

**What Executives Need to Develop for Success: A Three-Dimensional Model of Skills for
Learning in Executive Coaching**

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A Three-Dimensional Model of Skills for Learning in Executive Coaching*

ABSTRACT: *Executive coaching helps to improve an executive's professional performance and ultimately the effectiveness of the client's organization. The recipients of executive coaching are often described as "leaders" or/and "managers," and the areas the executive coaches are working on are described as "leadership skills" or/and "management skills." However, learning high levels of such skills does not seem to ensure success, the overused strengths becoming weaknesses, causing the derailment of executives. This paper proposes a three-dimensional model of skills for executives' learning. By having a strong combination of these three skills, executives continue to be successful and can prevent their derailment before it occurs. This model provides the areas for executive coaching and executive education programs.*

Keywords: coaching, executive training/ability/education, leadership development, management training/education/development, skills development/training

RECEIPIENTS OF EXECUTIVE COACHING AND WHAT TO BE COACHED

Definitions of executive coaching vary in the literature (Table 1). In such descriptions, an individual who receives executive coaching is also described differently. For example, in Kilburg (1996, p. 142), a coachee in executive coaching is 'a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization.' Peterson's (1996, p. 85) definition describes executive coaching as a service provided to 'executives,' and is intended for 'leaders.' Orenstein (2006) calls a coachee a "manager." Some others use "leader" and "executive" interchangeably (e.g., Stern, 2004), and the others seem to treat "manager" and "leader" as an executive coachee (e.g., De Haan, Culpin, & Curd, 2011; Grant, 2014). Thus, the terms, "a leader," "a manager," and "an executive" are used interchangeably in coaching literature, all of them referring to a recipient of executive coaching.

Insert Table 1 about here

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What skills, then, are coached to those who receive executive coaching? Stern (2004) asserts that executive coaching should be differentiated from other forms of coaching such as personal coaching, career coaching, team coaching, financial coaching, relationship coaching, etc., in that executive coaching focuses on ‘one-on-one to develop the executive as a leader while also helping that leader to achieve business results.’ Grant (2014, p. 259) considers executive coaching to enhance executive’s ‘leadership skills,’ while Orenstein (2006, p. 106) considers that it improves ‘management skills.’ In addition to the confusion of the terms “managers,” “leaders,” and “executives,” it is not clear what is meant by “leadership skills” and “management skills” that executive coaching is supposed to coach.

The aim of executive coaching is to improve an executive’s professional performance and ‘consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organization’ (Kilburg, 1996, p. 142). In this paper, we will propose a three-dimensional model of skills for learning in executive coaching that suggests the areas of executive education/coaching that successful executives need to learn for their further success and for the avoidance of their derailment.

This paper is organized as follows. First, we will look at the definitions of “leaders” and “managers,” “leadership” and “management” to consider what the recipients of executive coaching need for their success. Next, we will interpret the survey results answered by CEOs and senior executives as recipients of executive coaching to see the coaching areas from the perspective of the coachees. We also consider executive’s derailment factors, and then propose a new model.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR EXECUTIVES

A model by McCartney and Campbell (2006)

McCartney and Campbell (2006) review the use of the terms “leadership” and “management” in the literature, introducing several perspectives on such usage: 1) these are regarded as complementary skill sets (e.g., Zaleznik, 1977; Kotter, 1990), 2) leadership skills being a subset of management skills (e.g., Koontz, 1964), and 3) leadership being the preferred alternative to management (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

The view that the two skills sets are distinct can be divided into two perspectives. One is to think they do not coexist in a single individual (Zaleznik, 1977), and the other considers that both are

necessary for executive success (Kotter, 1990). In line with the latter view, Daft (2003, p. 520) says ‘a person can be a manager, a leader, both, or neither.’ Hitt (1988) calls a person who possesses these two skills a ‘leader-manager.’

Adapting Daft’s view (2003), McCartney and Campbell (2006) specify the relationship between leadership and management skills, on the one hand, and individual success, on the other, in terms of the model in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

McCarthy and Campbell (2006) claim that a person can have various combinations of management skills and leadership skills, and that both skills are necessary for the person’s success. Their model suggests that having only one of the two skills does not guarantee success without the other, no matter how high that skill is. The model also suggests some appropriate level of one of the skills can lead to high-potentials.

Depending on the combinations, three groups are identified: low, moderate, and top skill levels. Individuals who are in the low-skill levels are candidates for derailment. Individuals with very low skills of leadership and very low skills of management are not likely to be selected to a leader/manager position; a person in this area does not possess the required skills for the selection.

With moderate skill levels, individuals are candidates for development. They are the ones ‘who have either exceptional leadership or management skills or those who have a promising level of skills in both areas’ (McCarthy & Campbell, 2006, p. 196), and this group needs development intervention in order to maximize their potential.

McCarthy and Campbell (2006) consider those who are in the top skill levels to be assured of success at the executive level. Their model proposes that ‘there is more than one successful combination of leadership skills and management skills,’ indicating that not all successful executives are the same (McCarthy & Campbell, 2006, p. 197), and that both skills are critical for executives.

McCarthy and Campbell (2006) conclude that their proposed model elucidates relationships among management skills, leadership skills, and individual success and failure. Then what constitutes skills for leadership, and what for management? To review their claim, those skills are distinct and

complementary. McCarthy and Campbell (2006) rely on the research on success and failure (e.g., Russell, 2001; Lombardo & McCall, 1988), making lists of each skill set, and make a distinction between management skills and leadership skills. For example, leadership skills involve interpersonal skills, idealism in the form of vision, challenging process, strategic vision, etc., while management skills include resources problem-solving skills, specialized knowledge, directing subordinates, goal achievement, etc.

From an executive coaching point of view, McCarthy and Campbell's (2006) model is attractive; as we saw before, executives who receive coaching are a leader or a manager, or both. Based on this model, they should have a combination of more than moderate skill sets in both leadership and management skills to be a leader-manager. In the next section, we will look at the data from coaching.

Areas coached in executive coaching: from a perspective of executive coachees

According to the *Stanford 2013 Executive Coaching Survey* conducted by Larcker, Miles, Tayan and Gutman (2013), which surveyed more than two hundred CEOs, board directors, and senior executives in North American companies, one in three CEOs and one in two senior executives receive coaching. Of those who receive coaching, 78.7% of the CEOs and 68.4% of senior executives replied that it was their own decision to take this step. Larcker et al. (2013) interpret this to mean that those executives realize that there is room for their growth, and the coaching is not perceived as remedial. 96.1% of the CEOs, and 94.3% of the senior executives agree that they enjoy the process of receiving coaching and leadership advice.

The survey reports the areas the CEOs and senior executives are working on in executive coaching, as well as the areas in which they think they should be coached for development (Table 2, Table 3). These results will reveal the skills the executive coachees need to develop and want to develop. I think the data will help us to find out their relationship to the leadership skills and management skills we discussed above.

Insert Table 2 about here

Insert Table 3 about here

From the perspective of McCarthy and Campbell's (2006) model, we are able to distinguish CEOs from senior executives here, the former having top-level skills and senior executives moderate-level skills. Here I adopt Kotter's (1990, p. 104) perspective on leadership skills and management skills: 'Management is about coping with complexity,' whereas '[l]eadership, by contrast, is about coping with change.' Specifically, according to Kotter (1990), managers' activities are 1) planning and budgeting, 2) organizing and staffing, and 3) controlling and problem solving, while leaders' activities are 1) setting direction, 2) aligning people, and 3) motivating and inspiring.

In light of this distinction and the list, we can interpret the survey result in Table 2 as follows. CEOs in executive coaching are currently working more on leadership skills such as sharing leadership/delegation skills, team-building skills, and mentoring skills, than management skills, such as conflict management skills, planning skills, and decision-making skills. Senior managers, on the other hand, do not show much difference in the areas of coached areas between leadership skills and management skills.

Comparing Table 2 and Table 3 with respect to the difference between the areas of current coached areas and the biggest areas they want to develop, CEOs do not show much difference concerning leadership skills and management skills. On the other hand, senior executives think they need to develop more management skills, such as decision-making skills (26.3%) and planning skills (21.1%), than leadership skills. Team-building skills, which are a leadership kind of skill, ranks as the eleventh biggest area of development, which ranks third as a currently working area for senior executives.

This tendency indicates that leadership skills and management skills are not on a par, but form a hierarchy. The leadership skills situate higher than management skills, as the skills of what executives need to develop to be successful. We will come back this issue later.

Executive education and executives' derailment factors

Executives used to be sent to schools for several days to fix their problems, these being

described as “charm schools” (Eggers & Clark, 2000). Executive coaching has been targeted at talented but abrasive executives in peril of dismissal without change, but today it is popular for ensuring top performance (Peterson, 2009). ‘Today, most coaching is about developing the capabilities of high-potential performers’ (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009, p. 92). Coaches are hired by firms to signal their commitment to development of their high-potential executives (Charan, 2009, p. 93). Receiving coaching is now ‘often considered a badge of honor’ (Charan, 2009, p. 93).

The results of *Stanford 2013 Executive Coaching Survey* (Larcker et al., 2013) reflect this tendency. It surveyed more than two hundred CEOs, board directors, and senior executives in North American companies, and reported that one in three CEOs, and one in two senior executives, receive coaching. Of those who receive coaching, 78.7% of the CEOs and 68.4% of senior executives replied that taking this step was their own decision. Larcker et al. (2013) interpret this to mean that those executives realize there is room for growth and the coaching is not perceived as “remedial.” The survey also shows that 96.1% of the CEOs, and 94.3% of the senior executives agree that they enjoy the process of receiving coaching and leadership advice. 100% of the CEOs and 91.4% of senior executives answered that they were receptive to making changes in response to coaching they receive.

However, executives’ weaknesses cause their derailment and they still seem to require “fixing.” McCall (1998) shows how successful executives derail. For example, an executive who is a team player, who obviously has the leadership skills of team building, eventually derails because the person does not take a risk and is indecisive. An analytic thinker, having one of the management skills, can derail because that executive exhibits “analysis paralysis” and is afraid to act. McCall (1998, p. 36) claims that ‘Remarkable strengths that made a person successful can become liabilities in situations where other strengths are more important.’ Chamoro-Premuzic (2016) also asserts that positive qualities can become toxic if used excessively, such that attention to detail turns into counterproductive perfectionism. If one skill can be either a strength or a weakness, it is no use just listing such a skill in a list of leadership skills or a list of management skills, after categorizing it as one or the other.

Besides strengths becoming weaknesses, McCall (1998) presents other derailment factors: one is that success after success leads to arrogance; another is bad luck and the reaction to it. As for the latter, McCall (1998, pp. 46-48) says ‘Sometimes talented people are just unlucky. ... The people who

most believe bad luck is the cause of derailment are the derailers themselves. ... But more often, trouble is only a backdrop against which something is revealed about a person's temperament or character by the way the situation is handled.'

A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL EXECUTIVES

Proposal

The three dynamics of derailment – strengths becoming weakness, success leading to arrogance, and bad luck – cannot be handled by McCartney and Campbell's (2006, p. 199) model of individual success and failure that we discussed above (and saw in Figure 1) despite their claim that their model explains 'the relationship among leadership skills, management skills, and individual success and failure.' In this section, we propose a new model that can explain the skills needed for executives. Also, we assert that executive education, including executive coaching, should deal not only with management skills and leadership skills, but also with derailment factors as well.

Building on McCartney and Campbell's (2006) model, we propose a three-dimensional analysis of skills for successful executives, adding a third axis to leadership skills and management skills, namely, intrapersonal skills.

Insert Figure 2 about here

A need for additional skill

Let us see how the new skill proposed here can handle McCall's (1998) three dynamics of derailment. The first problem is that every strength is a potential weakness. Decisive can become autocratic, self-assured can become cocky, broadly strategic can be unfocused, and so on. Chamorro-Premuzic (2016) thinks that overused positive qualities become toxic. If so, do we need to go back to the strategy of "fixing" the flaws that otherwise appeared to be strengths? It is not necessary. We propose that by developing intrapersonal skills, a quality can be tuned to an optimal level. Chamorro-Premuzic (2016) says 'everything is better in moderation.' Self-regulation, which is an intrapersonal skill, can control what an executive has, so that it does not go too far in the positive direction or too far

in the negative direction but rather setting it at just the right level. There is then no need to fix the flaw from the beginning. Derailment that might be caused by that skill can be prevented before the derailment occurs.

The same is true with success leading to arrogance. Too much self-confidence results in arrogance. If this scale of self-confidence could be regulated at the moderate level by an executive's intrapersonal skill, the problem does not arise, and thus, again, there is no need to fix it. There are simply no problems that need fixing.

As for bad luck that successful executives encounter, if they use their intrapersonal skill, they can overcome such a fate. Recall that 'trouble is only a backdrop against which something is revealed about a person's temperament or character by the way the situation is handled' (McCall, 1998, p. 48).

In order to avoid these three derailment dynamics, we need a skill to control and regulate the levels of our other skills, namely an intrapersonal skill, in addition to leadership skills and management skills. Thus, the three-dimensional model as in Figure 2 is hereby proposed. The notion of intrapersonal skill is from Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003), which we discuss below.

Intrapersonal Skills: The third axis

In discussing the education of managers, Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) organized lists of competencies into four domains. The four domains are (1) intrapersonal skills, (2) interpersonal skills, (3) leadership skills, and (4) business skills. Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) claim that these four domains represent the content of management education, and that they form a hierarchy of trainability, the latter skills depending on the development of the earlier skills.

The intrapersonal skills concern self-regulation and self-management, and are considered to develop early and to have significant consequence for adult career development. The skills are comprised of three components: 1) self-esteem/emotional security/resiliency, 2) attitudes toward authority, and 3) self-control. 'Intrapersonal skill is the foundation on which management careers are built. Persons with good intrapersonal skills project integrity; from the perspective of implicit leadership theory (i.e., what we expect to see in leaders), integrity is the first and perhaps the most important characteristic of leadership' (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). This domain will be adopted as our

additional axis in the model proposed above. Self-regulation prevents us from overusing our strengths, becoming arrogant, and handling bad luck in a terrible manner, thus avoiding derailment scenarios.

As for the three other domains of Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003), following Kotter's (1990) categorization of management skills and leadership skills, we group their three domains into the two skills of Kotter's (1990). Recall that for Kotter (1990), leaders' activities are 1) setting direction, 2) aligning people, and 3) motivating and inspiring, while managers' activities are 1) planning and budgeting, 2) organizing and staffing, and 3) controlling and problem solving.

Hogan and Warrenfeltz's (2003, p. 79) interpersonal skills consists of four components: 1) 'a disposition to put oneself in the place of another' anticipating how that person sees the world, 2) a skill that involves 'getting it right when one tries to anticipate another person's expectations,' 3) a skill involving 'incorporating the information about the other person's expectations.' I categorize this domain as equivalent to Kotter's (1990) leadership skills, mentioned above.

Hogan and Warrenfeltz's (2003) leadership skills are about building and maintaining effective teams and consist of five components: 1) recruiting and attracting talented people to the team, 2) retaining the talented people after recruiting, 3) motivating a team, 4) developing, projecting and promoting a vision, and 5) being persistent and hard to discourage. I categorize this domain as Kotter's (1990) leadership skills.

As for business skills, this fourth domain concerns communicating, following up, planning, scheduling, managing budgets, and finding resources. I categorize this domain as Kotter's (1990) management skills. Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) says that this domain is different from the other three domains in that this is the last to develop, the easiest to teach, the most cognitive, and the least interpersonal. This characteristic of management skills is in line with what we saw above about how CEOs and senior executives differ in terms of what areas they are working in executive coaching and what they want to develop. CEOs are coached and want to be coached more in the area of leadership skills, while senior executives are more in the area of management skills. This fact made us claim that the leadership skills situate higher in hierarchy.

As for the intrapersonal skills, we will place it as the basis of three dimensions, since this regulates and controls the level of qualities found and used in the two other skills. Thus, hierarchically,

in our system, intrapersonal skills are the base, management skills build on it, and leadership skills come last. Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) consider intrapersonal skills as the core of emotional intelligence (EQ), but we do not equate our axis of intrapersonal skills in our system with EQ. It is because EQ also deals with interpersonal skills, such as social awareness and relationship management (Ackley, 2016). In our model, interpersonal skills are categorized into leadership skills. We emphasize the preeminent importance of intrapersonal skills. Controlling and regulating a self may be the most difficult task that executives encounter, as derailment cases exhibit such difficulty. We also emphasize that the three skills are distinct, but the model exhibits the importance of the interaction among the three skills for a executive's success.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have proposed a three-dimensional analysis of skills for successful executives. The three axes are intrapersonal skills, management skills, and leadership skills. They are hierarchically organized, intrapersonal skills constituting a basis, managing skills building on it, and leadership skills coming the highest. The three skills are distinct and they can coexist in an individual in various combinations. A successful executive needs to possess these three skills at high levels. Possessing high levels of the third axis, the intrapersonal skills, is critical for the prevention of derailment, since this concerns self-regulation and self-management. The intrapersonal skills play an important role in regulating other skills to avoid overusing them, preventing the executive from being derailed. This made it possible for executives to avoid being in the position of “fixing,” going back to the system of the old “charm schools” that executives used to be sent to.

Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) state that intrapersonal skills cannot be educated in a profound way, but executives can be given the opportunity to construct behavioral strategies to deal with the negative consequences of poor intrapersonal skills. We conclude that intrapersonal skills should be incorporated into executive education in the form of executive programs or/and executive coaching, in order to avoid having to fix such problems after they occur. Prevention is better than cure. We need to develop executive education programs and executive coaching programs incorporating intrapersonal skills, in addition to the conventional education of management skills and leadership skills. Ways to

educate intrapersonal skills and the interaction among the three skills remain as topics for future research.

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Table 1**Definitions of executive coaching**

Authors/Source	Description
Kilburg (1996)	‘a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organization within a formally defined coaching agreement.’ (p. 142)
Peterson (1996)	‘ <i>Executive Coaching</i> is a consultative, relationship-based service provided by seasoned consultants who serve as advisors and objective sounding boards to senior executives. This type of coaching is intended for leaders who are wrestling with the implications of tough business decisions, who want to develop new strategic insights into how they can better manage the personal dynamics of their responsibilities, or who want to enhance their own development as they face greater obstacles in achieving organizational and personal goals.’ (p. 85)
Stern (2004) (as cited in Ennis, Stern, Yahanda, Vitti, Otto, Hodgetts, et al. 2003, p. 20)	‘an experiential, individualized, leadership development process that builds a leader’s capability to achieve short and long-term organizational goals. It is conducted through one-on-one interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect. The organization, an executive, and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum learning and impact.’ (p. 154)
Orenstein, R. L. (2006)	‘executive coaching, a one-on-one intervention, with a senior manager for the purpose of improving or enhancing management skills.’ (p. 106)
De Haan, Culpin, and Curd (2011)	‘In executing coaching, leaders and managers submit issues from their practice to conversation, the aim of which is to explore and bring those issues forward with the help of an executive coach.’ (p. 25)
Grant (2014) (adapted from Kilburg, 1996)	‘a helping relationship formed between a client (the coachee) who has leadership, managerial, or supervisory authority and responsibility in an organisation, and a coach who uses a range of cognitive and behavioural techniques in order to help the client achieve a mutually defined set of goals with the aim of improving his or her leadership skills, professional performance, and well-being and the effectiveness of the organisation.’ (p. 259)

Table 2**Aras currently working to develop in executive coaching**

What leadership skills or behaviors are you currently working to develop? (Select all that apply.)					
CEOs			Senior executives		
Rank	Areas	%	Rank	Areas	%
1	Sharing leadership/ delegation skills	37.2	1	Communication skills	21.1
2	Conflict management skills	27.9	1	Conflict management skills	21.1
3	Team building skills	23.3	3	Planning skills	18.4
3	Mentoring skills/ developing internal talent	23.3	3	Sharing leadership/ delegation skills	18.4
5	Listening skills	20.9	3	Team building skills	18.4
6	Planning skills	18.6	3	Mentoring skills/ developing internal talent	18.4
6	Communication skills	18.6	7	Decision making skills	15.8
8	Interpersonal skills	14	7	Motivational skills	15.8
9	Decision making skills	9.3	7	Compassion/ empathy	15.8
10	Persuasion skills	9.3	10	Listening skills	13.2
11	Motivational skills	7	10	Interpersonal skills	13.2
12	Compassion/ empathy	7	12	Persuasion skills	10.5

Adapted from Larcker et al. (2013, pp. 2-4)

Table 3**The biggest areas for personal development**

What are the biggest areas for your personal development? (Select all that apply.)					
CEOs			Senior executives		
Rank	Areas	s%	Rank	Areas	%
1	Conflict management skills	42.2	1	Conflict management skills	34.2
2	Sharing leadership/ delegation skills	35.7	2	Decision making skills	26.3
3	Listening skills	32.1	3	Planning skills	21.1
3	Communication skills	32.1	4	Compassion/ empathy	18.4
5	Planning skills	25	4	Listening skills	18.4
6	Mentoring skills/ developing internal talent	21.4	6	Motivational skills	15.8
7	Team building skills	17.9	6	Persuasion skills	15.8
7	Decision making skills	17.9	8	Communication skills	10.5
7	Compassion/ empathy	17.9	8	Sharing leadership/ delegation skills	10.5
10	Interpersonal skills	14.3	8	Mentoring skills/ developing internal talent	10.5
10	Persuasion skills	14.3	11	Team building skills	7.9
12	Motivational skills	10.7	11	Interpersonal skills	7.9

Adapted from Larcker et al. (2013, pp. 2-4)

Figure 1

A model of individual success and failure (McCartney & Campbell, 2006, p. 192)

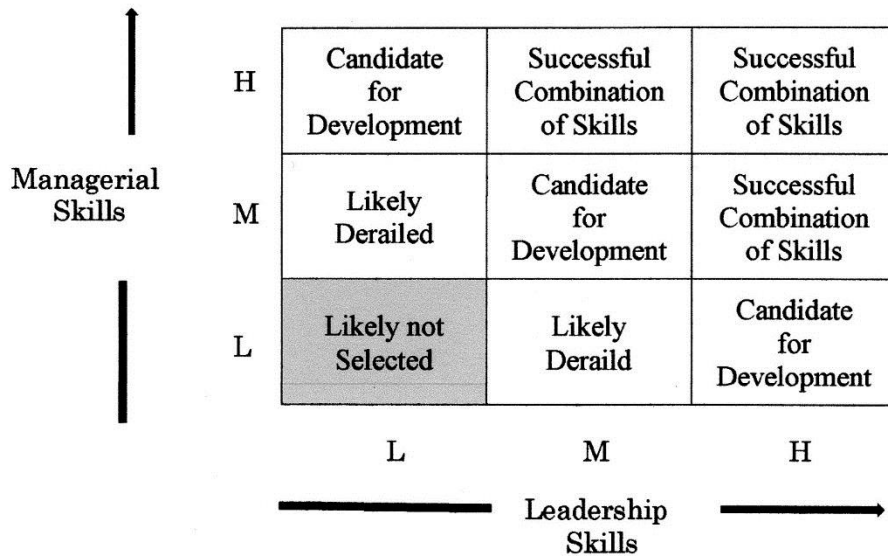


Figure 2

Three-Dimensional Model of Skills for Executive Learning

