

JANE WASHBURN

In 25 years as a senior executive and in coaching as well, I have witnessed the frustration many women experience when they can't realize their full potential in the workplace.

To be successful, women need to be able to promote themselves to hiring authorities, bosses, colleagues, clients, and prospects. But many are uncomfortable with this concept, unsure of how to go about it without seeming to be too brash or boastful. I've seen bright, accomplished women become unnecessarily insecure when they need to foster relationships with business prospects or the boss's boss. To meet their unique needs, I coach female executives in personal-brand and business development.

A personal brand is necessary for articulating who you are and what you stand for in the eyes of your internal and external networks. You can't "sell" yourself until you thoroughly understand that. I help women identify their communication goals, realistically assess their core competencies, and then craft a positioning statement that articulates their unique value propositions. If a female executive wants to be rewarded as a results-driven leader or as an innovative problem-solver, for example, she needs to continuously reinforce that image visually, vocally, and verbally.

In most businesses, the people with power are those who deliver incremental business to drive growth. In today's environment, enterprise survival requires executives to be rainmakers, but many women simply are not confident in that role. I coach female clients on how to adopt a business advisor's attitude. This means moving beyond a focus on your technical capabilities and specific service to identify a client's broader needs and bring in the resources to help address them. This takes the relationship to a new level, building trust and fostering loyalty.

Once this mentality is established, I work with the executive to create focused business objectives and strategies for such areas as networking and negotiating to drive the actions/reactions that lead her to new-business wins.

Jane Washburn is an Ayers executive coach/consultant who has provided strategic counsel across a broad array of industries. Her background includes extensive corporate sales/marketing experience in financial and professional services.

JOE TOMASELLI

The skills that will matter most for leaders in the next few years are interpersonal competencies. Executives more often run into problems over issues relating to interpersonal effectiveness or emotional competencies rather than functional skills. Those charged with executive development need to address this area creatively to help executives achieve their full potential.

A key outcome of coaching is often a change in self-concept. We achieve this by helping clients gain deeper self-awareness and equipping them to deal effectively with the ambivalence of subordinates, unspoken rivalries of peers and superiors, and complexities of the workplace. The key is a customized comprehensive assessment, which provides a lens through which clients can clearly see strengths, weaknesses, and barriers to change. Once they better understand themselves, they can more fully realize personal capacities and achieve integrity in relationships.

A comprehensive assessment process integrates performance-related skills and competencies and emotional competencies, looking at how they interrelate and match up against job criteria and the company's mission, vision, and values. The process accelerates understanding for coach and client, helping both consider the impact of styles, proclivities, and patterns in the client's work environment and create a development plan to facilitate desired change.

Whether the client is a high-potential being groomed for greater responsibility, a seasoned pro in need of focused support to improve skills and effectiveness in tackling business challenges, or a team seeking to enhance synergy, assessment is a powerful tool used in a safe climate with support. I've widened the process to include learning that reveals the client's values, which inform attitudes and behavior. Together, we leverage values and strengths to effect desired behavioral change. When you do this with a team, deeper awareness cascades and generates power within the organization.

Once people really see themselves through the assessment lens, you have their attention. Then you can identify one or two key areas to focus on and develop a strategy and actionable plan for achieving sustainable change.

His experiences in the pharmaceutical industry and as an entrepreneur and a senior HRD/OE executive have helped make Ayers coach/consultant Joe Tomaselli an expert in facilitating transformational change in executives and organizations. ■