

Should Leadership Coaching be an Inside Job?

It is an interesting debate whether leadership coaching should be offered internally by senior executives or whether it is better to engage an external party to do the job. There certainly are pro's and con's both ways. This article takes the discussion a little further.

Although there are many common aspects to leadership coaching across the board from the behavioural considerations to the skills and capabilities of the leader there are many too that are specific to the company in question.

No external leadership coaching professional would ever exceed the knowledge and experience of those that live and breathe the culture of the organisation on a daily basis. In addition to this is the fact that senior executives of long standing have a history and deep experience of the relationship dynamics that currently exist and those that have shaped the way others behave and engage.

If this scenario holds true does it not build a strong case for leadership coaching to be carried out by the appropriate senior executives within the organisation? After all they have the superior knowledge and expertise of the business that would add a valuable dimension to any leadership coaching conversation.

Equally another argument can hold true. When senior executives have been around for an extended period of time they can lose the objectivity and fresh eyes approach that an external party can bring to the table. So can it be with their way of thinking that may have become entrenched and habitual in approaching the organisations challenges and issues.

So which of the options would yield the best results from a leadership coaching perspective? They both certainly have their advantages. The one thing that most would agree with is the fact that there is a place for both. The question is of the balance and weighting of each.

This balance will depend upon the leadership coaching outcomes that are required. If they are focused mainly on the behavioural aspects then one can argue that external support would be preferred. If however the focus is centred around the particular leadership skills based upon the technical aspects then an internal weighting may be more advantageous.

Either way they should not be mutually exclusive. Realism is essentially the key. Neither party can coach all the aspects of leadership coaching proficiently. The important factor is the openness and egolessness of the individuals so as not to engage in competitive behaviour to win the balance in their favour.

For this not to occur there first needs to be a high level of trust between the parties concerned. This will enable the best coaching result for the participant in question.

The structure of a leadership coaching program is complex and it is wise to consider all the resources at hand to find the best combination. In this way optimum efficiency and effectiveness will be achieved.