



The Benefits of Executive Coaching

28 May 2026

While often seen as an expense, executive coaching is, in fact, an investment. A Metrix Global Survey reports a Return on Investment (ROI) of 788% for executive coaching. So yes, this is something you want to consider, either within your company, or even personally. Some other figures show that executive coaching boosts individual performance up to 70%. And the Franklin Covey Institute reports a 50% improvement in team performance following executive coaching.

Those are the numbers. Personal reports from executives after experiencing coaching include: more self-confidence, improved performance, improved employee engagement, better staff retention, and stronger interpersonal relationships (Institute of Coaching). Executives have also been found to have better problem-solving and decision-making abilities after coaching (Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 61 (4), 298 – 318).

What is executive coaching?

Executive coaching is typically a series of one-on-one sessions between a coach and an executive. The executive is usually at Senior Manager or Director level but doesn't have to be. Some organisations are increasingly including middle managers in coaching programmes, especially where they may be part of a succession plan to eventually move into an executive level role. The goal of executive coaching is to improve the performance of the executive and the organisation. And it does this by helping executives understand themselves, their thinking, their behaviour and the consequences thereof, expanding their self-awareness, developing personal and interpersonal skills, improving core executive skills such as strategic thinking and decision-making, and through being a confidential sounding board often much needed by executives.

Some executive coaching programmes may follow a specific curriculum, but most executive coaches work with the executive, possibly the board, and other key executives, to agree on outcomes desired. Most coaching at executive level is very much customised to the specific executive, how they think and behave, their current capability, their potential, and improvements in the organisation desired. Thus, it caters for the specific executive and situation. While a boss can provide coaching in companies, an independent executive coach hired by the company has the capability to effect much greater change due to the independence of the person and the confidentiality of the engagement.

Above I mentioned some metrics associated with executive coaching. However, let's unpack a bit more what goes into making up these numbers and what specific benefits can be.

1. **Enhanced self-awareness.** We all have blind spots. We all engage in behaviours that can be counterproductive. We all have limiting thoughts and personal biases that can stop us from making the best decisions in specific situations. We all make assumptions and engage in behaviour that produces undesirable consequences. Coaching is one of the more effective methods to bring these to the fore due to the confidentiality of the process and the non-judgemental nature of coaching, as well as the skill and experience of the coach. I have put this outcome – enhanced self-awareness - first, because it is pivotal in executive performance, and precedes most of the important changes that come from coaching. Increased self-awareness allows the executive to consider more choices. This in turn can lead to better decisions. It also allows for even greater leverage of strengths, as well as understanding weaknesses and when to work on these and when to bring in persons with complementary skills.
2. **Improved emotional intelligence.** At an executive level, most of your role is about engaging with many different stakeholders and influencing them. The better you are at this, the more effective your results tend to be. Executive coaching helps develop this with increased understanding of others and their motives, improved empathy, and better conflict resolution and communication in general.
3. **Better work performance.** Almost all coaching involves setting and achieving goals. In executive coaching this is about using goal setting and goal achievement methods and processes to realise company objectives. Specific challenges the executive may have with obstacles and roadblocks in achieving the desired company performance can be understood and changed to allow for better business outcomes.
4. **Improved strategic thinking.** Coaching helps to widen perspectives, to see more options, to think broader, and to see more possibilities and opportunities. Executive coaches challenge narrow thinking, encourage the exploration of diverse perspectives, and help executives to make precise, creative strategic decisions. This, together with specific tools coaches can provide, help improve problem-solving and decision-making.
5. **Maintain long-term wellbeing.** Coaches can help executives build resilience, manage stress, keep a healthy balance in their lives, and remain mentally and physically healthy. The coaching relationship is a safe and confidential space to unpack challenges, stress, and prevent burnout.
6. **Lead organisational change.** Today an executive needs to be able to navigate a changing landscape and adapt to new conditions on a constant basis. Coaching can help leaders build better adaptability, help them adapt to change and lead the organisation through change, and provide tools and frameworks to support executives.
7. **Improved team performance.** Even if only the CEO or one executive is coached, that person can inspire and unify their teams with better morale and increased productivity according to some of the research mentioned at the beginning of the article. Increased employee retention has also been observed. Companies where there is effective coaching, report significantly higher productivity and engagement levels among employees in general (Harvard Business Review. <https://www.harvardbusiness.org/insight/good-leadership-it-all-starts-with-trust/>).

An executive is in the spotlight, and if this executive is the CEO, then not just the spotlight of the organisation. Other stakeholders such as shareholders, investors, the community, customers, the media, etc, are also observers of his or her behaviour and performance. The higher you rise the easier it becomes for someone to take you down because you are literally on show most of the time. So, if you are an executive, you will face plenty of scrutiny from multiple sources. Not only your company performance, but also your behaviour (even in private) can be openly discussed. Given that we all

have blind spots, weaknesses, challenges in life, and often don't know what these are, never mind how to deal with them, executive coaching is a must for many leaders. And as a bonus, the benefits usually extend even further than in the company. Most executives who are coached experience benefits in their personal lives as well.