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## Taking Care of Business

Coaching in corporations

What does it  
take to be a  
**GREAT  
CORPORATE  
COACH?**

**SPIRITUALITY IN  
THE C-SUITE**

**COACHING  
to CULTURE**

**LEADERSHIP  
COACHING**  
It's not just one thing

# TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

What does it take to be a great corporate coach?

**HOW DO ORGANIZATIONS** decide that coaching is for them? Who is the decision maker inside the organization and how do they choose and implement a coaching program? How do coaches market and get into corporate coaching programs? What are the different types of coaching required in corporations? What qualifications and tools do you need to be a corporate coach? Join us as we explore coaching in corporations.

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# LEADERSHIP COACHING

It's not just one thing

By Julian Humphreys PhD, PCC

**LEADERSHIP COACHING** in organizations is one of the most popular coaching niches, but what does it look like in practice? And what kinds of tools, in addition to basic coaching skills, does a leadership coach need to be effective?

In delivering over 500 hours of coaching to leaders in both public and private sector organizations in North America, Europe and the Middle East, I've come to the conclusion that leadership coaching is not one thing. It is at least four different things, depending on where the leader is in their leadership journey.

Potential leaders, emerging leaders, senior leaders and C-suite executives each require a different kind of coaching, with a different focus and different measures. In this article, I outline what leadership coaching looks like for each of these different populations, so coaches working in organizations are better able to provide the right coaching, to the right people, at the right time, focused on the right outcomes.



## STAGE 1: CORE INTELLIGENCE

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*“Know Thyself.”*

– TEMPLE OF APOLLO AT DELPHI

The ancient Greek aphorism, “Know Thyself,” sums up the first stage in a leader’s journey. What are my strengths? What are my values? Where do I fit in the larger world of work? Without clear answers to these seemingly abstract questions, potential leaders won’t be able to answer more concrete questions, like, Am I a good fit with this organization’s culture and values? Am I ready to make the commitment to be a leader of this organization?

Resolving the very natural ambivalence that most people feel when faced with increased responsibility is essential, as the challenges of being a leader are significant, and without a substantial commitment to the company and the role, the chances of success are low.

## STAGE 2: LEARNABLE INTELLIGENCE

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*“Anybody can become angry – that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not within everybody’s power and is not easy.”*

– ARISTOTLE

Leaders discover the truth of Aristotle’s statement when they manage people for the first time. In their previous role, they likely succeeded as a result of their cognitive

skills and domain-specific knowledge. But now they find themselves having to deal with messy, triggering, hijacking emotions – both their own and others’.

To meet this challenge head on, leaders need to shift their focus from thoughts to feelings, no matter how uncomfortable that may be. By directing their attention toward more subtle aspects of human experience, they are able to experiment with new ways of being and doing, supplementing IQ-based action with Emotional, Social and Positive Intelligence.

## STAGE 3: LEADERSHIP INTELLIGENCE

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*“Most people are subjective toward themselves and objective toward all others; frightfully objective sometimes – but the task is precisely to be objective toward oneself and subjective toward all others.”*

– SØREN KIERKEGAARD

Leaders whose values align with the organizations they lead (Stage 1) and who have become adept at managing their own and others’ emotions (Stage 2) are likely to have successful careers and end up in senior leadership positions. But senior leaders still struggle, often with challenges they don’t completely understand.

Despite their best efforts, they may find themselves stressed, frustrated or failing on key measures. They may even become disengaged, ‘checking out’ because they don’t know how else to deal with seemingly chronic challenges. The issue here is ‘blind spots’ – areas of weakness the leader is unaware of and

consequently unable to address. And the key to revealing these blind spots is rich and valid feedback, which, when accompanied with sufficient support, empowers leaders to see themselves as others see them.

#### STAGE 4: ORGANIZATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

*“The world doesn’t speak; only we do.”*

– RICHARD RORTY

Leaders who have successfully navigated the first three stages in their leadership journey are likely to end up with responsibility for the organization as a whole – or at least a substantial part of it. Given that all organizations today exist within highly complex and uncertain contexts, leaders need to make decisions with a full appreciation of these contexts – an almost impossible task.

Only by subjecting their thinking on an ongoing basis to counter-perspectives that disrupt assumptions and challenge biases can C-suite leaders see and seize new opportunities as they arise. The fourth stage of a leader’s journey is thus never complete. To continue to see, commit to and create previously unimagined possibilities leaders need to see, commit to and re-create themselves in previously unimagined ways.

The utility of this model is two-fold. First, coaches can use the model in sales conversations with buyers of coaching programs, who are always looking for new ways of understanding leadership as it relates to their particular organizations. So long as coaches hold the model lightly, using it to kick-start conversations rather than trying to convince or persuade buyers of the rightness of their model, their unique perspective and expertise will be appreciated.

Secondly, coaches can use the model to highlight the extent to which leadership coaching is not one thing. In showing that leadership coaching is not just for senior or executive leaders, but also for potential and emerging leaders, coaches maximize their own sales opportunities and help organizations build a deep reservoir of leadership in the organization that is necessary for sustainable competitive advantage in this era of unprecedented uncertainty and change. ●

## THE LEADERSHIP JOURNEY ROADMAP

### An evidence-based coach approach to the four stages of leadership development

The leadership journey roadmap outlined below integrates research in adult development, leadership theory and neuroscience with best practices in leadership coaching.

**STAGE 1**, which begins soon after entering the workforce, is focused on the development of Core Intelligence: the understanding of individual differences through awareness of innate capacities. Innate capacities are measured through self-reports that deliver non-hierarchical feedback, such as personality, strengths, and values assessments. With these assessments, no one personality type, strengths profile or values orientation is superior to any other – they are simply different. Developing Core Intelligence enables potential leaders to focus on what’s important to them, and to work more effectively as part of a team.

**STAGE 2**, which begins when a person is responsible for managing people for the first time, is focused on the development of Learnable Intelligence: the understanding of new and subtle aspects of experience, particularly emotional experience. Current abilities are measured using psychometric assessments that deliver hierarchical feedback, such as Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Positive Intelligence (PQ) assessments. Although these assessments provide objective data, they are intended for developmental purposes only. The result of developing Learnable Intelligence is the ability to skillfully manage oneself and optimally motivate others.

**STAGE 3**, which begins when a leader is first promoted to a key decision-making role, is focused on Leadership Intelligence: the understanding of key competencies required for effective leadership. Observable behaviors are measured using surveys that deliver benchmarked data, such as 360° Leadership Profiles or Culture Surveys, which contextualize subjective perceptions within established norms. The result of developing Leadership Intelligence is the ability to build alignment within and across teams, and to manage increasing degrees of complexity.

**STAGE 4**, which begins when a leader holds an executive role for the first time, is focused on the development of Organizational Intelligence: the understanding of business priorities and their underlying rationale. Success is measured using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are strategic,

meaningful and defensible within the larger cultural context. The result of developing Organizational Intelligence is the ability to capitalize on multiple, competing perspectives, set direction and lead change.

