



## **A BUSINESS CASE FOR EXECUTIVE COACHING**

When executive coaching has clear and measurable outcomes, the results can have a distinct return on investment.

Typically, the desired outcomes include:

- Accelerated development of critical leadership skills
- Increased influence and business impact
- Enhanced leadership presence
- Improved collaboration with other functions

However, a recent “case study” exemplifies how “executive coaching” is overused. We were recently asked by a large client to coach/consult with a senior financial executive who is often abrupt and, at times, demeaning to coworkers and direct reports. When we asked our client whether the individual had been coached in the past, the human resource executive replied, “Yes, twice. Both engagements were considered unsuccessful.” In fact, over \$30,000 had already been spent to rehabilitate (not coach) the financial officer. In addition, the financial executive was not considered to be “a people developer.”

Initiating a third coaching engagement with the financial officer appeared destined to fail. The executive was generally considered by colleagues to be incorrigible. Instead, we suggested a creative approach. We asked whether any of the financial executive’s direct reports were considered to be high-potential and/or probable successors. After learning that two were judged as high-potential, we suggested leadership development coaching programs for these individuals. By accelerating their leadership development, we would expect to increase their readiness for promotion.

Our advice to the client was delivered with the intent to avoid “throwing good money after bad.” We often find clients seek coaching for individuals to “remove” ineffective and entrenched behaviors rather than to develop new leadership capabilities or to reinforce effective actions.