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## **STEP ON THE GAS:** *The Power of Coaching in Transformation and Change*

### **You're in the Driver's Seat**

This is performance evaluation season for many of you. While much of the feedback will be positive, you may again receive some feedback you've heard before, even more than once. These are the behaviors that are holding you back from achieving your goals, whether it's that partnership you seek or another milestone you're working toward.

Or you continue to feel that you lack influence in your firm or organization and want to raise your image as a strong and influential executive, a challenge that up until now has been eluding you.

Or maybe it's not you, but that high potential professional on your team who is struggling with making the changes required for the next level of professional excellence.

Outside of the evaluation process, perhaps you are tired of being disorganized or ineffective in getting your work done, not satisfying either your clients in the workplace or your family on the home front. You could be stuck in a rut, looking for renewed energy or focus.

Performance improvement and leadership development ... time management and organization ... enhancing your executive presence ... these are just a few areas where focused change can spark your transformation.

### **Step on the Gas**

If you are "coasting," by the laws of nature you are actually moving downhill! But you can make a course correction. Your choice for change in behavior, attitude or thought is in your control. In fact, one of the simple truths of change is: only YOU can change YOU.

Another truth of change: successful change happens with ongoing support. Enter the certified coach. Trained in adult learning and development as well as the key



characteristics of outstanding leadership, a certified coach knows the critical elements of sustained change. And a certified coach with experience in your profession or line of business can raise the level of coaching effectiveness exponentially and put you in a better position to lead and succeed.

The process of coaching is a partnership based on trust and confidentiality. During the coaching process, the coach speaks and listens from a total commitment to the client's success. Coaches ask powerful and challenging questions that allow clients to discover their own unique answers and solutions. And when a client discovers their own answer, powerful change can occur. The coach further facilitates learning by providing accountability, feedback, resources and useful models.

Coaching helps leaders achieve critical business objectives in the shortest possible time, thus accelerating development. Just like in sports, YOUR coach is on YOUR team, and she can accelerate your performance now with even greater benefits down the road.

One of my clients, "Jim," received performance feedback last fall that prompted him, with the support of his firm, to seek coaching. Jim was a promising, high-potential CPA whose career at a regional firm had been stalled as a result of an ineffective leadership style, causing him to lose respect and support from both superiors and his direct reports. Clearly, those relationships were critical to his ability to achieve peak performance.

Beginning last fall and working through busy season, (which provided many opportunities to practice new behaviors), we worked to channel his passion into productivity. By April 15, he reported an increase in effectiveness due to improved relationships. The coaching sessions continued and so did his progress. In addition to winning a significant new account, he was able to regain the respect and admiration of his partners, colleagues and clients. His energy and focus were renewed.

Another client, "Janelle," struggled with presenting herself as a confident executive. Certain behaviors hindered her effectiveness in influencing her team and her clients. Through the coaching process, she made small changes that increased her self confidence and her assertiveness in dealing with others. Enhancing these skills allowed her to achieve the level of influence that she desired. Small changes created transformative results.



### Fill Your Organization's Tanks

Coaching adds value not only to individuals, but to organizations. From a firm perspective, coaching offers a high-value opportunity to leverage leadership talent and resources. Consider these facts:

- Consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton found that executive coaching returned nearly \$8 for every \$1 invested. Leaders who participated in coaching cited improvements in team chemistry, retention and the quality of consulting, all contributing dramatically to profitability.
- *Trends in Executive Coaching*, a 2008 joint study by DBM and the Human Capital Institute, found that individuals and organizations using coaching got a solid return on their investment in the form of increased sales revenue and productivity, cost savings, quality improvements and achievement of agreed-upon development objectives. I've seen similar results in my clients.

### The Road Won't Get Any Smoother

The rocky road we've experienced recently will be with us for years into the future. Don't wait any longer. Put yourself in the driver's seat. Coaching is a proven process that can help you shift your performance into a higher gear.

*About the Author: Mary C. Werner, CPA, MOD is the founder of Werner Coaching and Consulting, Inc., a practice that builds on her more than 25 years of accounting, business and financial consulting experience. A leader of leaders, Mary is especially skilled at coaching and consulting with CPAs, attorneys and other business professionals who are interested in accelerating their personal and professional growth for breakthrough results. For more information, visit <http://www.wernercoaching.com> or contact Mary directly at [Mary@wernercoaching.com](mailto:Mary@wernercoaching.com).*

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