

Peer Coaching – What is it?

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Many people have heard of executive coaching, personal coaching, life coaching, and business coaching, but not many have heard about peer coaching in a group setting.

Peer coaching is the process where participants in a group are both the coach and the coachee. Participants take turns sharing their challenges. Then others in the group provide input from a "shared experience" perspective relating how they addressed similar challenges. Key to success of this approach is that participants share their experience and not provide advice or approach it from an "I would do this..." view.

My research on CEOs and Their Trusted Advisors found that CEOs often find themselves isolated in their organization and unsure of whom they can rely on for good advice. It also found that effective, facilitated peer groups can make a tremendous difference for CEOs. Indeed, peer groups are effective at all levels of the organization. Mid-level manager peer groups may focus on addressing concerns and issues such as managing employees, personal time management, managing upwards, and professional career growth. Senior executives and CEOs may focus on topics such as recruitment and retention of employees, succession planning, and avoiding micro management.

A trained coach/facilitator initially sets the format and structure for the group, with input from group members. This includes group norms, format, and meeting dates. The foundations of peer coaching groups are confidentiality, trust, commitment to the group, and the sharing of experiences and challenges. The coach plays the role of a facilitator, ensuring that the experience is valuable for each participant, and modifies the format and structure to ensure that the needs of the participants are being met.

Participants in peer coaching groups describe the experience as being transformational and helping them be better leaders. The sharing of challenges and experiences provides the recognition that there are many common issues that leaders face. They realize that taking advantage of insights and perspectives from those who have "been there and done that" is valuable and leads both to personal and professional growth.

Dr. Wilma Slenders facilitates CEO, senior executive, and mid-level executive peer groups. If you'd like to know more, contact **Wilma** at (403) 547-7900 or wilma@transcendmgt.com.

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