

THE CHALLENGE: GROWING AS AN EXECUTIVE

- The founder of a performing arts nonprofit wanted to grow his organization by increasing budget, service offerings, and staff by 20–30%.
- Extensive business experience as an independent contractor served him well, but he lacked insight into collaborative group dynamics fundamental to an organization.
- His essential questions: Why aren't people as committed as I am? And why don't they just do their jobs well?

THE TECHNIQUE: COACHING PROCESS

- Apply coaching as an individual growth activity, with a focus on 1) personal insight, 2) individualized strategies, and 3) actionable outcomes.
- Select coaching targets focused on improving leadership of existing staff and processes as well as developing leadership infrastructure to support anticipated growth.
- Drive development through a structured use of personal insight, skills acquisition, skills practice, reflection, and repetition.
- Approach challenges from a reflective standpoint, offering best practices and learning tools and challenging him to reflect on his preferences, group application, and desired outcomes.

THE INTERVENTION

- Conducted psychometric assessments.
- Kicked off coaching through assessment baseline of personal insight and baseline of organizational leadership goals. Defined a reflective, action-and-evaluation process of how the leadership goals would be approached.
- Set priorities and sequenced goals for step-by-step process. Leader approached each goal as an exercise in skills application and self-reflection: gathering data and best practices, engaging team, hearing and reflecting on feedback, and assessing next steps.
- Conducted weekly individualized coaching sessions to track progress, reflect on effectiveness, and assess personal impact.
- Held the executive accountable to his goals through repetition, humor, reflection, and skills growth.

THE RESULTS

- The executive learned to identify his personal preferences and reflect on whether a choice was a personal preference or a business-based decision.
- Over time he learned that decisions against his personal preferences might actually be the better approach to achieving what he wanted on a business level.
- The organization collectively agreed on systems, tools, and processes to better enable process-based work. Leading staff to this collective set of decisions established a basis for the future 20-30% growth.
- He learned:
 - Applying his leadership differently could get better results for the same level of effort.
 - To get staff to “do their best,” he needed to give them structures, frames, and support to enable their independent roles.
 - Depending on having “really good” people who were committed to their work was not a repeatable business process that could enable future growth.