



# Use Coaching to Retain the LEADER'S EDGE

Don't let stress and burnout infect your organization's leaders. Here's how coaching can help.

By James Boyle

**H**ow can nonprofit leaders maintain their focus in the face of stiff challenges? A look to our colleagues in the private sector may reveal a viable option.

Long ago, professionals in the private sector added business coaching to their list of best practices. Unfortunately, nonprofit organizations have been slow to adopt the practice.

When coaching is provided for managers, organizations typically experience a return on investment of six times the cost, according to a study conducted by Manchester Incorporated. This is an investment even the strictest CFO could love.

Working with a coach can improve time management, decision-making skills, and career fulfillment. Coaching has rescued countless managers from burnout, helping them strike a balance between personal and professional life, controllable and non-controllable events.

Many find coaching superior to one-time workshop training, and for an important reason. Unlike a training seminar that leaves you alone at the end to implement what you've learned, a coach is there to establish a relationship that lasts as long as necessary. The relationship, whether it's for three months or three years, is vital, because the power to institute change lies in the alliance between coach and client.

Still, not all coaching arrangements are a good fit. Those looking

for a coach need to be selective, interview potential coaches, and seek a personality match. When the proper connection is made between coach and client, the results can move a leader from good to extraordinary.

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It's important to note that coaches can't work miracles by themselves. Clients must do more than just show up for scheduled sessions. They must be willing to change. They must commit themselves to the process, establishing goals and holding themselves accountable.

Although it's hard work, it's not a burden when accomplishments become visible and goals become reality. Hiring a coach won't insulate you from the realities of life. Coaching can, however, be a tremendous tool for keeping motivation and passion high. ■

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## Top Five Reasons for Nonprofit Leaders to Work with a Coach

**Manage stress**, and make behavioral changes that promote productivity.

**Align leadership demands** with job responsibilities, especially strategic planning and time management.

**Gain support** during major organizational transitions.

**Improve relationships** and communication with board members.

**Enhance employee job satisfaction** to reduce costly staff turnover.

## How to Learn More

For more on sharpening the leadership edge and keeping motivation high, see these *Nonprofit World* articles at [www.snpo.org/members](http://www.snpo.org/members):

**Do You Need a Coach?** (Vol. 17, No. 5)

**Master Change, Or Change Will Master You** (Vol. 14, No. 4)

**How Do We Survive and Grow in the Work We Love to Do?** (Vol. 11, No. 1)

**Overcome Organizational Indifference** (Vol. 24, No. 2)

**Building Morale: The Key to Successful Change** (Vol. 13, No. 3)

**Not Taught in Business Schools: How to Cultivate Creative Leading** (Vol. 24, No. 5)

**Leading from Feeling: Coaching Tools for Interpersonal & Organizational Excellence** (Vol. 27, No. 1)