

# The Rare Leader Forum™

*Affinity Group Coaching*

## What...is the Rare Leader?

We could spend a lifetime reading books, attending seminars, and studying the practices of great leaders. Through this careful research, you would discover a consistent pattern of observed behaviors predicting the potential of great success as a Leader. We call these twelve behaviors, characteristics, and style, the competencies of a Rare Leader™.

## Your Behaviors...The 12 Competencies

Competencies are the measurable or observable knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors critical to successful job performance, and in this specific case, Leadership.

- ➔ Who you are
  - Integrity Of Character
  - Charisma
  - Inner Strength
- ➔ Instilling in others
  - Relationships
  - Delegation
  - Working With Ambiguity
- ➔ Seeking Results
  - Driven To Achieve
  - Taking Ownership
  - Decision Making
- ➔ The Bigger Picture
  - Vision
  - Planning To Execute
  - Outlook For The Future

## Why...Affinity Group Coaching

The success of Executive Business Coaching has prompted a question from rising stars, ranging from Middle Managers to Senior Leaders. “Can the principles of business advisory coaching be applied in a group setting?” “Absolutely” says Steve Riege, President of Ovation Leadership. “Group coaching can link professionals together to make their work more effective. This Affinity Group Coaching should include peers with a common interest or people from different organizations who want to collaborate to increase effectiveness, through the sharing of lessons learned, best practices, and create efficiencies through shared knowledge.”

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### **Leveraging...The Power Of Peers**

There are significant reasons why leveraging the power of peers through group affinity coaching works. When working within a group, participants share their best practices for mutual and common benefit. As a result, great ideas are quickly integrated. When working within an affinity group, participants tend to manage change quickly and respond with less delay. Therefore, change happens more smoothly and with less chaos.

When working within a coaching group, company and organizational initiatives can be reached more easily. As a result, the bottom line is positively impacted. When working within a facilitated group, hundreds of years of combined wisdom from the participants accelerate the transfer of knowledge. When this happens, each participant reaches their goals faster.

Affinity Group Coaching is characterized by common goals and experiences, networking, collegiality, multiple perspectives on problem-solving, shared encouragement and accountability, and the opportunity to help others. The keys to success are the chemistry of the group composition, the confidential trusting environment, and interaction driven by engaging exercises and a professional facilitator/leader.

### **Features of the Rare Leader Forum™**

Our varied experiences over many years, and our careful research on Affinity Groups have helped us design successful group experiences. While each group begins to take on its own “personality”, the core curriculum, meeting agenda, and experiences of the Facilitator ensures adherence to the principles that have made other groups successful, leading us to believe your group will have similar success. Dependent upon the intent and goal of the affinity group, elements can be designed specifically for you.

Within our Affinity Groups, features specific to the Rare Leader Forum™ include;

- Intentional composition of the group (see below)
- Careful integration of new Members (see below)
- Facilitator - A Professional Leader, certified by Ovation Leadership in the Rare Leader™ program, and skilled at meeting facilitation, and individual coaching will lead all activities of the Rare Leader Forum™.
- A regular meeting schedule
  - ✓ quarterly is typical
- Length of meeting
  - ✓ full day
- Location of meeting
  - ✓ regular meetings are either at a Member site, or off site.
  - ✓ Some groups will have an annual “event” off site.

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- A proper group size
  - ✓ a minimum of 8, a maximum group of 14 facilitates best interaction.
- Elements of 1-1 coaching
  - ✓ Coaching with the Rare Leader Forum™ carries an agenda specific to inclusion in the group. Although it does utilize one on one confidential coaching elements, it is not focused on, nor should it be considered career, or leadership track executive coaching. Coaching focused on a specific career, or leadership track can be considered as an optional addition.
  - ✓ The Coaching agenda contains four parts. Review the prior meeting activities/takeaways, prepare an issue presentation for a future meeting, action plan followup on past issues presented by the Member, and some individual coaching on work/life/career/balance issues relative to the Rare Leader™ competencies.
  - ✓ In the Rare Leader Forum™, each member receives 1-1 coaching quarterly, within a combination of in-person, telephonic, and live video chats with the Facilitator.
- Issue presentation and group input/resolve
  - ✓ Members function as a personal advisory board to each other. The Facilitator will utilize a proven process with several steps to guide the group in presenting the issue, discussing and assessing alternatives, and helping the Member to commit to an action plan of resolve, with peer accountability. This is a wonderful opportunity for members to develop their leadership, communication, and decision-making skills through collaboration with Member issues.
- Group education/experience exercise
  - ✓ Members will work with the Rare Leader Forum™ Facilitator to bring learning experiences to the group. These may include cross functional education, industry knowledge, leadership development, or general business topics. When the Rare Leader Forum™ is represented by multiple employers, a tour of the host facility is common.
- Focus on the Rare Leader™
  - ✓ Members will devote a portion of the monthly meeting and coaching activities to focused activities on a specific competency of the Rare Leader™. The list of 12 competencies will rotate giving a curriculum of in-depth study over a three year time frame.
- Commitment from you
  - ✓ Members are expected to attend all meetings and participate actively, appropriate to rules of engagement set by the group. This includes presenting issues, research topics of exploration, leading topic discussion, etc.
  - ✓ Members are expected to observe strictest of confidence and non-disclosure of member issues, topics, discussions, and information. The cornerstone of the Rare Leader™ Forum is open trust between members.
  - ✓ Members are expected to host a meeting on a rotational basis.

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### **A Typical Meeting**

The RareLeader Forum™ members set their own rules of engagement, working within guidelines of the curriculum and Affinity Group protocol. Groups will usually set their own expectations on items such as attendance, cell phones, breaks, meeting dates, start/finish times, etc.

The protocol of our Affinity groups, and specifically for the Rare Leader Forum™ provides for a general framework creating an agenda such as this abridged sample.

#### *Sample Agenda*

1. Begin - 9:00 a.m.
2. Member networking
3. Member updates (part 1)
4. Accountability reports - past issues
5. Focus on the Rare Leader™ topic
6. Member Issue (#1)
7. Working Lunch (group exercise or education topic)
8. Member updates (part 2)
9. Group education/experience exercise
10. Member Issue (#2)
11. Housekeeping items
12. Adjourn - 4:00 p.m.

### **Composing the Affinity Group**

While the common goals and experiences will be a key contributor to the success of the group, Members of each group must be carefully selected to ensure that they are high-quality Leaders and Managers in terms of their “core, character and craft”. “High Potentials” (HiPo’s) in a company succession plan are typical of a successful member. Members must also display an understanding and acceptance of the Affinity Group process, as well as a commitment to progress through a learning cycle of the 12 competencies of the Rare Leader™.

Members of the same Affinity Group should represent a diverse range of functions, but might be also be expected to bring a broad range of approach, style, and history of identifying issues and methods of solving problems. It will be important to make certain there are no conflicts of interest with other members of the group. Overall, we desire to reduce the risk of challenging the positive group chemistry.

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### **A New Member Integrates Into The Group**

We begin with a 1-1 session for each new member. This 1-1 session will be conducted by the Facilitator of the Rare Leader Forum™. The goals of this 1-1 are;

- Assure and confirm the selection of this employee for this particular group.
- Develop an agreement on desired outcomes. The Rare Leader Forum™ Leader will guide the member through a brief assessment process to help determine strength and development needs.

It is common for the Rare Leader Forum™ Facilitator to ask one current member to meet with the prospective member as a final step in the process of assuring group chemistry. Although within Affinity Groups and specifically the Rare Leader Forum™ members already know each other, we want to assure a welcomed orientation into the group. This optional member to member pre approval stage will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Following our decision affirming the inclusion of this employee into the group, we will then introduce the new member to the group.

When there has been a member to member pre approval step, we will ask this same member to ask as a host at the initial meeting and make an introduction to the other members, and generally take the initiative to make the new member feel welcome.

While other longer tenured members will be bringing their issues to the group, we will not encourage the new member to initiate the issue resolution process until the Rare Leader Forum™ Facilitator and Member both feel sufficient time and exposure to the group, and a comfort with the issue process has been achieved.

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## How We Begin

We will work together with you to determine the best Rare Leader Forum™ Affinity Group for your specific needs. Because of our experience working with leaders, managers, teams, groups, and employers across many diverse functions and sectors, we bring an open “white board” approach to matching you with the ideal group.

For more information, or to begin the process of joining a **Rare Leader Forum™** Affinity Group, please contact us;



Steve Riege, President

[Steve@ovationleadership.com](mailto:Steve@ovationleadership.com)

414-899-9673

[www.ovationleadership.com](http://www.ovationleadership.com)