



Praxis Consulting Group, Inc. Approach to Coaching

Praxis provides individualized coaching to C-Suite, senior, and midlevel leaders in employee-owned, publicly traded, and nonprofit organizations. This document describes the Praxis coaching process, the goals of coaching, success factors and other key issues.

Goals of Coaching

The goals of a Praxis individual coaching engagement are for the client to:

1. Develop a clear and accurate understanding of the client's strengths and limitations in his or her role
2. Develop a clear and accurate understanding of the elements of the client's work environment that facilitate or inhibit performance and how to manage those elements
3. Create a **concrete Development Plan** that reflects the client's development needs, leverages strengths, and responds to the needs of the organization
4. Implement the action plan so that new behaviors become an automatic part of the client's repertoire

While focusing on individual performance, Praxis always seeks to understand and respond to organizational factors that may be facilitating or limiting a client's performance, particularly as they relate to his or her relationship with a manager, colleagues, direct reports, or other factors (i.e., culture).

The Coaching Process

Our coaching process has four components:

1. **Assessment:** We begin our coaching work by conducting an assessment of the client's strengths and development needs as a leader, manager, and subordinate, with a particular emphasis on learning how others perceive the client's performance in his or her role. In most cases, we use electronic 360° Feedback instruments (such as Clark Wilson or the Emotional and Social Competence Inventory) in concert with any one of the Hogan Self-Assessment Tools (Personality Inventory, Motives, Values and Preferences or the Development Summary ("Derailers")) We then analyze the data to clearly target the specific strengths that clients can leverage as well as developmental opportunities.

2. **Feedback and Goal-Setting:** Upon completion of the assessment, a Praxis coach meets individually to provide the client with both oral and written feedback. Our overall intention is to target the specific areas where he/she can build on strengths as well as challenge current behaviors in order to increase effectiveness.

Relying on the feedback, we work with clients to develop a coaching plan, which identifies the professional goals that he/she agrees to work on while engaged in coaching over a nine- to twelve-month period of time.

Typically, the client and coach will collaborate with the client's manager to refine the coaching plan.

3. **Ongoing Coaching:** A critical part of the coaching process is to create a supportive on-going relationship in which the client can explore approaches to the challenges he/she faces. After completing the assessment phase, we meet with the client on a regular schedule, typically 12 to 14 sessions over nine to twelve months. The frequency of sessions may taper off after about eight months, eventually resulting in conversations once a month. Sometimes during this period, our clients find it helpful to have us observe their interactions or meetings (individual, supervisory or larger group meetings) as a means of gaining insight into the dynamics and providing additional strategies for change.

We encourage the client's manager to play an active role during the coaching process. Coaching is more successful when managers can productively provide feedback, support, reinforcement, and guidance to the client.

4. **Accountability:** Praxis undertakes several accountability measures to ensure that the client is receiving the maximum benefit from the coaching process.

The client takes responsibility for writing up the goals of the **Development Plan**, which are discussed between the client and the coach. Halfway through the coaching process, the client and coach re-evaluate the process to ensure that the coaching is on track and productive. We also communicate with the client's manager to determine any visible performance improvements and where we may need to increase our efforts. At the end of the coaching relationship, we conduct a final assessment in which we re-interview a sample of the individuals from the initial assessment to determine progress. Then we meet with the client to talk about the work accomplished and help him/her map out next steps in maintaining or continuing development.

Success Factors in Coaching

Based on years of experience with hundreds of coaching clients, we have determined that coaching is most successful under certain circumstances. We provide these here to set expectations about what is required for coaching to be successful.

1. ***Coach-Client Relationship.*** The single most important factor in the success of the coaching process is the ability of the coach and client to form a trusting working relationship. In such a relationship, the client is able to accept feedback from the coach, openly discuss vulnerabilities, problem solve, and explore new behaviors in the context of the coaching sessions. Not every coach is right for every client. But if the coach and client can form a trusting working relationship, the chances of success in the coaching process rise considerably.
2. ***The Client's Motivation.*** The client should have some internal motivation to engage in the coaching process and pursue change. The coaching process is not likely to be successful if the client feels forced into the process or otherwise lacks the desire to engage.
3. ***The Client's Capacity for Insight.*** The client must be able to learn to look at his/her behavior from the perspective of others. This capacity for self-assessment is critical for a client's success.
4. ***The Manager and Work Environment.*** The final variable contributing the success of the coaching process is the client's manager and work environment. When the client's manager and work environment provide support, reinforcement, and accountability, the client has essential resources for improved performance. At a minimum, the client's manager needs to play an active role in approving the coaching plan and meeting periodically with the client to discuss progress on coaching goals.

Confidentiality in Coaching

Confidentiality is a critical component of the coaching process. We take care to preserve confidentiality in the coaching process because it facilitates the feedback process for the client and allows the client to discuss potentially sensitive issues with the coach without concern about performance evaluation or other repercussion.