

Coaching For Women Managers





We facilitate the weekly meetings that successful people have with themselves

Why should women need coaching?

Women are in no greater need of coaching than men, but nor are they in any smaller need of it. The job of a manager is far from easy, and the required learning curve is steep.

People are being promoted to managerial responsibilities because they are really good in their jobs, because they have shown exceptional capacity to perform, both in terms of quality and in terms of quantity and because they display high loyalty to the firm.

But nothing prepares them for the new responsibilities of team and people management, delegation and empowerment, juggling with priorities to be assigned to their people etc.

Coaching has proved to be the most effective tool for accompanying managers in their varied tasks and in developing varied skills.

The requirements are the same for women and men, but our current organizational cultures present some serious challenges to women that men encounter in much smaller degrees.

When you hire a coach for your women managers, be sure to hire one who is familiar with those challenges, one who understands both the “male culture” of our organizations and the challenges women meet in those organizations. A “bilingual” coach.



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Gender balance in contemporary organizations

Gender equality is high on the agendas of countries and organizations alike. It is a question of ethics (it is women's right to be treated fairly) and a question of diversity. It is above all others a question of **strategic importance** for our organizations and for our society.

Women still hit many obstacles when engaging on a high-level career path. Some of these obstacles are unconsciously upheld by **organizational cultures** built on "male" values, and some are due to a flawed approach to what should be healthy competition. Often change is resisted because the status quo feels more comfortable and less risky.

We found during our research that women themselves can often be **prejudiced** against women.

"**Equal treatment**" can be a form of discrimination, because the "game" is played according to masculine rules. *Men think women should learn the rules of the game. Women don't think it's a game.*

Women make no better decisions nor are they better managers than men. However, a **genuine partnership** between women and men is one of the conditions for excellent, sustainable decisions or management and leadership cultures. What needs to be done therefore is to significantly increase the number and the influence of women at all levels of management and decision-making

The challenge for women is to be more effective in managing their careers without compromising their **femininity**. The solution is not to adopt men's behaviors and styles.

The key is **Gender Bilingualism**. We all know that when we don't even understand what people say or why they say it, or why they behave the way they do, we tend to interpret, to speculate, and to build up prejudice. This is valid for both women and men, but in a men's world, women suffer more from lacking such bilingualism.

ACCOMPANY's coaching program for women managers addresses those questions that help women managers build greater awareness of their needs and possibilities to make a better contribution to decision-making in their organizations and to make and enact their own choices for their careers.



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Which issues are addressed in Coaching for Women Managers?

Identifying your values and goals

Knowing who you are and what makes you tick is essential to being an effective leader. Knowing precisely what you want is paramount for achieving your goals. As an accredited "Cultural Transformation Tools" consultant, we use the CTT "Values Assessment" as a basis for the coaching process.

Self-confidence

Recognize and accept your competencies and strengths, behave accordingly and get the recognition you deserve. The culture of our organizations may make it particularly difficult for women to maintain a healthy self-confidence. Our Appreciative Coaching approach helps both women and men to build on their strengths rather than trying to correct imaginary flaws.

Effective Communication

"I said it three times and nobody seemed even to hear it. When the same idea was suggested by a man 10 min later, everyone was fascinated!" This story is symptomatic. It evokes prejudice and stereotypes; it also speaks about communication styles. We work with women to enhance the effectiveness of their communication styles in a men's world.

Gender-cultural bilingualism

This concept is best explained through a story: I remember visiting Italy as a kid with my parents who did not speak a word of the language, and it seemed like a strange and somewhat frightening world to me. After I became fluent in Italian and acquainted with Italian culture, I fell in love with the country and its inhabitants, and I was able to do business in the country. Did I become an Italian? No. Do I think it is perfect? Far from it! So how is this relevant, you will ask? Our organizations are Men-land. The challenge for women is to learn and become fluent in the language of the country, to learn to understand the culture. If we want to influence a situation for the better, we first need to accept it and to be accepted in it. Facilitating this learning process is one of the most important contributions a male coach can make to female executives.



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Networking

Women are frequently *de facto* excluded from joining traditional men's networks. Often, they don't find these networks attractive. But women's networks are still rare. The still small number of female executives adds a layer of difficulty.

Women can benefit from finding ways to become part of traditional networks and to influence or transform these. They can also create new networks in innovative ways.

Coping with the double burden of career and family

When women have to bear the double burden of family and childcare and of high-level careers, life can really become difficult and coping strategies are required. We can let you benefit from other women's experiences and help you to eliminate the slack, find new resources and get the organization acknowledge and adapt to your needs.

Achieving specific objectives

The action-based character of coaching makes it an ideal instrument for project planning and follow-through. The issue is similar for women and men but the hurdles that women find on their way are different and often need to be addressed differently.

Manage the responsibilities of a new role

When a manager takes on higher-level responsibilities, or enlarges her "span of control", coaching is a proven way to quickly becoming effective. This applies equally to women and men, but the specific difficulties that organizations still oppose to women call for a tailored approach and for a coach being fluent in gender-bilingualism.



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Which are the benefits of Coaching for Women Managers?

Executive Coaching is a contemporary response to the challenges of our times.

Complementing and enhancing more traditional forms of learning and training, coaching for women managers is the most effective support

for the female executive, to:

- Enhance your personal and leadership effectiveness
- Increase your confidence and self-esteem
- Develop more effective personal habits
- Tap your own inner wisdom and increase your inner sense of well-being
- Discover your sense of purpose and your enthusiasm and act from the foundations of your values
- Find satisfaction in both the personal and professional sides of your life

for the organization, to:

- Value, attract and retain female talent
- Develop leadership skills of the existing female talent pool
- Recognize, build on and contribute to one of the most important cultural changes of the 21st century
- Demonstrate and act upon the importance that you assign to non-discrimination and gender balance
- Address possible current weaknesses of your leadership team in the most effective and sustainable way
- Reduce conflict and enhance teamwork



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How does it work?

The triangle

Organizational coaching is an agreement involving three parties:

- **The organization** that hires the coach and that expects a measurable positive outcome
- **The client**, i.e. the person with whom the coach works and whose performance in the organization is to be supported by the coaching process. The client must be confident that her conversations with the coach will remain strictly confidential.
- **The coach**, who must respect both the organization's and the client's legitimate interests.

The resulting relations may be complex and must be clearly understood and accepted by all involved parties. Such understanding is an essential condition for the effectiveness of the work that will be done.



Staying focused on the goal

Executive coaching as practiced by Accompany starts with an agreement between the three parties regarding which competences or projects will be specifically worked upon. During the process, it is quite usual and often desirable for the benefit of effectiveness that more personal issues will be tackled. Addressing such questions must support, not distract from the goals that have been agreed upon by the three parties.



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Measuring results

Organizations may expect the coach to produce detailed reporting and evaluations of the coaching process.

We will not disclose the content of coaching sessions. The client has an inviolable right to confidentiality and this is a *conditio sine qua non* for an effective coaching process.

We cannot evaluate the outcome of the coaching program, for two reasons:

- Evaluating the effectiveness of our own work would put us into a conflict of interest
- The real effects of the learning process will only be visible in the real-life work environment. The organization is much better placed than the coach to effectively monitor and evaluate success.

Let us decide together how the outcome is best monitored in the specific case of your organization!

Reaching autonomy and effectiveness

Our objective is to support our client to become more effective and independent. As one of our colleagues adequately put it, the focus should not be on coaching effectiveness but on client effectiveness.

In order to avoid both the risks of losing focus and of letting dependency install, we strongly suggest limiting the coaching program to 12 sessions. This is short enough to put both the client and the coach in a healthy stretch situation and long enough for an effective change of habits.



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Starting the coaching relation

Preliminary meeting

The first step is a conversation between the representative of the organization (usually but not necessarily the client's boss, or the human resource manager), the client and the coach. This conversation aims at defining a measurable objective of the coaching, at clarifying the roles and the responsibilities of all those involved, and at drawing the line between the client's right to confidentiality and the organizations right to receive reporting. The steps and the time frame of the process will be identified. The coach will develop an understanding of the strategic context for the client's progress.

After this meeting, when a shared agreement has been reached, the coach will invite the executive to complement the picture through a a profiling test adapted to the specific requirements of an executive that will provide a managerial, entrepreneurial and leadership profile of the executive.

First session

The first session will give the client a comprehensive understanding of the process and underlying principles and provide an answer to all the questions they may have. Coach and client will have a chance to better know each other, to fine-tune the style of interaction that will bring out the best results and to build mutual trust. They will assess the current situation based on a shared analysis of the profile provided by the test and other data as seen as important.

One of the most important conditions in a coaching relationship is the "right match" between the coach and the coachee. The first session will make it clear whether such a right match exists.

The coaching process

The coaching relationship will follow the "Objective - Choice – Planning – Doing – Arrival" executive coaching model as developed by Accompany and as further elaborated on the following page.

The "Objective – Choice – Planning – Doing – Arrival" Model

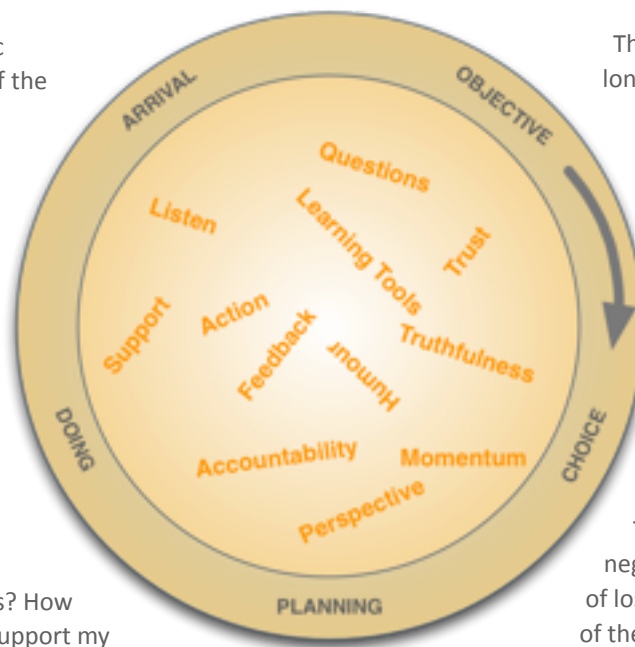
During the preliminary meeting, the three parties involved agree upon the **objectives** of the coaching program, which may be the achievement of a specific organizational goal (*project coaching*) or the enhancement of specific competencies or skills of the executive (*competence-focused coaching*).

The concept of **choice** is a core aspect of the model. As long as we believe our decisions are controlled by extraneous constraints we are not free to develop our full potential. Which is my personal objective and how does it support the organization's objectives? How do my personal values support my choices? Choosing may mean abandoning past advantages (the comfort of not being in

charge, e.g.). What exactly must I renounce?

All things are created twice: first in our imagination, then in reality. The **plan** shows us the details, the steps to make, the foreseeable stumbling blocks; it allows us to develop a vision and to espouse it.

coaching model



The phase of **action** (doing) is the longest, and the most difficult. We are likely to run into resource shortages, we risk losing sight of the objective, to neglect important details, to lose momentum or on the contrary to miss or to overshoot the goal. The coach accompanies the client and helps them keeping these questions in mind.

The **arrival** phase should not be neglected; it would be at the price of losing a great deal of the benefits of the voyage. It will be important to "celebrate" on arrival, to communicate the performance in a suitable way and to stabilize the new situation.

Personal & Professional growth, self-actualization, success



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The coach's toolbox

Continuity and regularity

In management work, "urgent" is the strongest opponent of "important". Our coaching process provides a space, one hour per week, for the manager to reflect about the important things, to look back over the week, to learn from their actions and choices, to make choices for the week to come, to integrate the change, to stay focused and maintain the pace.

Respect and trust

True dialogue is only possible in a climate of respect and mutual trust. That is the sort of climate that allows both the individual and the company to reach their full potential.

Listening

How often do we find somebody who really listens? Corporate life has become too hectic and leaves no time for listening. And yet, our ideas cannot become entirely clear unless and until we find a way to express them, to present them to someone and to receive feedback from them. The coach is trained to hear what is said, what may be implied, and also what is withheld.

Support and non-judgmental feedback

The role of the coach is not to judge, nor to evaluate or find mistakes. It is rather the opposite. The coach assumes that the client is fully qualified and has unlimited potential, if only they find access to all their resources. It is in this quest that the coach supports his client. The client is the expert; the coach is a catalyst

Constructive questioning

Questions are the fundamental tool of the coach. Often, their purpose is not for the coach to hear the answer, but rather to allow the client to hear their own answer to a question they might not have raised otherwise. The questions can simply reinforce the confidence of the client, or it may shake their convictions, invite them to adopt a new point of view, clarify the need for clear and sometimes uncomfortable choices - as life can present them to us. The questions will always have to help the client's progress.

Focus on the objective

In the corporate setting, the coach's work must always be for the benefit of both the company and the executive. To achieve this longer-term goal, it may be essential to work with the client on more immediate projects. However, the ultimate objective must guide all choices.



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Working languages

Accompany works in English, French, Italian, German, and Luxembourgish

How can you as our client enhance the process?

- Be committed to the process
- Believe in your potential for personal and professional growth
- Be open and frank - to yourself and to your coach
- Have the courage to succeed
- Look forward to positive change

What you can expect from us

- Our professionalism
- Our total confidentiality
- A non-judgmental climate
- That we're honest and frank
- That we respect your unique individuality
- Our support and listening
- Our feedback and our perspective
- Suggestions and advice, if you ask for it



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Can your business benefit from coaching?

These are the question you may ask yourself

- Would our managers benefit from learning or enhancing specific capabilities at this stage of our development?
- Would our company benefit from improving its internal and external communications, the quality of vertical and horizontal dialogue, the work climate?
- Would our company gain from being a better place to work for both women and men?
- Is the acquisition of formal knowledge and new technical know-how enough to respond to the challenges of our time?
- **Are the company and its leaders ready to allocate 2.5% (that would be one hour per week) of selected persons' time to reflecting about the important – and increasingly urgent - questions?**

Do not hesitate to contact us and to request a complimentary consultation with your executives where we will be able to answer all your questions whether, and how, coaching can contribute to enhance the performance of your business.

accompany

7, coin du Lohr, L – 4987 Sanem
Conseil économique et institut de
formation agréé
Tel 26202283 / Fax 593641
email: serge.thill@accompany.lu
website: <http://www.accompany.lu>

Serge Thill
Executive coach

tél +352 26202283
fax +352 593641
GSM +352 621 501383
serge.thill@accompany.lu