

Eleven Reasons Leaders Need a Coach

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1. **Capitalize on strengths and overcome limitations.** Every leader has strengths (possibly underused) and weaknesses (possibly ignored). Your coach offers objectivity and guidance in exploiting your capabilities and helping you find ways to work around your limitations.
2. **Enhance awareness.** Your coach challenges your existing perspectives, examines your underlying assumptions, and clarifies your unarticulated expectations and desires.
3. **Feedback.** Team members instinctively want to please the boss and are reluctant to offer their honest impressions, especially negative ones. Your coach, however, helps you see where you are blind to the impact your behavior is having on your team members, peers, and boss.
4. **Discipline.** Everyone knows that change is hard. Becoming a “more effective leader” means changing patterns of thinking and behavior. You tend to lapse into habitual responses despite strong desires to change. Your coach helps you remain accountable to your desired vision.
5. **Confidence AND competence.** Many leaders are stronger in one or the other yet may not recognize the imbalance in their skills and poise. Both are valuable. Your coach will help you work on the one where you feel the greater need, and when you do, both will probably improve!
6. **Servant leadership.** Some leaders lord it over those under their authority. The most effective leaders, however, look for ways to serve their team members. Your coach helps you understand and prioritize your team members’ perspectives and needs, resulting in greater engagement.
7. **Building future leaders.** Many leaders are busy solving today’s problems, giving little attention to developing leaders for the future. However, there may be no greater responsibility when it comes to improving and sustaining your organization. Your coach helps keep your attention on the long-term health of your culture despite the pressures of the day.
8. **Beyond functional/technical skill.** Early promotions come because of technical proficiency. Effective leadership, however, requires healthy influencing and relationship skills. Your coach provides education, support, and accountability to build and expand those competencies.
9. **Rehearsal.** When facing a tough situation, your coach helps you generate innovative options, allowing you to explore and practice alternative behaviors that you never previously considered.
10. **No personal agenda.** Everyone in your organization has a personal agenda. They all want to look good and avoid looking bad. Your coach’s only agenda is your improvement, doing whatever is required to help you move from where you are to where you want to be.
11. **“Safe harbor” dialogue.** Leadership can be lonely. Who do you talk to when you want to blow off steam or think creatively? There are risks in doing so with any of your existing staff, yet it’s valuable to be able to express your sincere feelings. Your coach will confidentially serve as a sounding board in acknowledging your anxiety and in providing an environment of imagination.

This is a condensation of two articles written in 2010. If you’d like to see expanded versions of the above thoughts, look up www.buildingfutureleaders.com, click on the “Article Archives” page, then scroll down to “Why Would a Leader Need a Coach?” (parts 1 and 2).