

## What is executive coaching?

In today’s work environment, characterized by rapid change, the vast infusion of technology, and increasing complexity, the significance of executive coaching has grown immensely. At its essence, executive coaching is a personalized professional development process aimed at enhancing leadership skills and behaviors. It’s like having a personal trainer for your career, offering one-to-one guidance to help you navigate the challenges of your role and industry.

Executive coaching typically involves a series of one-on-one sessions between a coach and an executive, who is generally at a mid-to-senior level leadership position. However, it’s becoming increasingly common at all levels in the organization. The primary goal of coaching is to boost an executive's performance and influence within the company.\*

## What is the difference between leadership and executive coaching?

Context	Leadership Coaching Indicators	Executive Coaching Indicators
<b>Role Level</b>	Emerging or mid-level leader, team lead, project manager	Senior executive, C-suite, business unit head
<b>Scope of Responsibility</b>	Leads a team or department	Oversees multiple divisions or the whole organization
<b>Focus of Coaching Goals</b>	Building leadership behaviors, emotional intelligence, communication, team effectiveness	Strategic visioning, large-scale change, board/stakeholder relations, organizational transformation
<b>Primary Stakeholders</b>	Direct reports, peers, immediate manager	Board of directors, shareholders, key clients, cross-functional leaders
<b>Complexity of Challenges</b>	Leading change at team level, managing performance, influencing peers	Managing complexity, organizational culture, large-scale change, global context
<b>Performance Metrics</b>	Individual and team performance goals	Organization-wide impact, profitability, fundraising, shareholder value, innovation outcomes
<b>Assessment Methods</b>	Self-assessments, 360 feedback, personality inventories	Comprehensive diagnostics, stakeholder interviews, organizational data reviews
<b>Engagement Duration</b>	3–12 months, might be scaffolded into phases	6–18 months; often a long-term partnership. Confidential advisor role

<b>Confidentiality &amp; Sponsorship</b>	Sponsored by HR/L&D with developmental lens or self paying clients	Sponsored by CEO/board/investors with performance outcomes in mind
<b>Coach's Role</b>	Facilitator of growth, reflective partner, may offer content to support coaching	Strategic advisor, sounding board, may offer content to support goals
<b>Learning Emphasis</b>	Leading self and others; behavior and mindset shifts	Leading self and others; behavior and mindset shift AND organizational and systemic leadership strategy
<b>Development Lens</b>	Skill-based: developing future potential	Strategic-based: sustaining impact in complex environments

## Summary

**Leadership Coaching** focuses on developing individuals as effective, emotionally intelligent leaders within teams and organizations. It strengthens interpersonal capacity and prepares leaders for broader responsibilities. Think of *leadership coaching* as building and refining the “leadership muscle” — helping someone lead themselves, lead others, lead parts of an organisation.

**Executive Coaching** operates at a strategic, systemic level — supporting senior leaders to navigate complexity, align culture, and lead transformational change across the enterprise. Think of *executive coaching* as applying that leadership at scale — working with someone whose role requires strategic decisions, system-wide influence, and high accountability.

Together, they represent a developmental continuum from *leading self* to *leading the system*. For example, someone may receive leadership coaching as a mid-manager, then later engage in executive coaching when promoted to the C-suite. As coaches (or as learners of coaching), it’s helpful to clarify: what is the level of your role, what are the stakes, which domain needs most attention (people/team, process/system, strategy/stakeholder) — to decide whether the engagement is framed more as leadership or executive coaching.

**Coaches work collaboratively with their clients to unlock potential, define clear objectives, and devise innovative strategies to address business challenges. Unlike conventional leadership development programs that might follow a set curriculum, executive and leadership coaching is distinctly customized to cater to individual growth and specific situational needs.**

For further inquiry, contact Elizabeth Walden at the information below: