons. A professional coach becomes the sounding board for the executive to vent and clear the frustrations. This enables a more clear-headed executive to move forward.