

Farr Associates is a Leadership Development and Organizational Effectiveness consulting firm located in High Point, North Carolina. Farr delivers a range of services that improve performance by enhancing the quality of leadership at all levels of the organization.

Perspectives of the CEO

Mark Ernsberger
Farr Associates: President and CEO

BALANCE

Have you ever noticed that there appear to be two types of people in the world? One type is all about self; the other type is all about others. Hardly a day goes by that you don't hear about politicians who have gotten into trouble by using public funds for personal gain. Or, by voting for the causes of lobbyists' who contribute to their political campaigns rather than the causes that are important to the people who elected them. Far too seldom do we hear about the mother who sacrifices everything for the welfare of her children, or the team player who always pitches in to help make a project work, even when there is no visible reward in it for them.

Because we employ lots of psychologists here at Farr Associates, we know that there is psychic reward in both of those types of behaviors. The first type feels good when they win; the second type feels good when others win.

We also know that type determination has a lot to do with brain dominance. That is, which part of the brain is stronger for that individual. People who focus mostly on themselves are stronger in their left brain; people who focus on others (or the collective) are stronger in their right brain. So, which is the best approach?

I believe that we were given "two" brains for a reason. And that reason is balance. It's obviously healthy to look out for self and self interests. After all, we come into the world alone; we go out alone. But, in between we depend on others to help achieve great things, and we get great satisfaction from being part of – and contributing to the success of the collective whole and the many personal relationships it encompasses.

So, it is critical to our happiness to find a solution that serves our interests AND the interests of those relationships we support. That's our focus here at Farr. And while there may be a lot of science in figuring out how to create that balance, sometimes it's just a matter of interrupting our routine and spending some time considering the other side. In other words, using our "two" brains instead of the one we have come to depend on when making decisions. If we all achieve this balance, we will be happier and more successful, both individually and collectively.

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Organizational Performance

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Did You Know...

That 45% of companies list Leadership Gaps as the number one driving force of their talent management strategy?

People ask the difference between a leader and a boss. . .

The leader works in the open, and the boss in covert. The leader leads, and the boss drives.

- Theodore Roosevelt

News From the Field

MYSTERY SOLVED - How Executive Coaching Can Improve Team Performance

Steve Swavely, Ph.D.

Farr Associates: Director of Leadership Development

As an executive coach and leadership development consultant, one of the most exciting and rewarding parts of my job is to help solve leadership challenges for executives and their companies. Typically, by the time leadership difficulties are brought to my attention, the executive and the executive's manager have tried everything they know to "fix the problem," but have not been successful. The vast majority of executives I work with are viewed as "high performers" within their organization, but have some "unexplainable quirk" of behavior that is limiting their performance, which only deepens the mystery.

The Challenge

For example, I was recently called in to provide executive coaching to a team leader of a company in the technology industry. This executive headed a team of engineers and scientists performing complex analyses that were critical to the company's success. The team was extremely successful and performed at a high level; however two separate and seemingly distinct leadership missteps occasionally disrupted the performance of the team. On some occasions, the team leader drove his approach to a project so hard that team members felt disempowered and became disengaged from the team. The result was poor overall efficiency. Yet on other occasions, the team leader unexplainably backed down from an approach he believed to be correct and withdrew from decisions about approaching a project, leading the team to embark on a path that ultimately was wrong and unproductive. Both of these problems were costing the company dearly in efficiency, morale, and, ultimately, in profit.

The Realization

The executive was at a loss to explain why he overdid pushing his approach sometimes and did not push hard enough at others. With no clear understanding of the problem, there was no apparent solution and the pattern continued. He was finally referred for executive coaching. Through the coaching process, he examined his thinking processes and the motives behind his actions in a way that he had not done previously. This led to a realization that he "pushed too hard" when he had overwhelming data to support his position. The data inflated his confidence to the point that he did not bother to explain how he came to his decisions. Rather he thrust his approach on the team and became impatient and defensive when he was questioned, feeling that his team did not trust him or did not think he was capable ("good enough").

In contrast, when data to support his ideas or approach was limited, his confidence fell. Not trusting his own experience and instincts, he withdrew from the decision making process for fear of being wrong.

Leadership Tip: *Listening is one of a leader's most important abilities. Notice how well you truly listen this week. Can you accurately paraphrase back what you not only heard, but the emotions you sensed? Do you clear your mind of other thoughts, including what you are going to say in response, and focus exclusively on what the other person is saying? If you answered yes to these questions, great! Now, go ask your co-workers these questions and see what they say. Keep listening!*

Mystery Solved continued...

This awareness, along with the realization that his negative beliefs sabotage his efforts, gave him the perspective he needed to develop an effective action plan to better present his ideas in a way that would create team buy-in and understanding.

The Change

When ample data to support his approach was present, he shared the data with the entire team and then gave them an opportunity to provide alternative approaches without feeling threatened and becoming defensive. When available data was limited and the issue at hand more ambiguous, he made a conscious decision to trust his experience and rely more heavily on his instinct. He became more assertive by staying active in the discussion and leading the team to the best solution possible, given the available information.

The Outcome

Increasing his awareness of the root causes for his seemingly unexplainable behavior gave him the information he needed to develop an effective action plan that allowed the team to function more harmoniously, more efficiently, and more profitably.

Executive Coaching on Steroids

Farr's Personal Executive Development process is a game changer for high potential and challenged leaders. For those who want to exponentially improve and align their leadership strategies with their team and organizational goals, Farr's PED is practically a requirement. [Learn more..](#)

Invest in your people.
Then they will invest themselves in you.



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