

‘Hit the Ground Running’ - Hot Start Coaching for new hires

How coaching can be used to facilitate a smooth transition and limit disruption for new senior executives



Dr Christine Jones, Director of Development at Human Factors International

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Many top level executives regret their career move within three months and leave before the year is out. Even those who survive may find that they have made enemies who subsequently block their initiatives and make life difficult for them. With the cost of recruiting for senior level posts escalating and the disruption caused by the departure of a senior person creating uncertainty and disillusionment throughout the organisation, this is a serious issue.

There are two reasons why executives often fail to cope with that first three months. The first is that they do not realise the urgency of establishing their own authority. They tell us ‘I will just listen, watch and learn for the first couple of months – not make decisions which I may regret later.’ Listening and learning is always important, but not to the exclusion of action.

The second is that they fail to understand their new corporate culture and adapt to it. They try to do things in the way that they are used to and it does not work. They fail to establish networks and close working relationships with key stakeholders since they are not clear who these people are.

Even when roles and responsibilities are clear, individuals who have, for example, been used to a structured, hierarchical culture, can find themselves bewildered when faced with a highly collective, consensual and flexible culture.

Using Coaching to Bridge the Gap

An effective solution which has been proven time and again with our clients is HFI’s ‘**Hot Start Coaching**’. With the support of our analytic and knowledgeable coaches, executives are able to identify the key norm leaders in the new organisation and make them their allies, become fully aware of the culture and develop effective strategies for getting through that dangerous first 90 days.

The coaching focuses on a number of key areas:

Adaptation Skills - includes to what extent an

executive has a positive attitude about the job role, the degree to which he is flexible and able to adapt to new ways of doing things. It also examines his ability to cope with stress and manage his emotions in the face of opposition.

Cross Cultural Skills – encompasses how likely he is to be able to tolerate the new culture, how involved and interested in the history and values he is and how he can ensure that he is politically astute and able to develop strategies for organisational change.

Partnership Skills –being open to the behaviour and ideas of others is critical in a new role as is the ability to build effective professional relationships. Individuals need to be determined to contribute in a positive way and to persevere, even in the face of discouragement or opposition.

If you have a recently hired executive who could do with some help, HFI’s Hot Start Coaching comprises short, sharp sessions once a week for the first 90 days. It establishes a practical action plan to ensure that new executives avoid the traps that could derail them during this time and helps them establish their leadership authority, setting themselves up for a long and fruitful career with their new company.

A recent client sent us this comment: “The Hot Start Coaching by HFI had a great impact on my success when I took on a new job. The benefits have endured and help me to focus on what really matters. I use what I learnt to pass on certain principles to new managers I appoint, in particular, the need to make an impact quickly and operate outside their comfort zone.”

Use our Hot Start Coaching for your next senior appointment and see the effect that it has on your business results! These short, sharp interventions are tailored to the specific needs of your executives and are designed to deliver business results in a short period of time. Call us to discuss how we can help your senior appointments hit the ground running.