



Don't big bosses need training sometimes?

The answers "Yes" but is anyone prepared to tell the boss he needs it.

Executive level development can be a bit of a touchy topic in some UK businesses, you can see the areas that need polishing but no one is prepared to suggest they get the duster out! At least that's the case some of the time. In an alternative scenario the suggested development need is highlighted to the individual but it falls on deaf ears.

One of the clear problems in the mind of the exec is that they have already attained, they have reached a level of respect and seniority worthy of their life experience and achievements. This is of course true, most executives are competent individuals, they have had to be to get the role, and they often have to continue to be to retain the role. So the thought of sitting through any type of learning intervention that does little more than tickle the memory becomes highly unappetising to someone with such experience.

At the same time most execs worth their salt recognise that the learning's not yet over, and the right intervention could help them hone existing skills and competencies, introduce new thinking and provide independent comment on some home truths. The key therefore is all in the solution design and delivery. We've pulled together three key elements of creating a genuinely enhancing learning intervention for big bosses.

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1

Recognise that time is a very very precious commodity

We all feel it, but multiply it several times over to get a feel for an executives perspective. They will need very clear identification of the benefit to be returned from this intervention, they will need huge flexibility of engagement, and they will want a large amount of bespoke design to fit their individual timetables, and learning preferences.

2

Get very very specific about the need

For an executive program to be a success it's got to be very focused. A pointed needs analysis must be undertaken to ensure that they get what's required from the engagement. We think open performance coaching has a part to play, but much rather establish stronger, clearer outcomes before designing and commencing the intervention. It's time to forget the waffle and get very black and white as to what will be achieved by the programme.

3

Engage like minds

The selection of the learning facilitator is always important, but none more so than when engaging in executive development. Take time to find facilitators that fit the executives style, approach and seniority. They will have to earn the respect of the executive by demonstrating competence and insight on top of their coaching and facilitation skills, so finding the right provider is make or break.



All of this suggests the need to engage providers that can punch equally with the big bosses. They must also have the ability to commit to learning outcomes and behavioural change, able to articulate the clear benefits of the engagement and factually able to measure success afterwards. Executive development does not need to be something to shy away from, a strong approach can bring about incredible results when operating at this level.

