

# The VALU LEAD Approach to Executive Coaching : 'Wheels of Value'

Our unique approach of Executive Coaching is based on 2 philosophies viz;

*a) The **Carl Rogers** model of Client Centered approach – which indicates that rather than give solutions to others, we must help others find solutions for themselves*

*b) **Marshall Goldsmith's** approach of 'Inclusive Eco-System' based coaching – which indicates that sustainable change in Leader's behaviour happens when you include the stakeholders in her eco-system, in the executive coaching process.*

We weave these into two wheels of Value, which run alongside to create sustainable value for the Leader being coached and for the stakeholders around him.

## **INNER WHEEL OF VALUE**

The Inner Wheel's focus is divided into 3 key dimensions viz;

1. **Sponsorship** : Executive Coaching continues to be viewed with some degree of suspicion and scepticism by leaders for who this intervention is meant. In many cases, leaders are not sure if they are being nominated for this intervention because they are good or because they are not so good. Identifying a Sponsor for this initiative, helps in appropriately positioning the Executive Coaching initiative, by outlining its key objectives. The Sponsor should ideally be the CEO or the HR Director of the organisation. The Sponsor , Coach and Leader (coachee) must clarify with each other wrt what to expect from the Executive Coaching intervention. They must also set the confidentiality norm i.e. the Coach will not disclose any information of the Coaching conversation with the Leader, to anyone in the organisation including the Sponsor.



2. **Stake Holder Involvement** : A Leader always creates impact on the people with who s/he works. Whereas the immediate supervisor, peers, team members are the internal stakeholders for the Leader, the suppliers, vendors, customers are external stakeholders. Depending on the role, the Executive Coach and the Leader must decide which stakeholders to involve in the Leaders journey to increase his impact. Involvement of Stakeholders helps in ensuring that they give honest and constructive feedback to the leader and also play an encouraging role during the change effort being done by the Leader.
  
3. **Information Gathering** : This is the dimension where information about the leader's style is collected using tools such as : Skip Level Meet, Peer Mirror, 360 Degree Feedback, Psychometric Instruments, Development Center etc. Depending on the context set with the sponsor, the relevant tools can be chosen to gather the information (which would get discussed with the Leader in the outer wheel intervention ).

The Inner Wheel ensures that the soil is set right for the Executive Coaching to be effective. The Executive Coach must work along with the organisation to ensure that all 3 dimensions are addressed before the actual Executive Coaching conversations commence between the Leader and the Executive Coach.

## OUTER WHEEL OF VALUE

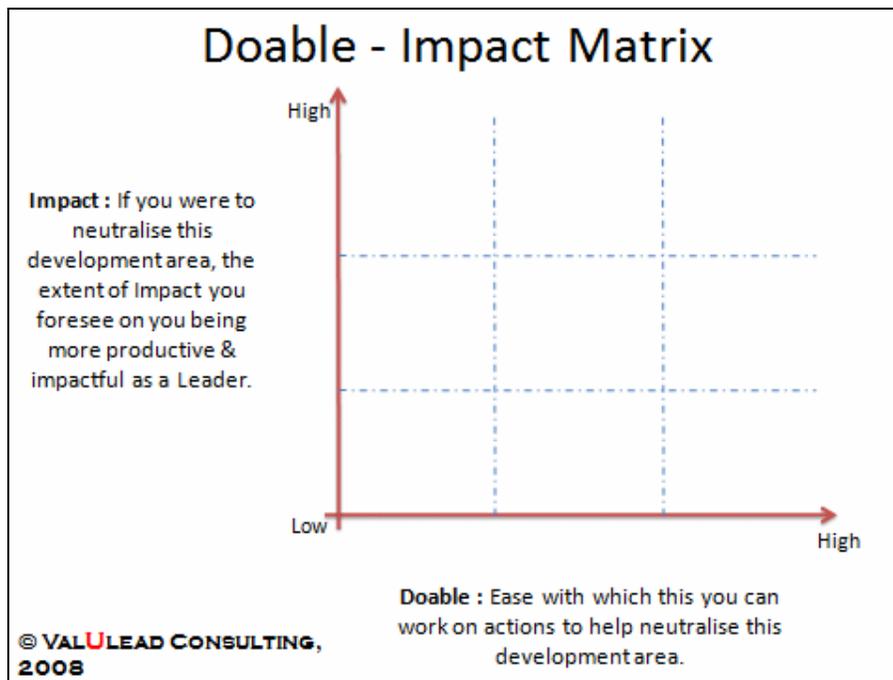
The Outer Wheel contains the several Coaching Conversations between the Leader and the Executive Coach. The Outer Wheel goes through 7 sequential stages of conversation, each stage building from the previous stages.

1. **Contracting** : In this stage, the Coach & Leader clarify their roles and responsibilities to make this intervention work for the Leader. The Leader is also given the “Parachute Option” which gives him the freedom to escape the engagement for any of the following reasons : No value being experienced; chemistry incompatibility between Leader and Coach, inability of Leader to work on actions discussed during Coaching Conversations. If this option is exercised, it does not in any way reflect on the effectiveness of the Executive Coach or on the Leader – it is simply indicating a practical reality that the intervention is not delivering what it should and rather than continue to invest the time and efforts of the Leader and the Coach, it is better to cease the intervention.
2. **Discovery** : The first building block for a Leader’s development is “Self Awareness”, the leaders needs to know and understand how he is being perceived and what is the kind of impact his style of leadership is having on his different stakeholders.

The Coach helps the Leader to take an inventory of his strengths & development areas leveraging tools such as ‘Appreciative Inquiry’ and the information gathered in 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension of the Inner Wheel. It is helpful to the Leader if there are at least 3 sources of input from which to sift through and summarise the key strengths and development areas. At this stage the Leader has put all the information on the table and gets a deeper understanding on how his leadership style is being experienced by different stake holders.

3. **Acceptance** : A Leader need to accept at a deeper level, what areas would he like to work on, either wrt Strengths or Development Areas – Acceptance leads to Ownership. The Leader is now encouraged to sift through discovery data and look for common themes which are emerging from different data sources. The Coach helps the Leader in the process of Acceptance, especially wrt the Development Areas.

The Leader is then encouraged to map the key development areas on a Doable - Impact Matrix, so that it helps the leader prioritise which development areas he would like to pursue and work on, so as to neutralise them. The Coach helps the Leader to recognise the energy to be invested by the Leader and what can be the potential benefits if the Leader is able neutralise these Development Areas.



4. **Reflection :** In this stage the Coach helps the Leader to get a deeper insight into the Strengths and Development Areas identified by the Leader. Strengths reflection revolves around understanding whether the Leader is leveraging his strengths adequately or whether there is scope to apply the strengths in more contexts (including in helping to neutralise weaknesses).

Similarly, helping the Leader understand what are possible root causes of the development areas, and what are specific behaviours the Leader needs to change / modify to neutralise the development areas. The Coach helps the Leader understand what are the situations / circumstances where the Leader tends to display these behaviours and this aids the Leader to be more sensitive / watchful for when they are likely to occur.

5. **Alternatives :** The Coach encourages the Leader to look at possible alternative behaviours which can help in stretching the strengths and neutralising development behaviours. Helping the Leader acknowledge the feasibility of each alternative, builds ownership and conviction on the alternatives which the Leader chooses to work on. The Coach helps the Leader to embrace the paradigm that 'Leaders grow and develop when they do things differently than what they have been doing'. The Coach also helps the Leader anticipate what could be possible road blocks that may come up in trying out the alternative behaviours, and what could be done by the Leader to overcome the road blocks.

6. **Actioning** : This is the stage where the Leader is encouraged to action the alternatives decided. Most of the Actioning happens by the Leader in between two Coaching Conversations, it helps if the Leader and the Coach plan out a periodic support system. The support system could be an email or a telephone call to update the coach on the new behaviour tried out. The mere thought of having to do a proactive, periodic update increases the probability of the Leader actually attempting the alternative behaviour.
  
7. **Measurement** : This stage is divided into two parts viz; a) Self Measurement b) Stakeholder Measurement. In the Self Measurement stage the Leader develops simple formats and metrics to measure the frequency of the alternate behaviour tried out and the resulting impact of the same. Linked to the metrics can be some small self rewards on milestone achievements by the Leader.

Stakeholder measurement can happen once again in the form of Skip Level Meet, Peer Mirror, 360 feedback or simple dipstick measurements. This helps the Leader to assess what is the impact his changed behaviour is having on his stakeholders. Normally Stakeholder Measurement should be done after atleast 12 – 15 weeks of sustained actioning by the Leader.

Valulead recommends an Executive Coaching intervention which is spread across a minimum of 6 months with six face to face, one on one contact sessions between the Leader & the Executive Coach. Each contact session would be for 90 – 120 minutes, with follow through T Cons / Emails in between 2 contact sessions.

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