

# COACHING towards success



Professional coaching can help boost talent development in an organisation. **HRM** looks at how HR professionals can upskill themselves and their employees to create a more effective workforce

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When a person is hired, employers can be wary of their new recruit's past professional experiences and education.

Only after a period of time will organisations fully understand what motivates and drives them.

However, as organisations evolve, people need to evolve too.

More particularly, following promotions, employees will face changes in responsibilities and environment.

This may cause some individuals to face hardships, but with coaching, employers can better facilitate their workers' progression and careers.

This is something Kelvin Lim, Founder and Principal Coach of Executive Coach International, stresses upon.

While there are different perspectives on the purpose of engaging in professional coaching, Lim sees it as a useful tool for employees who face internal barriers in their professional lives.

"With the help of a coach, being able to see what needs to be done to progress is one of the most powerful things we can do," he says.

"Being supported by a coach that will be able to point out those difficulties and help craft applicable solutions together is the most effective way of moving forward."

Similarly, Henry Lee, Managing Partner of Glides Consulting Partners, identifies coaching as bridge for the HR profession.

"Professional coaching is fast gaining traction as part of the 'arsenal' of offerings HR professionals recommend to complement other programmes for people development," he explains.

"HR plays a key role in people engagement and development and this can be done through many ways including training, workshops and coaching."

Praise Mok, Principal Consultant of ROHEI, believes that coaching is a key component in an organisation's approach to people and leadership development.

"When delivered appropriately, coaching has been demonstrated to have a 5.7 times return on investment," says Mok.

"This return of investment is manifested in the improved quality of the interactions and decisions leaders make when they are present and connected to others."

Furthermore, she adds that coaching guides an individual through life's challenges and helps them to move forward with confidence in the midst of change, turning their potential into reality and enabling them to be better leaders.

Possibly as a result of all these, there has been a significant rise in the number of companies investing in coaching.

"We have noticed more government entities are opting for executive coaching services," says Darryl Parrant, Managing Director, Align SMA.



"SME owners are also seeing the benefits of executive coaching for themselves and to their senior management teams."

"We have also seen an increase in emerging leaders and high potentials, as coaching can help accelerate their ability to prepare for the next promotion and to ensure they are job ready for the next career progression."

### Turning to coaching

An increasing number of companies have adopted coaching for a range of outcomes in both personal and professional situations.

"They come to us when they need to improve service levels and increase customer engagement; when staff engagement is down and they see a need to motivate their staff," explains Mok.

"There are other cases as well, those in which particular behaviour changes are needed, and staff need further development."

"There are also seasons of change that a company goes through, such as change of management or takeovers, in which clients come to us in need of team building, or values alignment programmes."

"Sometimes, training or coaching is needed on a more specific level such as development of supervisory skills or communication skills," she adds.

For some, engaging in professional coaching is only thought of when they hit challenges.

Lee says, "I usually share with potential clients that you can decide to engage coaches for your team members during times of aspiration, or times of desperation."

"Obviously the results are much more impactful and effective during times of aspiration where staff can really be coached on what breakthroughs need to happen to take their performance to the next level."

"Unfortunately, most employers, due to lack of awareness about coaching and the value, tend to look at coaching as a panacea for when things are not going well or

when employees are not performing."

Parrant says some issues that lead firms to engage in coaching include individual performance problems, and the need to provide opportunities for leaders to grow and to cope with a changing organisation.

"We noticed most organisations want to enhance their leadership capability to develop their leaders around a set of competencies to drive business goals," says Parrant.

"We work with organisations to evaluate and then close the competency gaps through effective executive coaching."

Lim has also noticed there are common challenges such companies face.

"Companies approach our coaches primarily because they want to get a different perspective of how their organisation is performing," he shares.

He adds that the typical issues revolve around a lack of teamwork, unsatisfactory communication between divisions and teams, challenges in integrating new staff, and conflict resolution.

### Programmes in place

To provide better services to organisations, Align SMA offers a variety



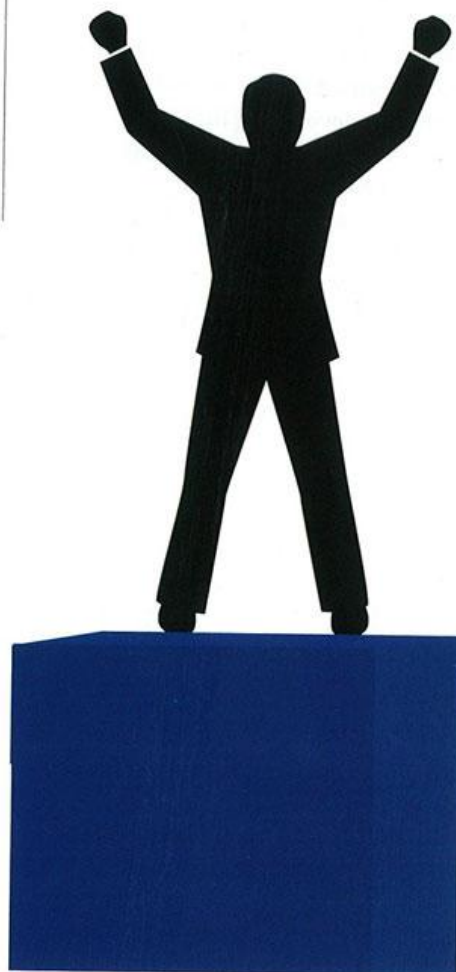
## Coaching is a compliment!

**Being** assigned to a coaching session is no longer seen as a form of remedial. It's a compliment.

According to a study by the Human Capital Institute, 87% of employers offer one-on-one coaching to "high potential" staff.

In fact, 70% of them stated the key reason was to assist future leaders in figuring out the next steps on their career path with the company.

However, other factors that lead employers to send their staff for coaching include communication skills (63%), relationship building (63%), and team leadership (60%).





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of development tools and assessments to help guide the coaching process.

In addition to the mandatory face-to-face coaching and e-coaching sessions, it offers an automated 360-degree process with individual and group reporting functionality.

Among its other programmes are the Licensee for the Leadership Dimensions Profile, which has a range of reports useful for developing individuals and teams, and guided projects where senior leaders select an organisational issue to be addressed.

“At Align SMA, we articulate the issue into an Action Learning Project and provide support and coaching services to individuals and the project team over a year to develop and implement the signed-off project plan,” Parrant explains.

“This coaching and action learning project approach are becoming very popular as it helps develop individuals as well as address real organisational issues with impactful results.”

Align SMA also works with its sister company Align HR consulting to develop succession planning toolkits with organisations, and also completes individual development plans for key successors.

ROHEI, on the other hand, offers career and executive coaching.

However, its approach is different as it aims to create learning experiences that transform an individual.

“We believe that every person is intrinsically valuable and destined to make a positive impact in their community,” Mok says.

“We focus not just on the mind, but we want to engage the hearts as well.”

The coaches at ROHEI are trained and have extensive experience in drawing out individuals, facilitating awareness, and guiding staff to articulate their personal goals and values.

“We’ve seen that when a staff member understands and feels their value as a whole person, the organisation becomes even more profitable,” she adds.

At present, Executive Coach International has two types of programmes in place.

Its flagship programme, Courage to Create, provides coaching for executives who want to improve any aspect of their personal or professional life.

Adding on to that is the Professional Coach Training programme, which offers training for those who want to learn coaching skills.

“All our trainers are International Coaching Federation-accredited as well, with at least five years of coaching experience,” shares Lim.

On the other hand, Glides focuses on an approach called “RACE” which corresponds to Results, Accountability, Communications, and Executions.

“Our programmes aim to focus them on driving greater accountability,

having impactful communication and executing well by doing real work that drives results,” Lee says.

## Factors to consider

As more professionals are looking to drive leadership development efforts, there are several factors HR professionals should consider to decide if coaching is the right fit for their organisation.

“The most important is how the coaching purpose is communicated to the coachees and if the coachees are motivated and receptive to individual or team coaching,” Parrant shares.

Align SMA makes it mandatory for coachees to have the right to select the coach themselves. This ensures there is chemistry and connection.

Before companies send employees for coaching, Lee advises that the sponsors need to partner with HR and professional coaches to discuss the outcomes they want to drive for each coaching engagement.

“Every individual, every situation, every company and every professional coach will be different so it is vital to have these conversations to assess the dynamics and the experience the coaches will bring to companies,” he says.

Additionally, Lim suggests firms to look to the technicalities of engaging a professional coach.

He says the factors to consider include past client successes, coaches’ years of experience, current personal and professional projects, professional certification, quality of customer service, and client testimonials.

Moreover, Mok emphasises that companies should prioritise employee’s attitude.

“Ascertain if your employees first understand, and are then open and willing to buy-in to the idea of coaching,” she explains.

“Then look for a consultancy whose coaching services and approach can meet your company’s specific needs and one who shares your company’s leadership values.”