TIP #46 – NOVEMBER 2010
USING TECHNOLOGY FOR LEADERSHIP COACHING
CONTRIBUTED BY BEVERLEY SIMPSON

In recent months, some of my clients have challenged me to help them find ways to continue to build leadership capacity, but within the constraints of very tight budgets. The use of Skype technology and email have allowed me to go virtual to effectively connect with participants who have been part of a Five Practices workshop and offer follow-up coaching for leaders.

Taking advantage of the latest technology tools has proven to be useful, valuable, and—essential to my clients—cost-effective, especially when participants are located in other cities. Combining Skype and email enables me to have 'almost' face-to-face contact with clients, without incurring travel expenses, and provided much-needed flexibility in scheduling time with busy leaders in the field.

The process I have used looks like this:

1. Selected leaders are invited by e-mail to complete the LPI Online360°

2. As the Administrator for the LPI Online, I monitor their process regularly with relevant e-mail messages to leaders as needed.

3. Once the participant's LPI data is available and the feedback report has been generated, I review the results, noting key details that will help facilitate our discussion during a subsequent coaching session.

4. A date and time are set for the coaching meeting with the leader and Skype contact information is shared.

5. The LPI Feedback Report is e-mailed to the leader one day before the scheduled coaching session. The leader is encouraged to review the data beforehand with a view to creating a 3-point Personal Development Plan during our virtual meeting.

6. On the meeting date, the Skype call is initiated, with video display where possible, so that we are visible to each other during the discussion.

7. During the 90-minute coaching session, the leader is encouraged to highlight feedback data that is relevant to his or her personal leadership goals and plans. As the coach, I guide the leader to highlight 2-3 key areas where she/he wishes to make plans and set goals.

8. At the end of the session, I prepare a follow-up e-mail detailing what I heard during our discussion and what I believe the leader wishes to initiate as a personal development plan. The e-mail serves as the first step in developing a formal plan for the leader and as helpful information for me in the event of another meeting.

9. If my contract with the client only allows for one coaching session, I make it a point to discuss internal resources that can provide support and encourage the leader to make use of those resources in specific ways.

10. In some cases, this first session will be followed with a second session (4-6 weeks later) and occasionally a third session some weeks after that.

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