

‘The Executive Book Club’: one GREAT idea a month!

What it is

An opportunity for a small group to read and explore high quality curated content —think: ‘done for you’ — that provides new, relevant and insightful information and then discuss over lunch each month to dig deeper, challenge current thinking and beliefs, and consider and extract the learning that can be applied to improve personal effectiveness and enhance leadership.

Who it is for

Around 6–10 executives and high potentials – a team, or execs within a department or across functions

How it works

Each month, participants receive a curated selection of hot topic and relevant ‘short burst’ reading — sometimes from counter-intuitive sources — for them to read and consider. (We start with a guideline of minimum 60-minutes reading and preparation for the conversation = 1 hour reading + 90 mins lunch conversation each month.)

Monthly topics include Change & Transition, Collaboration & Influence, Diversity & Inclusion, Strategy & Execution, Personal Effectiveness & Productivity, Decision Making, Engagement, and Resilience & Optimism.

The reading material might include book chapters, articles, editorials, blog posts, even TEDx talks on YouTube — all of which will talk to a theme or issue that will be relevant and interesting to the group. Depending on the length of each piece, each month’s packet of materials will comprise 3 to 5 items.

We then meet as a group for our monthly informal lunch (or breakfast) and rich discussion. I facilitate this conversation to highlight some of the main points reflected in the reading and extract the practical learning and insights and how they will integrate them into their role and with their teams.

... and a few of the benefits

- *‘Applied Creativity’* = the means to accelerate understanding of relevant issues and topics; how they can be applied to day-to-day leadership; and how these topics can influence both aspirations and performance.
- *Enhanced core skills* = the opportunity to exercise and hone the disciplines of critical thinking, ‘perspective taking’ and discovery of insights.
- *Convenience* = curated materials delivered in hard copy to encourage reflective and critical thinking while reading (making notes and questions in the margin and highlighting important passages) and without taking up huge amounts of time.
- *Self-awareness, self-diagnosis* = over time, as the group becomes more open in their discussions, and beliefs are challenged, individuals will experience a deeper understanding of their own, and others’, biases and preferences and when and how their ‘arguments’ are well made and when they are defensive. This is one of the most powerful capabilities an effective leader can develop.
- *Regular rich conversations with the same group of people* = the environment to create accountability, build trust, and explore and share ideas (as well as issues and obstacles).