



# Lessons for Leaders

*A Coaching Story*

## Can Success Jeopardize Your Career?

**S**uccess launches many executives into that coveted job! Yet, achievement in the new position may mandate a significant shift in style and the willingness to learn new leadership competencies.

Al discovered the need to concentrate in the areas of collaboration, team-building and relationship development. The ongoing MEDI coaching he received, in person and via telephone, provided continual learning, a safe place to practice new behaviors and tracked his progress.

### The transition challenge

When "tried and true" leadership strategies and personal strengths fail, the transition becomes a noticeable struggle. Al's story illustrates this common challenge.

Al distinguished himself as a CEO of a local hospital. This earned him a promotion to health system leadership with regional oversight and matrix responsibilities. After 18 months, Al was struggling. His numerous attempts to commandeer the team were met with resistance and many great ideas and approaches were never implemented. He had been a stellar performer, but not now! Both he and his superiors were concerned. Al tried to succeed by "working harder," using the same leadership competencies that made him a top-performing hospital CEO. The effort was futile. He had to find a different approach.

### The MEDI solution: Realignment

The CEO of the system, though anxious, remained confident in Al's abilities and encouraged him to look beyond himself for help. He suggested the use of an executive coach. Al relented, doubtful this strategy would work for him.

Al selected MEDI Executive Coaches because they were specially trained in the healthcare industry. They knew the intricacies of leading a healthcare organization and could immediately focus on helping him. He committed to the two-coach, 12 month program.

MEDI's coaches embraced the opportunity to get to know Al. They used tools and interviews to complete a thorough assessment. They examined his work style and motivation, his personality tendencies, how he was perceived by others, how he managed relationships and stress, and more. Then, for two days at a location away from the demands of the office, the coaching team helped Al gain a comprehensive view of self. With this foundation in place, Al was prepared to set specific goals that, when achieved, would raise his performance to its customary high level.

### Linear vs. matrix reporting

Al thrived in the traditional top-down management hierarchy. He led from a position of authority which capitalized on several of his strengths: visionary thinking, leadership skills and decisiveness. However, in the matrix organization, he no longer had direct control. His success would depend on persuasion, collaboration and influence, leadership competencies he had devoted very little attention to over the past 10 years.

### Mission accomplished

Change takes time. Al committed a significant portion of his career honing the skill set of "direction." Thus, an intentional, creative, repeated effort was required to build skills in the area of "persuasion."

Al worked hard to find new approaches and was able to adapt his behavior and leadership style to his new environment. He learned how to work with the corporate staff to accomplish his objectives, while allowing them to fulfill responsibilities to others in the organization—ultimately moving the overall system forward.

Al retained those skills that made him successful, learned when and how to use them; and, added the new behaviors critical to effectively transitioning from a linear to a matrix organization. He is better equipped to lead and is doing a fantastic job

He touts the MEDI coaching process as "the most valuable development experience of his career."