



Robert Witherspoon, PCC
Founder, President & Chief Learning Officer
Performance & Leadership Development Ltd

“My approach to working with clients is collaborative. I like partnering with active learners and their organizations because working together assures better, faster results. Besides, it’s more enjoyable this way, and immensely more satisfying for everyone.”

Robert Witherspoon is a seasoned executive coach and trusted leadership advisor. A widely respected top coach and thought leader, he has been hailed as an executive coaching pioneer, published author and recognized authority on executive coaching, leadership development, and organizational learning. After successful careers in business and consulting, he founded Performance & Leadership Development Ltd in 1990, to focus on executive coaching and organization change.

Robert’s primary areas of expertise include:

- Coaching and developing leaders and leadership teams
- Facilitating feedback sessions to provide accurate data about strengths, limitations, and potential
- Planning and catalyzing individual and organizational change

The success of Robert’s practice is built on four strengths: his significant business background and results orientation, his direct leadership experience, a deep expertise in executive coaching and leadership development, and his passion for helping leaders and managers to learn, to grow, to change, and to succeed.

- Robert’s business experience and a focus on results help him to quickly clarify client needs, name key issues across a broad range of situations, and readily customize assistance accordingly.
- Robert’s direct leadership experience helps him relate to varied contexts, from small startups, to large, global organizations.
- Robert’s deep insight into people, teams and organizations, from his lifelong learning and extensive experience with clients in business, government, non-profits and institutions.
- Robert’s broad repertoire of capabilities and relevant skills lets him respond effectively to diverse leaders and leadership teams in different assignments.
- Robert’s passion for helping leaders at all levels helps him enhance their performance, effectiveness and potential.

Robert seeks to leverage these strengths to help his clients lead more effective organizations and live better lives.



Robert serves a diverse client base, from individual professionals and leaders to organizations sponsoring executive coaching. As a result he has developed a broad repertoire of capabilities across an unusually wide array of executive coaching situations. For example, he has applied executive coaching to:

- Facilitate key leadership transitions, both onboarding and upwards within the same organization or after mergers and acquisitions
- Develop the capabilities of rising stars and high-potential talent, for future leadership roles
- Boost the performance of key players in a current role or of derailing executives at risk
- Resolve conflict, so key players (sometimes a boss or a peer) can forge more effective working relationships
- Act as a confidential sounding board on important strategic matters, such as leading organization change and turning strategy into action

Robert also helps clients decide whether to change their leadership behavior, and if so how. He has a proven track record in empowering learning at work—by helping clients achieve and sustain positive, lasting behavior change—through actionable feedback, guided practice, and support coaching for continuous improvement.

Robert’s collaboration with clients is enhanced by his 30+ years of experience in business. His significant work experience ranges from building small business startups, to leadership roles in large organizations, and as a trusted business advisor to senior executives and outside boards. He has direct experience in dealing with organizational issues from the top of organizations on down, and has worked in the public and private sectors in both America and abroad.

Clients describe Robert’s approach as “incisive,” “wonderful and challenging,” and “breakthrough.” He is gifted at listening first, asking searching questions, and providing constructive feedback and insights that can be readily assimilated and acted upon. Robert’s clients include leaders and their leadership teams, as well as emerging talent, including high potential and key leaders in transition to larger leadership roles. He serves individual leaders at all levels and organizations that range from *Fortune 500* companies to small, rapidly growing firms, as well as associations, institutions and government.

Robert is the lead author of *Four Essential Ways that Coaching Can Help Executives*, the first field guide to executive coaching, a best-seller from the Center for Creative Leadership, and a contributor to *Organization Change: A Comprehensive Reader*, *The Wisdom of Coaching: Essential Papers in Consulting Psychology for a World of Change*, and *Coaching for Leadership: How the World’s Greatest Coaches Help Leaders Learn*, the book that introduced the world to executive coaching in 2000.



He has published in professional journals, including the Association for Talent Development's Training & Development (now TD Magazine), and the American Psychological Association's Consulting Psychology Journal. Robert's article, "Double Loop Coaching for Leadership Development," can be found in the September 2014 issue of the Journal of Applied Behavioral Science (JABS). He also presents regularly on executive coaching and leadership development.

A lifelong learner, Robert has completed continuing education at the Center for Creative Leadership, the National Training Laboratories (NTL) Institute, and Georgetown University, where he holds a certificate in organization development. Before that, he earned his BA from the University of Rochester, and advanced degrees from the University of Paris (CEP in Policy Studies) and Princeton University (MPA in Economic Development). Robert is also credentialed with the International Coach Federation (ICF) as a Professional Certified Coach (PCC).

Most of Robert's work is informed by individual, team and organizational assessments. Professional assessments provide a baseline for development through feedback and ensure that coaching is focused on the most important priorities, a leader's strengths and weaknesses in their current or future roles.

Robert believes that "who you are drives how you lead." He has extensive experience in personality profiles, such as the Myers-Briggs (MBTI Step 1 and Step 2), Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientations (FIRO-B) assessments, and 16 PF as well as the new Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ Global Competency 38 competency framework and the legacy Leadership Architect 67 framework for Lominger 67, VOICES®, the Hogan Leadership Assessment Suite and other instruments like the CareerLeader® suite and many virtual 360° platforms.

Robert lives in Washington, DC where he leads Performance & Leadership Development and serves clients across the country. In addition, he collaborates with other professional firms globally, often as part of larger consulting teams and coaching compliments, for leadership development programs, talent management and other development initiatives. He can be reached at (202) 595-2055 or Robert@TopCoaches.net.

