

STAKEHOLDER CENTERED COACHING

Stakeholder Centered Coaching is a comprehensive process that engages those directly affected by the leader's behavior, harnessing their collective insights to drive meaningful change and create trust within teams.



In my work with clients, I ask that their progress not be judged by me, but by the people around them. This way, their behavior is being measured by their direct reports, board members, peers, and others that experience their leadership on a regular or daily basis. Early in my career I created a process called Stakeholder Centered Coaching that aims to create a collaborative coaching with the leader and the people around them in a 360-degree review; the leader's 'stakeholders'.

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is a comprehensive process that engages those directly affected by the leader's behavior, harnessing their collective insights to drive meaningful change and create trust within teams. This approach has been a cornerstone of my work, enabling leaders to see themselves through the eyes of their colleagues and direct reports, and understand the real impact of their actions.

Paul Hershey, one of my early mentors, played a pivotal role in shaping this principle that the effectiveness of coaching should

not be measured by the coach alone. He instilled in me the belief that true leadership development is recognized and validated by those who interact with the leader daily. From this guidance, I developed a unique coaching arrangement with my first client where my compensation was contingent solely upon the improvement of the leader as perceived by their peers, not my personal assessment. This approach underscored the importance of external validation in executive coaching and established a standard that my subsequent



clients find incredibly appealing. They appreciate that success is measured by tangible changes acknowledged by their colleagues and direct reports, ensuring that the outcomes are not only visible but also broadly supported.

The traditional approach of executive coaching often focuses solely on the leader's self-assessment and the coach's feedback. While introspection is valuable, it's the active participation of stakeholders that provides the nuanced perspectives necessary for authentic growth and development. The coaching starts with an anonymous 360-degree assessment of the leader's current strengths and areas for growth with the stakeholders they identify. I provide a report to the leaders and together we decide the top few areas that they want to work on from their behavior. They then must talk with their stakeholders, let them know what they'll be working on to get better, and ask them for any suggestions they have for the

future to help them improve. They don't have to implement all the suggestions, only thank stakeholders for their ideas, and continue to work on their defined behaviors.

In this process, stakeholders are not passive observers; they are active participants in their own right. As leaders openly work on their chosen areas of improvement, they invite stakeholders to do the same, fostering a culture of mutual growth and accountability. This two-way engagement not only elevates the leader's performance but also elevates the entire team, as everyone works together towards common goals. This also creates recognition of the leader's behavioral changes; they are not silently working on goals that no one else knows about, and thus might not realize are happening.

Finally, the process is iterative, with regular check-ins to discuss progress and recalibrate actions. This ongoing dialogue ensures that the leader's growth remains relevant and responsive to the

team's evolving needs. It also solidifies the transformation in the organizational culture, embedding the principles of shared leadership, transparency, and continuous improvement at its core.

By adopting Stakeholder Centered Coaching, leaders create a culture of self-improvement, trust, and humility that not only elevates their own capacity for change, but also deepens the relationship with their teams.

It's a partnership that turns individual growth into collective success, ensuring that as leaders become better versions of themselves, they also contribute to building a stronger, more cohesive organization.



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