

## Building Internal Coaching Capabilities

Glenn Hallam, Ph.D.

Creating an internal coaching program involves three phases: recruiting and selecting internal coaches, training coaches, and supporting them over time.

### 1. Recruitment and Selection

The best coaches are smart, fluid communicators with insight into how the business is run. They have a desire to help others and the ability to listen and empathize. They are also willing to devote the time and energy needed to maintain the coaching relationship over time. It is highly recommended to developing a pool of internal coaches that vary by gender, race, and functional experience. (Creative Metrics can provide a checklist and recommended method for the selection process.)

### 2. Training

Even individuals who have a natural gift for coaching need training and preparation. Creative Metrics conducts a training program to provide coaches with tools they need, such as methods for building rapport, identifying themes in feedback, pinpointing behavioral areas to address, brainstorming solutions, and setting goals.

Creative Metrics provides a process and structure for conducting coaching sessions, while encouraging coaches to develop and refine their own style. We address topics such as; how to prepare for the new coachee, how to adapt one's approach to meet the needs of different types of executives, and how to handle common challenges in the coaching relationship, such as defensive or disinterested executives. We also examine how to contract with the executive for further work, how to maintain an ongoing coaching relationship in the face of obstacles, and how to gauge progress over time.

*Internal coaches need to prepare well and follow a process. Most of all, they need to practice.*

A critical element of coach training is practice. We provide coaches with a range of scenarios and conduct role play so that coaches can try out the techniques and principles taught in the program. Coaches practice their skills, receive feedback on their performance, then have an opportunity to practice again, so that when they conduct their first real coaching session they have developed the confidence and basic skills they need to succeed.

### 3. Monitoring and Supporting

Many coaching relationships die quickly due to lack of commitment and organizational support. Coaches need to be monitored and supported to ensure that they are successful over time. Creative Metrics provides a support package that involves periodic review calls involving one professional coach for every 3-5 internal coaches, to explore the status of current coaching relationships and to address specific coaching challenges. These ongoing "mentor-the-coach" sessions involve a sharing of ideas among internal coaches as well as the opportunity to draw upon the wisdom of a senior coach. As a result, the skills of internal coaches continue to grow and coaches are able to provide better value for their coachees.

