



Career Management Column as published in Leadership and Management Books, L&MB - [Rita Balian Allen](#), Author of *Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself*

"Benefits of Coaching as a Developmental Strategy"

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The demand for coaching has grown over the years and has evolved in a variety of ways. Individuals and organizations are engaging executive coaches, career coaches, team coaches, business coaches, life coaches, marketing coaches, writing coaches, and the list goes on and on for other specialty areas of coaches. What is coaching and what value can a coach add?

"To coach" comes from the root meaning "to bring a person from where they are to where they want to be."

~ David Cattrell from The Manager's Coaching Handbook

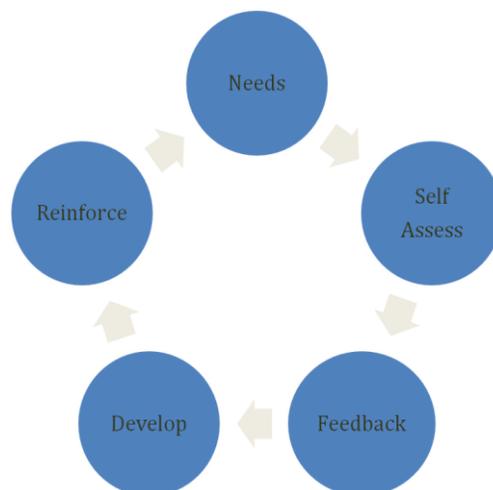
Organizations that want to invest in their talented executives, leaders and managers will partner them with a coach as a proactive developmental strategy. They see the value they bring to the organization and would like to offer additional resources to enable them to grow. It is development based and an incredible retention tool for highly valued staff. It's an investment in the individual, department, function and organization. Providing the benefit of coaching says we believe in you, your abilities and on-going potential so much we are investing in your development. Coaching is not ideal if it is approached as remedial or in place of performance management. The best scenario for coaching is when it is viewed as a development opportunity for both the individual and the organization to stretch out of their comfort zone and achieve greater value to impact individual and business performance.

The ultimate objective of a coach is to first earn trust, build a relationship and create a partnership with the individual they are coaching. The objective of the partnership is an investment in the individual as a valued talent, focused on their development with clearly defined and determined objectives. The coach provides a neutral, objective perspective as a sounding board to encourage as well as challenge the individual to try new approaches, behaviors and strategies. They are able to offer tools, techniques and resources to support the individual in stretching in different ways and continue to reinforce those strategies as they face successes and challenges in doing so. The coach plays that role for a specific time period, typically 6-12 months, providing a strong foundation for which the individual continues on their own. Coaching is just the beginning of a process that extends well beyond their time together.

Coaching approach can vary but there is a methodology that includes the following:

- Identify appropriate options
- Develop relevant model
- Individualize and personalize based on needs
- Create process and structure
- Select tools and assessments
- Determine goals and desired outcomes

Coaching Model - When coaching is embraced as a proactive development strategy, it offers an opportunity for the individual to play a lead in their own growth and career management. Having an effective structure is vital for success. Let me offer the basic model below that starts with identifying the individual's needs, followed by an extensive self assessment process including feedback and insights from others, leading to the creation of a development plan with new strategies, behaviors and techniques to be practiced and reinforced for ongoing success.



Creating a specific structure at the onset of the engagement that lays out meeting timelines, milestones that will be achieved along the way, desired outcomes, as well as follow up for evaluation and on-going accountability of those outcomes is critical. It is also essential to

determine metrics in 4 steps: 1) Initial - mutually agreed upon objectives; 2) Midway - clearly articulated development plan; 3) Completion - assessment of behaviors changed, progress achieved; and 4) Conclusion - formal evaluation of coaching process in preparation for transitioning to non-coaching scenario and individual accountability.

Coaching goals and outcomes include:

- ✓ Value Add - individual, team, function, organization
- ✓ High level of engagement
- ✓ Empowerment and accountability
- ✓ Increased team effectiveness
- ✓ Building leadership capabilities
- ✓ Improved Communications
- ✓ Increased level of connection and retention
- ✓ Results - direct impact on individual and business performance

Organizations that choose to invest in their talent reap the rewards from highly engaged employees that are working towards reaching their utmost potential and being the best they can be. Many individuals are opting to invest in their own development by engaging coaches on their own as well. Make no mistake, partnering with a coach and engaging in your own development is very difficult work, however, is worth every moment of it. Investing in your own growth and future is ultimately the most exhilarating and rewarding experience. My favorite quote that I say often is, "Get comfortable being uncomfortable." When we do so, fabulous things will happen. Enjoy the journey!

Ask Rita: Do you have a career question and/or a career story to share? Email your questions or stories to rita@ritaballenassociates.com

Rita Balian Allen is the president of Rita B. Allen Associates, a career management firm specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, management training and career development. She is a lecturer at Boston-area universities, a sought-after speaker and presenter, the author of numerous articles, blogs and the book, "*Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself: The Three Ps Marketing Technique as a Guide to Career Empowerment*". Rita was voted one of the top ten executive coaches by the Boston Women's Business Journal .