

Leadership Coaches' Perception of the Value of Peer Coaching: A Case Study

by

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Abstract

In the last few decades, coaching has become one of the most popular and integral components of leadership development. Despite tremendous growth, leadership coaching remains an unregulated field with no clearly established standards for educational preparation or methods for leadership coach development. The purpose of this explanatory qualitative case study research was to examine the value of peer coaching as a development strategy for facilitating learning and competency of leadership coaches. Seventeen uniquely bounded non-certified leadership coaches from a peer coaching program participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings from the interviews were triangulated with two cohorts of archival records to gain an understanding of the value of the strategy on coach development. The findings validated evidence from academia, athletics, leadership development, healthcare, and other industries and suggests that when there is a match between the peers, peer coaching is a viable development strategy for leadership coach development. When there is a strong match between peers, peer coaching provides a psychologically safe space for learning and leadership coach competency development. A mismatch between peers impacted satisfaction and engagement. To support the development of peer coaching programs and peer matching, the researcher identified through the data analysis seven steps to be taken to ensure effective peer coaching for effective leadership coach development.

Keywords: non-profit leadership development; leadership coaching; leadership coaching development; coaching competency; peer coaching; value and perception of peer coaching.

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Recommendations: To ensure effective peer coaching, the researcher recommends the following seven steps be included:

- 1) Peer coaching should be considered an essential strategy for leadership coach development.
- 2) To support effective peer coaching, peer coaches should be provided fundamental training on basic coaching skills prior to the start of the peer coaching relationship.
- 3) The basic skills for peer coaching need to include creating a safe space for learning and vulnerability, active listening, asking questions, holding the space for discovery, let go control, stay on coachee agenda/goals, being a strategic thinking partner, challenge thinking and digging to grow awareness and push to action.
- 4) Peer coaches should be given a formalized peer coaching plan that includes coaching tool or framework, such as the ones used by RIHEL, (i.e.: FUEL and CLEAR), to support novice development.
- 5) Attention should be made for ensuring the match between the individuals are non-hierarchical and include personalities supportive of both participants.
- 6) All participants of peer coaching should be empowered to speak up to request changes to peer coaching group as soon as a mismatch is determined.
- 7) Routine check-ins should be done with all members of the peer coaching to assess for any potential risk for mismatch, and peer coaches should be reassigned as soon as any risk is determined.