

Through the SES mentoring program, I was paired with Birgit Zacher Hanson as my executive coach. I was drawn to Birgit because she offered practical applications to build responsiveness in our workforce. Throughout my career, I have enjoyed success partly because I recognize the importance of consistent follow through. As a leader I found this is not universally understood or embraced. One of the key changes Birgit helped me to learn and coach is the management of commitments. Through the consistent application of this approach, I have seen our departments become more responsive. A secondary gain is that this more reliable response is encouraging employees to speak up when they need something.

Another area where Birgit helped to improve is in how I present and teach. She brings illustration and even music into her teaching. I have found that through application of a similar approach, along with what was reinforced at UNC about the importance of storytelling, I have deepened the effectiveness of my own communications.

My coaching sessions with Birgit afforded me time to take a step back and gain perspective on where my time and energy were needed. I have built on this and, now that my leadership team is fully in place, I have been able to shift more of my energy from directing operations to setting strategy. I see the fruits of this as I watch the leaders within our facility succeed in accomplishing results on ambitious goals.

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