



The Future of Executive Coaching

From the Desks of the Co-Editors

We focus in this issue on the challenges and opportunities of executive coaching. One can identify this field in terms of the client being served: high-level individuals, with fiduciary responsibility, resource stewardship for the benefit of all stakeholders, and broad accountabilities to the communities in which the organization resides.¹ Alternatively, the field can be defined in terms of the function being served: the process of making decisions within a context of complexity, unpredictability and turbulence.² Both approaches are being taken in this issue of IJCO. Regardless of the approach being taken, executive coaching can leverage the impact of intra- and interpersonal changes or transformations in organizations. The higher in the organization these shifts occur, the more fully they are shared and adopted at lower levels of the organization, the more these alterations translate into improved performance, and the greater is the return for that investment.

You will read a number of articles in this issue that discuss various aspects of executive coaching. At the same time, we want to expand the frame of reference. We believe that targeted business coaching (i.e., changes in behavior and decision-making) for mid-managers is also an activity with robust return on investment. This is particularly the case when coaching is conducted in conjunction with training. This pairing of coaching and training can lock in newly learned behaviors. Executive coaching is also timely when managers feel torn and “stuck in the middle” between demands for quick executive decisions and longer-term implementation that accompanies these decisions.³

Whatever your own perspective on these challenging issues, we invite you to explore the dynamic world of executive coaching. We also invite you to join us in seeking to firmly establish executive coaching as an

enduring component of 21st Century organizational life.

With the organizational imperative to find and retain talent and leadership at mid and senior levels, it behooves any organization to take the actions needed to keep its key leaders supported and engaged in the work at hand.⁴

William Bergquist

John Lazar

Endnotes

¹ Lee Smith and Jeannine Sandstrom, “Executive Coaching Summit I: Documenting the Emerging Field of Coaching in Organizations.” *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, 2003, 1(1), 28-40.

² John Lazar, and William Bergquist, “Alignment Coaching: The Missing Element in Business Coaching.” *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, 2003, 1(1), 14-27.

³ See Barry Oshry, *Seeing Systems* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 1995) for an excellent discussion of this phenomenon.

⁴ See the Gallup Organization research on engaged employees in Curt Coffman, and Gabriel Gonzalez-Molina. *Follow This Path*. New York: Warner Books, 2002.