

Strategic Thinking Skills Coaching: A Description

Overview:

Jackson Leadership is commonly asked to coach senior executives on developing their “Strategic Thinking Skills.” These skills are required to help a senior executive get out of the day-to-day issues and take a longer-term view of where the business is headed. These skills help the executive define a “strategic vision” for where the business is headed and build support from his/her team to ensure that vision is enacted. “Strategic Thinking Skills” also help an executive better understand the competitive landscape and how his/her business can best take advantage of the opportunities and threats facing it.

The one-on-one coaching process is designed to help the executive in a customized fashion. The basic value of such a coaching module is that it will deliver the same impact of taking a Business School course on Strategic Business Thinking, without the cost or time requirements of enrolling in an MBA course. In some ways, this module is even more valuable than an MBA, because we suggest it ties into discussions with a recognized strategic thinker from the company or company’s board on how to best apply these concepts in the organization.

This coaching process breaks into 3 parts and is spread over a 3 month period:

- (1) Basic Readings on Strategic Business Thinking “Classics”;
- (2) Working through 2 Business School Case Studies and;
- (3) A Final Strategic Business Thinking Project tied to the leader’s own Organization.

Stage One: Basic Readings on Strategic Business Thinking “Classics”:

The first step to becoming a “Strategic Thinker” requires some familiarity with the classical readings on the subject known to most business executives. Therefore, we begin the process by asking participants to read the following articles:

- (1) “The Value Chain and Competitive Advantage” by Michael Porter from *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*.
- (2) “From Competitive Advantage to Corporate Strategy” by Michael Porter from *Harvard Business Review*, May – June 1987.
- (3) “Resources: The Essence of Corporate Advantage” by Cynthia Montgomery, *HBS Case #9-792-064*, February 4, 1992.
- (4) “What Leaders Really Do” by John Kotter, *Harvard Business Review*, May – June 1990.
- (5) Other relevant and recent strategic thinking articles.

These initial readings provide a basic framework for thinking strategically. Following these readings, participants meet with a Jackson Leadership coach in person for 90 minutes to discuss the main points from the readings and how to apply them in their day-to-day work. A summary memo of the key learnings from the readings will be distributed to the participants following this meeting.

Stage Two: Working through 2 Harvard Business School Case Studies:

The next step in becoming a more critical “Strategic Thinker” is for each participant to work through 2 Business School Case Studies. Each participant will read a case and then prepare a 20-minute presentation made to the Jackson Leadership coach on how they would proceed with next steps if they were the CEO

depicted in each case. The coach will then discuss their analyses and presentation and discuss how it could be improved.

The 2 cases will be discussed in 2 separate 90-minute meetings over a 2 month period (i.e., 1 per month).

We will read the following 2 cases:

- (1) Tellme Networks, Inc., *HBS Case #9-801-319*, November 15, 2000.
- (2) Husky Injection Molding Systems, *HBS Case #9-399-137*, May 14, 1999.

Stage Three: A Final Strategic Business Thinking Presentation tied to the leader's own Organization:

As a final capstone project for this coaching module, each participant will meet with their Jackson Leadership coach and one (or more) recognized strategic thinker from the leader's organization or its board for a final 90 minute meeting. At this meeting, each participant will make a presentation on how they see their organization's current market position and how it can best structure itself to compete in the next 5 years. As part of the presentations, each participant will discuss their vision of the organization 5 years from now to a high degree of detail. After each presentation, the Jackson Leadership coach and the one recognized strategic thinker from the organization or its board will discuss the presentation in a round-table discussion with the participant.

Each participant will present for 30 minutes on their analysis and suggestions. There will then be a 1 hour discussion following the presentation. We will then conclude with some final thoughts to conclude the coaching module.

Timeline:

The entire coaching module would occur over a 3 month timeframe, to ensure maximum learning of each stage in the process between meetings.

How Many People Can Take this Coaching Simultaneously from my Firm?

We have conducted this coaching one-on-one or with 15 "high-potential" leaders at the same time. The process can entirely be structured to suit your needs.

Benefits of this Program:

- *More tailored and cost-effective approach* to developing "Strategic Thinking" in your leaders relative to them taking an MBA or Executive MBA course or reading a book
- *Connecting the "theory of Strategic Thinking" to the reality of your home organization* (through the final capstone presentation)
- *Bringing the wisdom of recognized "strategic thinkers" within your organization into this process* by inviting them to the final capstone presentation.
- *Flexible timing of these meetings.* They are structured around the schedules of those going through the program. As a result, our completion rate is 100% -- compared with a much lower rate for a Business School course.
- *"High-Potential Leaders" learn from each other.* When more than one emerging leader takes this coaching module, the benefits increase exponentially, as they get to see the presentations of their colleagues as they go through the process and learn from each other in addition to learning from their Jackson Leadership coach.

Next Steps:

To learn more about Jackson Leadership's Strategy Thinking Skills Coaching module, including more details on date availability and costing, please contact Eric Jackson at leaders@jacksonleadership.com or +1.905.473.7218 x233