



The Big Blue Box Ltd

A Working Definition of our Executive Mentoring

This is a working definition of our Executive Mentoring:

Executive mentoring is a confidential conversation within which the mentor shares and transfers their knowledge and experience to support the mentee's development.

This definition complements our working definition of our coaching. Our belief is that the two techniques overlap considerably and are used side by side and interchangeably, as appropriate, within our practice.

The elements within this definition are discussed below.

1. Executive Mentoring

a) Context

Much of our coaching and mentoring is sponsored through corporate clients engaging us as external suppliers to provide independent learning and development expertise to their people.

Our mentee would be seeking support for their development within a specific **domain** where the mentor might be expected to have more knowledge and experience.

There will be domains that might be more appropriately provided by the organisation's internal subject matter expert, for example industry sector expertise, professional practice, role-specific or employee-centred knowledge. The mentee and mentor should understand and agree the mentoring domain – the focus for the mentoring.

The mentoring domain could be a **shared domain** of common experience areas for both mentor and mentee. In this context the mentor is **extending** the mentee's existing knowledge. A **shared domain** might include: the mentor's and mentee's leadership and managerial skills.

The mentor might also offer expertise in an **additional domain**, one that is new to the mentee. Here the mentor is **adding** new elements to the mentee's knowledge. An **additional domain** could include sharing insights into cultural, strategic or 'political' awareness, new networks, or individual support needs upon promotion to a new leadership role.

b) Intention

The intention of our mentoring is the sharing of domain-specific knowledge and experience to assist the mentee's learning and development within the domain area. Mentoring style delivery would be a fully integrated and seamless element within all our coaching projects.

2. Confidential

Confidentiality is essential to the mentoring process and should be defined in the mentoring contract between an organisational sponsor, the mentor and mentee.

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3. Conversation

Our mentoring will be a conversational flow of advice from the mentor to the mentee.

The diagnostic element of the conversation will help to establish how much of the support might be mentoring and how much might be coaching. In our regular practice, both techniques are used side by side, in an integrated conversational flow.

a) Mentee's Contribution

The mentee should identify their intended support domain requirements and demonstrate openness to guidance. Within some circumstances the mentee might be able to identify, select and invite their chosen mentor, in particular if seeking an internal mentor within their employing organisation. The mentee should be active in creating a positive working collaboration with the mentor.

b) Mentor's Contribution

The mentor brings domain-specific experience and knowledge, offering context-aware advice and guidance while understanding the boundaries of their expertise. Mentoring as an externally appointed mentor within an organisation, our mentoring must balance the limitations of our knowledge about the organisation with the value of diverse external perspectives.

The mentor's scoping and 'diagnosis' will help to define the specific mentoring requirements. The mentor should manage the pace and scope of the information flow to ensure that it is appropriate to the mentee's need at that time.

Experience suggests that the advice should be delivered at the time of need and that the 'experience gap' perceived by the mentee should not be too great so that the advice shared is relevant – that with a stretch the mentee can achieve the change.

4. Shares and Transfers their Knowledge and Experience

Domain-specific knowledge could be of many forms including information and advice, stories and guidance.

Our mentoring domains would not typically include specific organisational, cultural, professional, role or process advice outside our knowledge and experience. Our mentoring domains could and usually do include complementary insights. These would include diverse perspectives around organisational culture, personal effectiveness, strategy, relationships, purpose.

5. Support the Mentee's Development

Our appointment as external providers, by corporate sponsors, enables us to offer mentoring-style support with a diverse, independent and external perspectives. Our support will almost certainly be a pragmatic and flexible blend of coaching and mentoring style conversations.