

Executive Coachee Challenges & Resolutions

Drawn from Actual Coaching Sessions



Following are examples of 20 issues and challenges actually addressed¹ by executive coachees during GROVEWELL *Coaching for Global Advantage*SM sessions. Each topic was discussed and eventually resolved *because the executive coachee himself introduced it into the session.*

GROVEWELL's executive coachee...

...learned *how to* learn, and *efficiently* learn, about the new business environment to which he was being assigned – including locally respected ways of delegating, managing employee performance, conducting meetings, and making and communicating decisions.

...probed the question of which members of his worldwide Executive Board required convincing about the usefulness of a new project, then practiced culturally appropriate patterns and communication *and especially of persuasion* for each of the hold-out Board members.

...addressed the need to restructure his virtual team worldwide, with emphasis on setting objectives and roles in ways that would be clearly understood in members' various local cultures, and on building increased mutuality and trust among members.

...recognized the features of the preferred presentation style in the unfamiliar business culture, then practiced transforming elements of his own presentation style so that he would be positively received in formal sessions by key local stakeholders.

...addressed the fact that local team members were not placing a high priority on his critical project, notwithstanding his efforts to communicate urgency to them; learned how to alter his pattern and style of communication to motivate them effectively.

...distinguished among, and became familiar with, the layers of culture encountered in a new executive assignment abroad – cultural layers including the the nation, the ethnic region, business/professional culture, local corporate culture, and community culture.

...identified value differences between himself and his key international stakeholders, then planned culturally appropriate ways to establish credibility and communicate with various stakeholders so that he could build strategically aligned relationships with them.

...dealt effectively with unintended outcomes of his communications to his staff in a new culture; change came through recognition of the effect of intonation, phrasing, and emotional style on the staff's "listening" to his intended content, followed by practice.

¹ All examples are based directly on written records of *Coaching for Global Advantage* sessions with executive coachees.

...learned to effectively deliver various messages – requests, instructions, data, feedback, bad news, etc. – to colleagues and subordinates in a new culture through selection and use of e-mail, phone, and face-to-face communication in locally respected ways.

...gained understanding of the reactions of employees in other cultures to requests for 360° feedback of others, and to employee responses to receiving 360° feedback; modified this practice for greater acceptance and effectiveness the new locality.

...worked through the factors that, in the new business environment, should enter into the identification of high potential young managers and the processes that would be widely respected for developing them into vice presidential and unit head roles.

...came to understand why he was mistrusted by peers in the local culture; after which he developed a personal action plan for introducing changes into his styles of problem-solving, relationship-building, decision-making, and overall leadership of his unit.

...admitted his weakness in maintaining interpersonal relationships with host culture colleagues; recognized that the undermining factors were cross-cultural, *not* personality related, after which he developed a plan for altering his thought and behavior patterns.

...came to understand the subtle differences in the role of a business unit chief in his home country and in the new location, which enabled him to transform his expectations of himself and lose his concern that he was about to lose “face” with local subordinates.

...explored differences between the assumptions and expectations he and his staff had imported into the new assignment, and the assumptions and expectations of the local national managers; crafted a plan for all parties to develop their own “Third Way.”

...recognized that, growing up in France, he learned to communicate in implicit, indirect, non-linear, and narrative ways, whereas his new local subordinates used communication that was explicit, direct, linear, and concise; learned and practiced ways of changing this.

...created a personal action plan in relation to his firm’s *Global Leadership Competency Model*, including ways to make its qualitative measures more specific and behavioral, with an emphasis on how to measure and track his own global competency development.

...addressed and gradually resolved anxiety he felt in the role of heir-apparent to the current CEO, whose wide-ranging knowledge and business acumen caused the executive coachee to view him as a father and teacher whose shoes he was not worthy to fill.

...came to understand that his own abrasive behavior was due to his anxiety on behalf of his wife and children, who feared relocation to the new city; then developed a plan to insure that they would be exceptionally well taken-care of, and to reassure them.

...recognized that he had been taught by his father to be fiercely independent, proactive, and ultimately successful in all endeavors, with the result that he was a “control freak” resented by local subordinates; learned and practiced ways of changing this.

Compiled by partner Willa Zakin Hallowell