

## Learning on the Run 21: Initial 360° Feedback Agenda

How to initiate coaching with a client that has just received their first 360° feedback results?

**The Request.** The Deputy Administrator (DA) for Research and Development, who oversees several regional institutes for the Department of Health, wanted to provide her direct reports with individually focused developmental opportunities. I was hired to provide individual feedback and coaching for all the regional directors and headquarter program managers over a 5-month period of time. A 360° feedback assessment was implemented prior to coaching.

**Larger Context.** The DA was relatively new and wanted to confirm the organizational norm of continuing professional development. Each of her direct reports (both headquarters' program managers and regional directors) managed multi-million dollar programs. They were executive level leaders as well as health scientists. Many of these senior leaders had been through several advanced team leadership programs in the past. This time, the DA wanted to provide a one-to-one experience with a coach so that her reports could continue their leadership learning with a rigorous and individualized development program.

**Consulting Intervention.** We began with an introductory meeting with all the senior leaders who would be part of the coaching program. We wanted to ensure they had a common understanding of the purpose, overall design and timeline of the program. The next step was for each senior leader to participate in a computerized feedback system; *Discovery Leadership Profile for the Public Sector* was the one we used. It was designed to provide each manager with ratings from themselves, and their peers, supervisor, and direct reports on 15 different competencies. Individual reports of the results were sent to each leader. Along with the results, they were also sent an introductory e-mail with a draft of an agenda for their first 2-hour coaching session.

The agenda for that first session with their coach included time to discover:

Who are we?

Brief career history. Current reporting relationships

Roles, expectations for working together

DA's Initiative purpose and overview, what you understand and can expect

Where are you starting from today?

Review 360° results, strengths, patterns, potential areas of leadership development

Key business, program, and team goals, immediate assignments and drivers

Where do you want to be?

Hopes, learning edges

Specific development objectives, what you hope to get out of this

Next steps

Immediate insights, session feedback

Intersession application, coaching dates

**Last Line.** To begin with a new coaching client that has just received their first 360° feedback, the basic purpose of the meeting, after introductory history and expectations, is to help them understand where they are starting from, as leaders and where they want to be that will add to accomplishing a current business objective.

(1) One of the best books I have found for senior leadership coaching is: O'Neill, M. B. *Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco. 2000.