At the core of Korn/Ferry’s 720° coaching methodology is a dynamic blend of facilitation and expertise. The facilitative approach fosters the executive’s self-awareness and personal growth. The coach’s expertise serves as a catalyst for the executive’s development of critical leadership skills. The balance between these approaches shifts depending on the individual and his or her particular needs. Together, the integration of facilitation and expertise addresses development from both the inside-out and the outside-in.

By integrating perceptions of the core self (inside-out) with the perceived self (outside-in) we accomplish a complete 720° approach to development and coaching.

Several diverse streams of research support different elements of the 720° approach.

Our model is reflective of where coaching is moving as a field of practice – towards methodologies that are integrative, multi-disciplinary, and deeply embed executive and coach in an intense, collaborative experience.

At the core of Korn/Ferry’s 720° coaching methodology is a dynamic blend of facilitation and expertise. The facilitative approach fosters the executive’s self-awareness and personal growth. The coach’s expertise serves as a catalyst for the executive’s development of critical leadership skills. The balance between these approaches shifts depending on the individual and his or her particular needs. Together, the integration of facilitation and expertise addresses development from both the inside-out and the outside-in.

By integrating perceptions of the core self (inside-out) with the perceived self (outside-in) we accomplish a complete 720° approach to development and coaching. The 720° terminology emerges from the additive effects of the inside-out approach’s “internal 360° assessment” of the executive’s motives and values with the outside-in approach’s “external 360° assessment” of the executive’s actions and behaviors.
Inside-out and outside-in coaching focus on different aspects of development and thus require different sets of tools and techniques for successful outcomes.

Inside-out coaching engages the executive in addressing complex questions that get at the essence of who he or she is as a leader. By aligning the individual’s practices with identified purpose, passion and values, a more authentic form of leadership can manifest itself.

Outside-in coaching targets the assessment and development of critical behaviors the leader must use every day. The key to successful growth and change is helping individuals to see themselves as others do on these behaviors and then identifying specific ways to build skill.

Artfully practicing both the inside-out and outside-in approaches requires a diverse and somewhat unique set of coaching talents. Coaches can increase their effectiveness by becoming well-versed and adept in both approaches.

Our approach follows the natural, “iterative” path of human development. The first step is awareness. Awareness, both inner-awareness and awareness of how one is seen by others, is elemental to the coaching process. Without this, the individual is unable to pursue a productive developmental path. A lack of awareness may even be harmful to the individual and his or her career path.

Next is commitment. Lasting adult learning will not take place unless the person undergoing change believes in what he or she is doing. Core emotions need to be tapped into and accountabilities need to be defined to create the necessary momentum for meaningful change.

Finally, practice is required to bring the process to fruition. The three stages of the process continue in an ongoing, dynamic flow. As practice leads to sustained changes in behavior, a new level of awareness is ready to be achieved and the cycle repeats.
An integrated approach
Our integrated coaching methodology has several distinct benefits. It is comprehensive and addresses the whole person – what lies deep inside and what lies outside for all to see. Our approach allows personal aspirations to be reconciled with business realities. Similarly, the executive has the opportunity to engage in both deep inner reflection and take pragmatic business action.

The process is dynamic, with the emphasis between inside-out and outside-in shifting with the situation. The process is also reciprocal, with the inside-out and outside-in approaches reinforcing each other. The new ways of thinking and perceiving that emerge from the inside-out process gradually begin to influence behavior. Similarly, the learning that occurs from examining behaviors during the outside-in process has an impact on the executive’s thoughts, feelings, values and insights.

The infinite loop of development
Inside-out and outside-in processes combine to form an infinite loop of development. Through progressive cycles of insight and growth the differences between the two become indistinguishable. Increased alignment between the inside-out and outside-in has the potential to strengthen the executive’s impact, effectiveness and satisfaction.
Our methodology is multi-disciplinary and addresses development from multiple angles. The inside-out approach has its roots in adult learning, humanistic psychology and the emerging science of authentic leadership. The outside-in approach is firmly grounded in the principles of managerial assessment and organizational science. All together, the process is greater than the sum of its parts and enables transformative growth, both personally and professionally.

**COMPONENTS OF AN INTEGRATED INSIDE-OUT/OUTSIDE-IN APPROACH**

We will now dive deeper into each of the components of the integrated model to explore the various streams of recognized practice and research that inform the coach’s methodology and approach.

**Awareness from the Inside-out – 1a**

An executive going through the Awareness from the Inside-out stage seeks to emerge with a clear sense of his or her core self. Doing so requires the individual to identify where core values and core talents intersect to reveal core purpose.

Executive and coach use this phase to explore what lies deep within the individual, perhaps hidden from conscious awareness. What intrinsic motivations, signature strengths, and frameworks of...
meaning combine to form the source of the executive’s authentic leadership contribution? The disciplines of psychology and adult learning have long sought to tap into these enduring questions and provide a basis of theory and practice for this stage of the coaching process.

**Humanistic Psychology**
During the 1950’s, Carl Rogers and his colleagues founded a school of psychology devoted to identifying and nurturing the individual’s “better self.” Humanistic psychology’s core principles of facilitating growth, taking a holistic view of the individual, and offering the individual freedom of choice in pursuing his or her pathway to growth are clearly evident in our approach to creating awareness.

Specifically, the objective of coaching relationships based on the humanistic model is not to “fix what’s wrong,” but rather to promote growth towards self-actualization. Driving this objective is a fundamental belief that each person is unique and therefore has something of equally unique value to offer – in other words, a core purpose.

The coach’s role in helping the individual to achieve that core purpose is to act as a facilitator of growth. The humanistic model is often referred to as “person-centered” because the focus is on the individual’s unique talents, experiences and motivations, not on the coach’s expertise. The coach gently guides the process of self-realization instead of giving prescriptive advice. This puts a particular emphasis on the coach listening and asking questions versus selling and telling.

Finally, because each individual is unique, there is also no one best way to facilitate growth. The executive and coach need to maintain openness and flexibility to let the pathway of growth follow its natural course. This means that the coach can and should assist the executive in identifying options but allow him or her freedom of choice in making decisions about where to proceed.

Following these principles achieves the end result of actively involving the executive in his or her growth and creating a broader and deeper awareness of self.
Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology
Another school of psychology, cognitive-behavioral (and the related school of rational-emotive psychology), gives special attention to the influence of our inner thought processes on our emotions and outward behavior. The key to growth and improved effectiveness is to first understand the nature of those inner thoughts and how they guide our reactions. Many thoughts are rational and constructive, but some are based on irrational beliefs or perceptions.

Gaining awareness of these irrational thoughts and their “self-limiting” impact is a first step in changing how we process and respond to daily events. The role of the coach is to help the individual recognize and become more aware of the distortions in his or her thinking and then to provide the individual tools to begin framing his or her thinking in a more clear and realistic way.

By recognizing these distortions and their impact the executive can begin to understand how ingrained patterns of thought might be closing off possibilities and limiting potential. Seeing things in a more constructive manner can begin to open the doors to what the individual may be capable of achieving. This is consistent with our aims in the awareness stage of the inside-out process to lift the veil on awareness, see ourselves in a new way, and shine light on possibilities.

Adult Learning
Many years of study have revealed distinct differences in the ways adults learn and grow versus children and adolescents. The science of adult learning has particular relevance to the coaching process as it is largely a facilitated learning experience for the executive.

The adult learning discipline of andragogy (pronounced an druh go jee and meaning the methods or techniques used to teach adults) has some specific points of connection to the coaching process. Many of the assumptions of adult learning outlined by Knowles and his colleagues are exactly the same as the ones driving the executive-coach relationship:

- Adults are self-directed in their learning
- Adults have a vast wealth of life experiences to bring to their learning

An dra go gy: (an-druh-go-jee): the methods or techniques used to teach adults. (From the Greek words meaning “man-leading” as opposed to pedagogy, also from the Greek meaning “child-leading.”)
• Adult are interested in learning to solve real-life dilemmas; learning needs to be relevant
• Adults have a practical orientation; learning needs to have application in their personal and professional lives

These principles reinforce the coach’s role in facilitating the executive’s awareness and insight, identifying options for growth, and allowing him or her to pursue the path that best leads to fulfillment of a chosen core purpose.

**Transformational Learning**
The essence of creating awareness is to derive meaning from life’s experiences. During the inside-out process, the executive looks within to make sense of his or her true self. The discipline of transformative learning posits that thorough reflection on the part of the adult learner is the key to deep, fundamental learning.

Mezirow and his colleagues have identified many forms of reflection designed to deeply challenge the learner’s values, beliefs and assumptions. These techniques are readily applicable to the coaching process whereby the coach plays an active role in facilitating the client’s awareness of core beliefs and principles through deep reflection.

**Recommended Readings**


The executive and coach work together during the commitment from the inside-out phase to tap into the emotional power of the individual’s core purpose. This requires the individual to envision what things would be like (both personally and professionally) if his or her core purpose clearly came into being in everyday life – as well as to imagine what things might be like if it never came to fruition.

This provides a strong motivational boost for the executive as he or she transitions into the challenges and intricacies of the practice phase. This process has many of the same touchstones in psychology and adult learning found in the awareness from the inside-out phase.

**Humanistic Psychology**

Building on our previous discussion, the humanistic approach is inherently aspirational in nature, seeking to tap into the individual’s natural desire to grow and strive to become a more complete person.

By taking the role of the facilitator and putting the responsibility for growth in the hands of the executive, the coach encourages a deeper level of commitment from the learner. It is the executive’s chosen purpose and path, not the one given to him or her by the coach, boss or other external person. This not only induces drive, but also a willingness to sacrifice; a necessity if the individual is going to undergo a personal transformation.

**Positive Psychology**

Positive psychology is another discipline of psychology with relevance to our coaching practice. More than a “feel good” movement, positive psychology seeks to apply fundamental principles of psychology to assist individuals in achieving a fuller life that is happy, meaningful and engaging.
Arguably the highest impact development in this field has been Csikszentmihalyi's research into the experience of peak performance, a state he refers to as “flow”. When an executive is pursuing his or her core purpose, he or she is essentially seeking a series of flow experiences; moments where the executive is fully engaged, in control and applying his or her strengths for maximum positive impact.

The coach’s role is to assist the executive in identifying the characteristics of those flow experiences as they apply to work and then help the executive to replicate them through a mixture of encouragement and performance feedback. The pursuit of flow is intrinsically motivating and can potentially lead to sustained peak performance.

**Adult Learning**

Two more of Knowles’ principles of adult learning map to our efforts to raise the executive’s commitment to pursue core purpose:

- Adults are goal-oriented; they need to know why they are learning something before they learn it
- Adults respond more to intrinsic motivators than extrinsic motivators

In order to commit to a pathway of growth and weather the challenges and uncertainties of change, executives need to be able to say to themselves that there is a deeply meaningful reason for them to do this.

Therein lays the power of having a goal-oriented vision that is personal and resonates emotionally. If the executive sees something of true value that can be gained by doing something different, then this can encourage him or her to take the first steps and serve as a constant reminder to sustain his or her efforts going forward.

For maximum value, these goals need to extend beyond the immediate self to impact colleagues, the organization, family, and the community – possibly even the world. The coach’s role is to facilitate the executive’s ability to discover this vision, tap into it and sustain it.

**Organizational Behavior (Motivation and Goal-Setting)**

Organizational science gives the coach a multitude of practical, proven tools for managing motivation and increasing the executive’s
chances of achieving his or her core purpose. Decades of research by Locke, Latham, Bandura and others have established several reliable principles of motivation and goal-setting that can be readily applied to the coaching process. These include the following (Locke, 1996):

- Goals that are both specific and difficult lead to the highest performance
- Commitment to goals is most critical when goals are specific and difficult
- High commitment to goals is attained when (a) the individual is convinced that the goal is important; and (b) the individual is convinced that the goal is attainable (or that, at least, progress can be made toward it)
- Self-efficacy (i.e., belief in one’s capability to accomplish a specific task) influences (a) the difficulty level of the goal (b) the commitment to the goal (c) the response to negative feedback or failure and (d) the choice of task strategies
- Goal setting is most effective when there is feedback showing progress in relation to the goal

An effective coach is attentive to these principles and ensures that the necessary conditions are present to enable the executive’s transition from the commitment phase to the practice phase.

Recommended Readings

Practice from the Outside-in – 2a

As executive and coach transition to the outside-in phase of the coaching process, the focus shifts from looking within the leader to examining the external realm of behavior. We begin by looking at the most tangible

An effective coach is attentive to these principles and ensures that the necessary conditions are present to enable the executive’s transition from the commitment phase to the practice phase.
results that are available to us, things such as finished deliverables (papers, products, presentations of results, etc.), performance reviews, resume/CV, awards, press clippings, and mission and vision statements.

Executive and coach then try to deduce what the gathered evidence tells them about the behaviors that were necessary to produce the results. What was required by the executive to accomplish the results? What does the evidence indicate about possible strengths or weaknesses as a leader?

The point here is to be as objective as possible in the analysis; to step outside the individual and look at things with an unbiased eye – no critique, no rationale, and no justification. The end goal is to identify, quite literally, what the executive has left behind and what is the meaning attached to that.

Organizational Culture
The study of organizational culture serves as a reliable framework for the entire outside-in process. The same processes involved in interpreting the work culture of an organization can be applied to examining a single individual.

Many models of organizational culture exist. Edgar Schein’s is one of the most enduring and offers a good model for our efforts. Schein’s conceptual model presents organizational culture as three concentric layers: Artifacts, values, and assumptions. Much like peeling an onion, the organizational scientist begins on the outer surface and works inward to the core.

Artifacts, the outermost layer, consist of the tangible signs and symbols of the culture that exist in the physical environment. The next layer in represents the organization’s underlying values. If artifacts tell us the “what” of the culture, values begin to uncover the “why.” At the innermost core of organizational culture are the taken-for-granted, sometimes unconscious, assumptions that are the genesis for the values and artifacts.

Thus, by beginning with the most concrete and observable aspects of culture (artifacts) and drilling deeper to the most abstract and hidden (assumptions) the organizational scientist makes a progressive series of inferences, testing and re-testing with each new layer of evidence.
Our outside-in coaching process proceeds in the same manner, beginning with the artifacts of the executive’s work in the practice phase, examining the values that drive the artifacts during the commitment phase, and concluding with well-informed assumptions/conclusions about how the individual behaves in the awareness phase. The entire process is guided by an objective, analytic perspective seeking to understand how the executive “operates in the real world.”

Recommended Readings

Commitment from the Outside-in – 2b

Examining commitment from the outside-in is less of a discrete step than a continuation of the process begun in the practice from the outside-in phase. In the practice phase we seek to determine the behaviors that gave rise to the artifacts being examined.

In the commitment phase we look more closely at the executive’s behaviors to infer what commitments may have fueled them. What does this tell us about the executive’s expectations for himself/herself? About his or her obligations to bosses, peers and direct reports? About the motives, desires and aspirations that fuel his or her efforts?

Answering these questions gets us closer to the truth of the executive’s true impact on others, which is brought to the surface during the awareness phase.

Journaling
Autobiographical exercises provide an effective means for deducing the motivations and values behind the executive’s actions. Journaling has long been used as a method of self-discovery in education and counseling. In the context of coaching, the executive
objectively reflects on the events and occurrences that led to the creation of artifacts and looks for patterns and meaning in the behaviors that he or she displayed.

Constructing a complete and cohesive story of events supported by a strong narrative thread begins to shine light on why the executive took the actions he or she did. Creating stories from the past can be an effective catalyst for the change that the executive will face in the practice from the inside-out process.

By understanding why we have done things a certain way in the past, we can motivate and prepare ourselves for doing things a different way in the future. This also serves as a useful bridge to the awareness from the outside-in phase as participants in journaling often demonstrate an “increased self-knowledge, self-acceptance and appreciation of their uniqueness” (Karpiak, 2000, p. 46).

**Recommended Readings**


**Awareness from the Outside-in – 2c**

In the “journey back to the self” that is the outside-in part of the coaching process, the awareness phase represent the core, the final layer. Here the executive is presented with the ultimate mirror on the self – others’ feedback on their perceptions of the executive. To the extent that others’ perceptions are reality, this provides executives with valid and compelling evidence with regard to who they are and how they impact others. A skilled coach not only delivers the raw data of others’ feedback, he or she also helps shape it into a meaningful set of patterns and themes that resonate with the executive.

The awareness phase brings closure to the outer 360° loop of the 720° process and brings the focus back towards self-examination. With the insight gained from others’ feedback, the executive can take

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Here the executive is presented with the ultimate mirror on the self – others’ feedback on their perceptions of the executive.

Effective coaches help executives interpret the feedback from others so it creates a clear and compelling portrait.

a fresh look at the commitments initially made during the inside-out part of the process. In what way does this enhanced awareness of the self reinforce or alter the executive’s commitments? This represents an opportunity to make necessary adjustments and enter the practice from the inside-out phase with renewed vigor and focus.

360° Assessment
Surveys of coaching practitioners reinforce that 360° feedback is a firmly embedded process in almost all coaching relationships. Feedback is one of the key elements of establishing awareness. It is particularly valuable from a behavioral change perspective – setting goals during the commitment phase and gauging progress during the practice phase is difficult if you don’t know where you are starting from.

Effective coaches help executives interpret the feedback from others so it creates a clear and compelling portrait. Recent research has reinforced the connection between 360° feedback and effective coaching outcomes. Smither and colleagues (2003) found that individuals who received 360° feedback followed by coaching (versus those who received only 360° feedback) demonstrated commitment to more specific development goals, sought more feedback and ideas for improvement from others and had higher subsequent 360° ratings. Similarly, Luthans and Peterson (2003) found that the combined use of 360° feedback and coaching led to increased satisfaction and commitment and lower turnover rates.

Self-assessment
A recent Business Week survey (August 20, 2007) revealed that among a sample of 2,000 U.S. managers and executives, 90% believe they are in the top 10% of performers. This simple but profound result illustrates both a fundamental truth and the reason why 360° feedback is so beneficial for increasing self-awareness – we are innately poor at perceiving ourselves.

Misperceptions can err in either direction. Sometimes we are unaware of strengths that others perceive in us. Of more concern are the blind spots in our awareness that keep us from seeing the flaws and weaknesses that others perceive.
Without feedback and facilitation from the coach, these hidden strengths and blind spots can persist indefinitely. The nature and extent of flaws in self-assessment are well-researched and chronicled. The impacts extend not only to business but also to areas such as education and health (Dunning, Heath & Suls, 2004).

**Recommended Readings**


**Practice from the Inside-out – 4**

**Step 4: Interactive practices for closing the gap, integrating results with intentions - until there’s no difference between the two: Leadership from the Inside Out & from the Outside In.**

The final phase of our process puts all the learning and insight of the previous phases into practice. This requires the individual to execute a new approach to doing things and make adjustments based on feedback from his or her efforts.

The coach functions as a coach in the traditional sense during this phase by creating opportunities for practice, reinforcing the executive’s efforts at growth, monitoring results, providing feedback, and collaborating to identify ways to strengthen outcomes. The practice phase is less an end than a demarcation point for a process that repeats in an infinite loop.

With each pass through the inside-out and outside-in loops, the executive continually refines his or her leadership style to align it with core purpose and achieve a truly authentic approach to leadership.

90% [of managers and executives] believe they are in the top 10% of performers.

The practice phase is less an end than a demarcation point for a process that repeats in an infinite loop.
**Authentic Leadership**

The end goal of the inside-out/outside-in coaching process is to enable the executive to come as close as possible to practicing authentic leadership. Authentic leadership differentiates itself from other forms of leadership by defining itself as a style that is genuine, principled, and personal in nature. Authentic leaders are able to effectively align their natural talents and desires with the demands of their environment to produce a style which positively impacts others and produces successful outcomes.

Kevin Cashman, Terry Bacon, Warren Bennis and Bill George are among those recognized as thought leaders in this arena. More recently, academics have given increased attention to the nature and impacts of authentic leadership. A landmark study by Avolio and Gardner (2005) identified five basic dimensions of authentic leadership: positive moral perspective, self-awareness, balanced processing (of feedback), relational transparency, and authentic behavior.

Initial field studies of the impact of authentic leadership by Avolio and colleagues have yielded positive findings. One study found that individuals rated higher in authentic leadership also received higher ratings in overall leadership excellence as well as the ability to handle pressure and influence others. Another study found that authentic leaders had a positive impact on their followers’ moral decision making.

**Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology**

We re-visit the influence of cognitive-behavioral psychology on coaching. Cognitive-behavioral techniques that have been shown to be highly effective in producing desired behavioral changes in motivated, high-functioning individuals are highly applicable to the coaching process.

Cognitive-behavioral approaches are aimed not only at identifying the irrational thought process that limit positive outcomes, but also to identifying alternative patterns of thinking that can create a pathway towards desired results. One of the more popular approaches is Seligman's (2002) ABCDE method. The method breaks down into the following steps for the executive and coach to work through:
A = adversity (the problematic thought)  
B = your automatic beliefs about it  
C = the usual consequences  
D = your disputing your routine belief  
E = the energizing you get when you dispute effectively

This and other cognitive-behavioral techniques can be implemented by a qualified and experienced coach to bring about positive change in the executive’s ability to deal with areas such as anxiety, stress, pessimism, and anger management that might be a roadblock to achieving his or her authentic leadership style.

**Process Consultation**

As seen in the awareness and commitment phases of the outside-in process, the coach takes a particular role of facilitator and, at times, active partner in the executive’s growth. The coach does not lead with his or her expertise, but instead focuses on asking probing questions and identifying options.

This same spirit in approach carries over to the practice phase and is captured well in Schein’s practice of process consultation. Originally designed for team coaching, but also applicable to individuals, process consultation emphasizes partnering, shared responsibility and an orientation towards ongoing learning and growth.

**Experience-based Development**

Research has shown that the most significant learning for executives takes place on the job. A good coach knows how to construct the executive’s developmental experiences to take advantage of current opportunities for learning at work and/or create new ones.

While the right experiences are essential for learning, not everyone benefits the same. Some individuals demonstrate higher levels of learning agility – the ability to adapt to challenging, first-time experiences (such as those encountered over the course of a coaching engagement) and leverage the lessons learned from those experiences as they move forward in their careers.

It is believed that individuals higher in learning agility might be more open to coaching and stand to gain more from the process. Recent research has sought to investigate this more closely.
Recommended Readings

Future Directions
Our model is reflective of where coaching is moving as a field of practice – towards methodologies that are integrative, multi-disciplinary, and deeply embed executive and coach in an intense, collaborative experience.

This is coaching that represents a significant personal and professional growth experience, not something that is transactional or looks to provide a fix-it solution. As ours and others’ models are put into increasing practice and continue to evolve, more streams of thought and practice are likely to enter into the mix.

One area demonstrating particular promise is the application of neuroscience principles to the coaching process. In particular, David Rock has sought to refine the connection between the study of brain science and leadership. He posits that many of the ways we approach activities such as managing change, providing performance incentives, and persuading others are at odds with how our brains are wired.

One finding supported by neuroscience with particular relevance to coaching is that behavior change is more likely to occur if the individual in question arrives at the solution for change via facilitated self-insight rather than being given direct advice. This supports our approach to building awareness during the inside-out phase.

Recommended Reading
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About The Korn/Ferry Institute
The Korn/Ferry Institute was founded to serve as a premier global voice on a range of talent management and leadership issues. The Institute commissions, originates and publishes groundbreaking research utilizing Korn/Ferry’s unparalleled expertise in executive recruitment and talent development combined with its preeminent behavioral research library. The Institute is dedicated to improving the state of global human capital for businesses of all sizes around the world.

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Korn/Ferry International, with more than 90 offices in 40 countries, is a premier global provider of talent management solutions. Based in Los Angeles, the firm delivers an array of solutions that help clients to identify, deploy, develop, retain and reward their talent.

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