

The WJM Developmental Tracker™

WJM has developed an app for smartphones and tablets that addresses two long-standing challenges specific to executive coaching:

1) Measuring the impact of executive coaching on observed behavior

Both vendors and consumers of executive coaching services have always struggled to measure and quantify the actual impact that coaching has on an individual's behavior and job effectiveness. Measuring how much actual behavior, as witnessed by the client themselves and others (boss, coworkers, peers, reports, customers, etc.), has improved or worsened can be very tricky. The WJM Developmental Tracker™ offers a way to conveniently collect frequent "real time" feedback from the people working with the client regarding how they perceive the client's behavior change during and after the coaching. (It is often said that real behavior change only happens when it's perceived by others.)

Currently in coaching and in executive development in general, feedback on a coachee's behavior is collected via a "360-degree" process from an executive's boss, peers, reports and clients, etc., through live interviews or online surveys. This feedback is typically collected one or two times during a standard coaching engagement. Typically the timing of the feedback collection is controlled by the coach, coaching vendor, HR, etc. The feedback is summarized and interpreted by the coach and then reported to the client by the coach. The formality, arbitrary timing and involvement of a third party "audience" (the coach) in the typical process may lead to resistance, procrastination and a feeling of defensiveness by the client who may feel "under the microscope".

Unlike this traditional 360-degree feedback processes, the WJM Developmental Tracker™ allows the client to control the timing and frequency of the feedback collection. For example, a client may want immediate feedback on their performance regarding a staff meeting they just led. With a click of a button, the WJM Development Tracker™ allows the client to survey select co-workers with a custom feedback statement (e.g. *John delegates work appropriately.*) regarding their performance, which these raters rate on a 1-10 scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The results of the survey ONLY go to the client who can see how he/she is progressing over time vis-à-vis the survey results and can decide if and with whom to share the results with via an email "share" functionality. The coaching client having this level of direct control over the timing and frequency of feedback collection is unique to the WJM Development Tracker™. This is also an ideal tool for collecting regular feedback on "Deliberate Practice" activities (See NOTES ON DELIBERATE PRACTICE at the end of this paper) the executive is engaged in.

The WJM Developmental Tracker™ also allows WJM to provide aggregate data (scrubbed to protect individual anonymity) on progress against leadership developmental goals and effectiveness of coaching programs to an entire division or company using executive coaching.

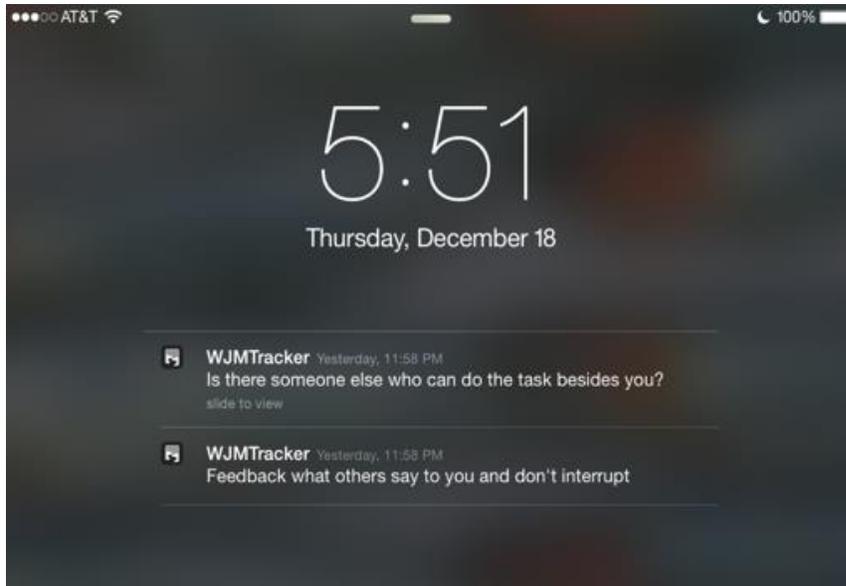
2) Effecting and supporting behavior change in between coaching sessions and beyond the coaching engagement

Helping people overcome resistance to change in order to learn new habits/behavior can be very difficult, even with the help of a professional executive coach. The latest findings in neuroscience tell us that the human brain is malleable and changes with experience. According to this research, the key to breaking habits or developing new, desired ones is to elicit attention and help people to hold this attention long enough to consolidate changes in the brain that correspond to desired changes in behavior. Continuous and repeated attention to the desired change strengthens the hard-wiring of newly created habits. The challenge with coaching as it is currently delivered, is that the coach is only there to provide behavioral reminders to the client periodically during coaching sessions or by email or phone calls.

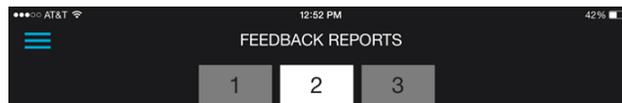
Supporting development in the Deliberate Practice model, the WJM Developmental Tracker™ offers a way to deliver continuous and repeated (hourly, daily, weekly, etc.) customized behavioral reminders to the client. These reminders are specific to the particular coachee and are crafted by the coach and client specifically to reflect that client's developmental objectives and identified strategies for Deliberate Practice. This keeps the attention on the executive's strategies for practice in between coaching sessions and beyond the end of the coaching engagement, thus keeping attention on these new behaviors even when the client is not speaking with his/her coach, and even long after the coaching engagement has ended.

How the WJM Developmental Tracker™ Works

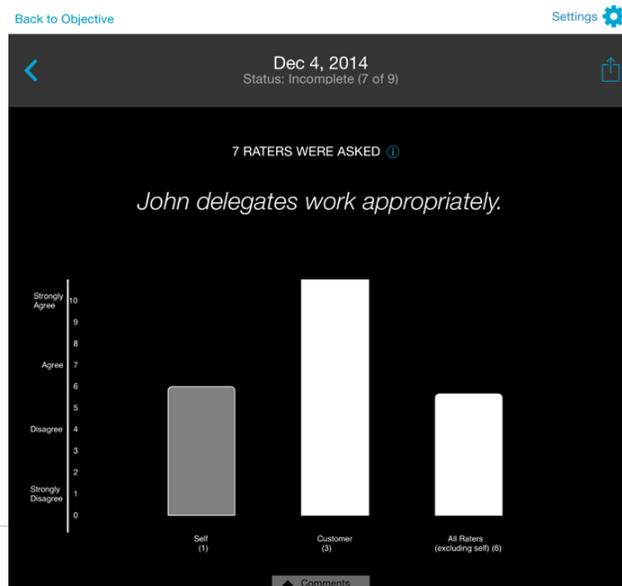
- 1) Coach and client identify two to three **Developmental Objectives**.
Example: Become a More Active Listener.
- 2) For each Objective, coach and client create a one-sentence **Deliberate Practice Reminder**.
Example: Feedback what others say...and don't interrupt!
- 3) For each Objective, coach and client create one-sentence **Feedback Statement**.
Example: John is a good listener.
- 4) WJM creates a WJM Development Tracker™ account for coaching client with their **Developmental Objectives, Deliberate Practice Reminders** and **Feedback Statements**.
- 5) The WJM Developmental Tracker™ “pings” the client with **Deliberate Practice Reminders** at a time and frequency set by the client.



- 6) WJM Developmental Tracker™ emails Feedback Statements at a frequency set by the user to selected raters who then rate the user vis-à-vis the Feedback Statement on a scale of 1 to 10. Or the user can manually send out Feedback Statements instantly whenever they want with the click of a button.
- 7) Feedback results go to the client only, who is able to view results over time by aggregate or by category of rater (bosses, peers, reports, etc.). “Share Button” allows client to send results to boss, coach, whomever...if they choose to.



Delegate more tasks and focus on big picture



- 8) WJM is able to aggregate results by organization/department, measuring the effectiveness of executive coaching in that company.

Summary of Advantages of the WJM Development Tracker™

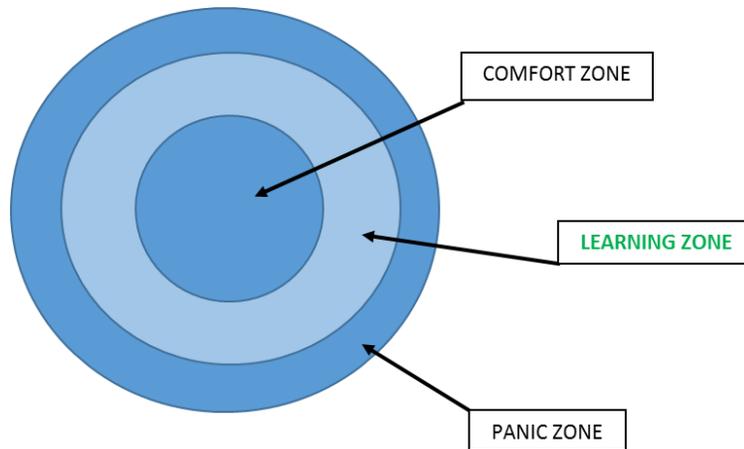
- Helps rewire neural pathways (leading to lasting behavioral change) of coaching client with regular Deliberate Practice reminders.
- Collects feedback from client's colleagues, etc. with a touch of a button and charts executive's progress over time against personal development goals.
- Keeps focus on development goals in between coaching sessions and long after the coaching engagement is over.
- Over time, quantifies effectiveness of coaching for entire organization by providing aggregate measurement of progress against goals for all coaching clients.

NOTES on DELIBERATE PRACTICE

The Deliberate Practice framework, pioneered by psychologist K. Anders Ericsson, denies that top performers are simply born more gifted than the rest. Instead, individual differences, even among elite performers, are closely related to the amount of time spent “deliberately practicing” a particular skill. Ericsson demonstrates that, in fact, many characteristics once believed to reflect innate talent are actually the result of a particular type of intense practice, and that how expert one becomes at a skill has more to do with *how* one practices than with merely performing an activity repeatedly.

What makes practice the right kind, i.e. “deliberate”, are the following conditions:

- 1) The individual is motivated to exert effort to improve their performance.
- 2) The practice activity is designed to develop a specific competency.
- 3) The practice activity is within the individual's “learning zone”.
- 4) The activity is rehearsed frequently over time.
- 5) Feedback is made available after each repetition.



The “Learning Zone”, coined by Noel Tichy, former chief of GE’s Crotonville leadership development center, refers to the skills and abilities that are *just out of reach*. Practicing in the “Comfort Zone” never leads to progress since those are activities we can already do easily, while “Panic Zone” activities are so hard that we don’t even know how to approach them. Identifying the Learning Zone, and then disciplining ourselves to stay in it as it changes can be difficult.

Deliberate Practice and Executive Coaching

Ericsson describes that in order to assure effective learning, individuals engaged in deliberate practice of new skills need the assistance of a teacher or coach. Although it is possible to generate curricula and group instruction that help, he points out that research recognizes superior outcomes from having one-on-one support, tailored specifically for the individual.

Traditionally in an executive coaching engagement, the coach acts as a sounding board for the executive as they describe their work challenges, vent about their manager or discuss problems with their team, etc. Perhaps the coach helps the leader devise strategies to prepare for an important upcoming event, presentation or difficult conversation, etc. This type of relationship can certainly be helpful to the executive. However, eventually the engagement ends and it can be difficult to assess whether or not the individual has actually changed or developed new behaviors or specific competencies as a result of the coaching.

While maintaining dynamics of the above “trusted advisor” approach to coaching, WJM integrates the Deliberate Practice framework into the process, providing more opportunity for specific and measurable competency development/behavior change. Within this delivery model, the coach assumes the following responsibilities:

- Making the case for, and continually encouraging the individual to practice activities that maximize improvement. Engaging in Deliberate Practice generates no immediate rewards, and can even be viewed as disruptive to short-term work results, so an understanding of the long-term consequences of this practice is important.
- Identify clear goals for development and then assist the executive in forming strategies for practicing new behaviors that allow him/her to move measurably closer to these goals. Research shows that the generation of new methods for practice can eventually enhance improvement previously arrested at suboptimal levels. In fact, relying on previously, well-entrenched methods that we devise on our own, rather than exploring alternatives developed with outside help, can deteriorate performance over time.
- Provide support in negotiating motivational and external constraints to practice. Deliberate practice is challenging and not necessarily enjoyable. The coach provides encouragement to keep the executive motivated and attentive – both necessary preconditions for effective practice. The coach helps the client, and also the client’s manager, carve out organizational space for these activities.
- Monitor the executive’s performance and provide immediate and informative feedback. As Steve Kerr, former Chief Learning Officer at Goldman Sachs described, practicing without feedback is like bowling through a curtain that hangs down over the bowling lane. You can work on your technique all you like, but without seeing the effects of your efforts you won’t improve and eventually you’ll stop caring.

With increased experience and the aid of the coach, the executive is able to internalize methods for assessing improvement and can then design strategies for practice and monitor the results on their own and with the help of their supervisor and others. This way the development continues long after the coaching engagement has ended.