



Single Focus Leadership Coaching: It's a Matter of Proportion

I can't say that math was my favorite subject in grade school or that I turned out to be very good at it. But one thing stuck – how to do proportions. If I know a, b, c in any situation, by golly I can solve for d every time. It's amazing how often I use this humble little skill and how it has helped me in both professional and personal situations.

My point is not to advocate for a core mathematics curriculum. It's just that I see similar possibilities in taking a hyper-focused approach to executive coaching. In the right situation, helping a person discover how to handle a seemingly small issue can lead to a quantum leap in their ability to manage other aspects of their professional lives.

Single-focus leadership coaching is designed to minimize both time and cost, but the impact on skill development is often way out of proportion (trust me!) to the investment. As a simple example, I've often witnessed new leaders struggle with delegation. The job of a manager involves getting results through others. Yet new leaders often have a

hard time adopting this way of thinking and operating. They invest their own energy and/or hours to try and get the work of a team accomplished. This not only underleverages the power of the team but it can also lead to burn out for the new leader.

Here's where the power of single-focus coaching can help. By working specifically on delegation issues, the coach can help the leader understand the barriers, identify opportunities to delegate more, and create a personal framework for leveraging the collective power of the team. This type of program combines a little learning on a focused topic with the opportunity to test-drive new behaviors on-the-job under the guidance of a coach. It's all about creating concise yet impactful "learning bursts" that propel the coachee forward.

Single-focus coaching is of particular value as training and education budgets continue to shrink and both large and small organizations are challenged to fund their developmental efforts. I see pent-up demand for small

increments of coaching that could help up-and-coming leaders address the “speed bumps” that are slowing their development. While not appropriate for every workplace challenge, this talent development approach works well to help an employee become more adept in a number of areas, including:

- Decision-making
- Time management and delegation
- Having “courageous” dialogues in delicate situations

- Interpersonal communications
- Cultural awareness

Single-focus coaching applied throughout an organization can further the development of a [coaching culture](#). When that happens, coaching becomes fluid throughout the organization – the de facto way that employees at all levels communicate, solve problems, and innovate on a daily basis. Have you tried the quick-hit, single-focus coaching approach to help employees overcome specific challenges? What has been your experience?

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