



**BY LEWIS LUBIN**

Lewis Lubin is the Executive Coaching Market Leader for Right Management in Northern California. He is a management consultant, entrepreneur, and executive coach specializing in coaching high and mid level executives. His experience includes over 20 years of organizational leadership as a marketing executive leading sales, production, operation and administrative teams.

Lewis holds a BA from San Francisco State University, a MA in Organizational Development from Golden Gate University, and he is certified as an Executive Coach from College of Executive Coaching. Lewis has published a business development e-book on Referral Networking and has taught a course on business development for executive coaches. He can be reached at [Lewis.Lubin@right.com](mailto:Lewis.Lubin@right.com)

---

This article originally appeared in NCDCA's web magazine, *Career Convergence* at [www.ncda.org](http://www.ncda.org). © National Career Development Association, February 2010. Reprinted with permission.

Reprinted from NDCA's *Career Convergence* web magazine

## The Importance of Coaching New Leaders

One of the hallmarks of career success inside organizations is the ability of a new or recently promoted employee to successfully transition into a new or expanded leadership role. This article highlights findings and practices from Right Management, Inc. that help new leaders succeed through the support of "on-boarding" coaching.

The high impact and cost of new individual executive-level employees (whether external or internal individuals) derailing within the first year is staggering. As Michael Watkins states in his book, *The First 90 Days*, "studies have found that more than 40 to 50 percent of senior outside hires fail to achieve results (2003, p. 8).

The reason for most of these failures is not the lack of intelligence (IQ), skills or experience, but rather the inability of these executives to assimilate effectively into the new culture or new role and make the necessary "mindset shift" as they go through fundamental changes in roles.

Four keys can help these individuals succeed in their new role and help them avoid derailing:

### **KEY #1 THE WISDOM OF DESIGNATING AN ON-BOARDING COACH**

To help the new leader to assimilate, it is imperative that the organization designate a senior-level executive to act as a resource for the newly hired or newly promoted executive. This resource person can be considered an "on-boarding coach" who can address the culture, context, and needed "mindset shift" to accelerate the executive's assimilation into his or her new responsibilities. By addressing these issues, newly placed executives are in a better position to accelerate their contributions to their organization, which is certainly critical today.

#### *Actions a career practitioner can take for Key #1:*

As a career professional, you can help your organization identify the best person to act as this on-boarding coach, or you can suggest taking on this role, yourself, if that is appropriate.

**KEY #2: THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

These executives need to be aware of their own emotional intelligence as they navigate through their organization, especially if they are newly hired or newly promoted. They need to master intrapersonal awareness — where they are in sync with their internal emotions (self-awareness and self-management) as well as interpersonal awareness (social awareness and relationship management) in regard to how they relate to other people around them. In many organizations, it is a matter of moving individuals from a place of high IQ to high EQ.

*Actions a career practitioner can take for Key #2:*

Consider having a discussion with the new hires you coach about the value of EQ as it relates to their new responsibilities. Though many executive-level employees have taken part in EQ training, it is still vital that new or recently promoted hires understand their own strengths and areas for further development regarding their interpersonal skills, which are so critical in getting work accomplished.

*The role of the on-boarding coach should be acknowledged and supported by the designated senior individual who is sponsoring and guiding the new leader.*

**KEY #3: THE VALUE OF SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

As individuals become more familiar with their surroundings during the on-boarding process, it is critically important that they use situational leadership skills as they communicate with the people around them — including those who report to them, those they report to, and their colleagues, as well. It is essential as these new leaders build their team, they understand the commitment level and areas of competence for each team member so that the new leaders can determine how they can delegate, support, mentor, or coach each member to reach the overall goals of the team and the organization.

*Actions a career practitioner can take for Key #3:*

The career practitioner coaching a new hire might administer appropriate leadership assessments and offer an interpretation of the assessment focused on team building.

**KEY #4: THE RIGHT APPROACH: OBJECTIVES OF A NEW INDIVIDUAL COACHING PROGRAM**

Finally, it is imperative that the role of the on-boarding coach be acknowledged and supported by the designated senior individual who is sponsoring and guiding the new leader. This coach can provide the support, guidance, feedback, and experience that can help the new leader to thrive in the organization. For that reason, it is imperative that the organization supports on-boarding coaches in welcoming and guiding new hires for the benefit of the organization and the individual.

## The Importance of Coaching New Leaders

### *Actions a career practitioner can take for Key #4:*

Make certain that you are getting the support you need to coach executive-level new hires and those newly promoted. Also consider who you can partner with inside the organization to best support and position the employees you are working with to achieve success for them and the organization.

The above key points are based on the fact that Right Management recognizes the importance of helping new leaders succeed. Our approach is to engage the new individual and his or her manager and team in a highly interactive process that focuses on building a strong foundation of solid relationships for future effectiveness.

We accomplish this in several ways. Some of our key objectives include:

- Solidifying the relationship between the newly hired or newly promoted executives and their managers by clarifying and defining key objectives, skills and issues to focus on in the first 100 days and beyond
- Accelerating new individuals' learning curve by focusing them on critical objectives necessary for success
- Helping improve internal communications between the individual and the organization
- Coaching them on new and alternative behaviors and attitudes that enhances their capacity for personal and organizational productivity
- Helping the individual identify and change any ineffective and inappropriate behaviors that may be viewed inside the organization as "derailers" or "blind spots"

For career practitioners working inside organizations, this overview highlights the importance of working with newly hired or newly promoted executives early and often to ensure productivity, retention and success. Coaching offers an excellent way for an organization to support the investment they have made in their new leader and to provide for that leader's ongoing development and growth.

*Coaching offers an excellent way for an organization to support the investment they have made in their new leader and to provide for that leader's ongoing development and growth.*

---

### REFERENCES

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.

Watkins, M. (2003). *The first 90 days*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.