

Supporting Executives to Develop Leadership Capabilities in the Japan Market

© 2006 Oak Associates, K.K. All rights reserved

Executive Coaching & Professional Development

coach@oakassociates.co.jp

It is a significant challenge to build a business, develop an organization or lead a division of a company. Demands for performance are increasing from all quarters—from boards, from superiors, from colleagues and from external sources, such as the intensified government oversight. Delivering results becomes more and more complex. No longer are foreign executives the pampered watchdogs of the Japan operations; executives are expected to perform and produce from day one. No longer is entering into a management or leadership position a guarantee that one will stay there or that one is destined to ascend the ladder further.

The image of the lone wolf, charismatic executive leader who can do it all is more myth than reality. Organizations need leaders who are required to know more than any one individual possibly could know or understand; success depends on finding the resources to support their performance and to use those resources effectively.

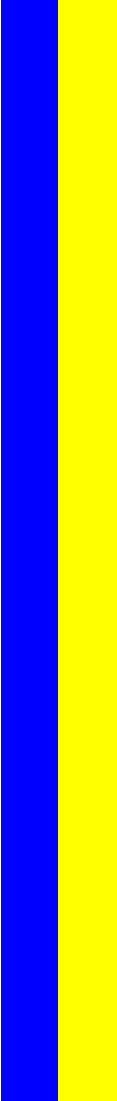
Organizations can support many of the needs of an executive, but sometimes those resources need to be sourced from outside the corporation; almost every executive needs an objective source of support to effectively lead a company or a company unit, especially if he/she is working outside a home market.

When you are looking for resources, you will find that there are many approaches for giving an executive support. The following list may help you clarify which approach might support you in an aspect of your executive responsibilities that you believe is need of strengthening.

A **Coach** will support an executive to work on skills and techniques to reach his/her goals. The Coach supports and acknowledges the executive's achievements and will offer words of encouragement, working with him/her until he/she feels confident and able to perform in the aspect of their responsibilities they are finding challenging. Coaches are focused on getting the executive from where they are now, to where he/she wants or needs to be. When taking up leadership in Japan, a Coach may provide support for the achievement of goals and early identification of problem areas in a new market, making success more attainable.

A **Mentor** would be able to communicate with the executive about all his or her own experiences as an executive/ leader and describe the lessons that were learned by the Mentor. He/she would suggest ways in which the executive may improve skills based on the way they learnt. This Mentor may be someone from either within or outside of the company and ideally be someone from the same industry. It is particularly important that a foreign executive finds an objective Mentor to support his/ her understanding of the business and the cultural issues of executive success in the Japanese market.

A **Consultant** is usually from outside of the organization in which the executive works. A Consultant will learn about the business/ organization/ division that the executive leads through observation of the executive in action. What the Consultant learns, they eventually share with the executive, who then is left to implement what has been learned. The Consultant may then return periodically to check up on how recommendations have materialized.



A **Therapist** will help an executive discover what is holding him/her back from becoming an effective leader and would explore past experiences and behaviors and analyze that past, discovering what experiences may be preventing the executive from performing as wished and/or needed. From this exploration, corrective behaviors and actions can be planned

What are Your Needs in Order to be an Effective Executive?

It is advisable to seriously evaluate the capabilities of a potential support professional. Here are some guidelines to assure your coach/mentor/consultant/therapist will best fulfill your needs:

- 1) Make sure to validate proper credentials, training and professional philosophy
- 2) Determine whether the individual or company understands you and your vision of your executive responsibilities
- 3) Make sure the individual or company fits into one of the above approaches that you think would be most useful
- 4) Ensure that there is a synergy between you and the individual

I wish you all best of success in your leadership in Japan.

Personal Career Support for Professional Development

Oak Associates' **Executive Coaching** includes: identification and formulation of mission critical goals, strategy planning, improving personal focus, increasing awareness of corporate/organizational objectives; teambuilding, work/life balance, improving customer/client relationships and development of communication skills and leadership skills.

Personal Career Support and Professional Development includes: identification of skill interests and values, writing profile statements/resumes & cover letters, research, providing job market information, networking, relationship building, interviewing, and career planning and testing such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

Our services are provided both in English and Japanese.