

COACHING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is coaching?

Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.

What is the difference between coaching and consulting, mentoring, training and counselling?

CONSULTING

Involves giving advice through expertise in given field to provide information and suggestion in regard to possible alternatives and choices. Insight comes from consultant to client. Can be facilitative but mostly directive/ prescriptive based on best practices, followed up by a step by step process of implementation.

COUNSELLING & PSYCHOTHERAPY

Focus on problems – what hurts, violates, causes ‘stuckness’. Therapist is expert on pathology of problems’ source, symptoms, defences, dysfunction and provides processes for healing and resolution of personal pain. An unequal and ‘power’ relationship focusing on the Emotions, Coping Skills and Healing of the other.

TRAINING

Focus on skills, developing new skills. Involves instruction, teaching, dialogue with practice, drills, role-play and experiential learning to transfer knowledge back to work place. Expert provides learning intervention and then tests and evaluates client.

MENTORING

Mentoring is about providing expert advice and guidance by taking individuals or members of a team under one’s wing and providing a role model to which they can aspire . Mentor with skills, knowledge, experience transfers this knowledge to a protégé. Close and personal relationship but which is unequal and not mutual. Career focused /Task or performance focused. Relationships can be personal as well as professional. Relationships are functional. “Teacher” is older, wiser, more experienced, higher in status and formal position. Knowledge transfer of organisational politics and history.

How does the coaching process work?

Step 1: Establish if I am ready for coaching (*see: How will I know I am ready for coaching?*)

Step 2: Get approval from manager (*see: How do I get approval from my manager for coaching?*)

Step 3: Scan available coaches to select potential coaches (*see: How do I select a coach?*)

Step 4: Attend chemistry meeting with a maximum of 3 coaches (*see: What is a chemistry meeting?*)

Step 5: Choose a coach and inform Organisational Development Manager

Step 6: Contracting session (*see: What is this coaching contracting phase about?*)

Step 7: Coaching sessions (*see: How do the coaching sessions work?*)

Step 8: Evaluation/Feedback on coaching (*see: How does feedback and measuring of coaching success work?*)

How will I know I am ready for coaching?

Not everybody is ready for the intimacy, commitment, and responsibility of a winning coaching relationship. A few factors can help you make that decision:

Your willingness to fully participate will determine the success of the coaching partnership.

- Am I willing to take full responsibility for my thoughts, feelings and actions?
- Am I willing to do tasking assignments between sessions?
- Am I ready to be taken outside my comfort zone and do what it takes to get my outcomes?

The clarity of your motivation/ reason for coaching

Coaching is useful in:

- The transitioning we go through in careers.
- Gaining clarity and intentionality in making business and life decisions.
- Teasing out behavioural patterns and uses process for creating behavioural change.
- Accessing inner resources for unleashing and maximizing potential.
- Improving emotional intelligence.
- Enabling one to reinvent him/herself in terms of how a person performs as a leader.
- Coaching can address the erosion of trust, loyalty and commitment in a company. Coaching recaptures the lost potential of our most valuable resource – our people.
- Attaining new levels of executive effectiveness.
- Developing strategies to deal with pressures and stresses that impede on personal performance.

When is coaching not viable?

Coaching is a development tool, not a magic wand or an instant makeover. It is expensive and other interventions might be more appropriate. The following factors can be considered in assessing when coaching is not viable:

Choice related

- The executive does not want to be coached and is forced /manipulated into coaching

- Coaching is perceived as a sign of poor performance
- The executive does not have a choice in coach

Expectation related

- The executive's attitude towards his/her goals does not include an openness to various potential options and a belief that he/she has the ability to move down one or more of those routes
- When the time frame for changed behaviour is unrealistic

Environment related

- Manager does not provide both challenge and support
- Manager does not want to engage in the coaching process
- Little line manager involvement /input & Senior Manager advocacy/support

Work performance deficiency related

- Perceived performance deficiencies that have been allowed to continue unaddressed needs to be "fixed " in coaching without addressing it directly
- The perceived performance deficiency is not due to a learned behaviour and the executive lacks the background credentials or technical expertise required in the current position
- When the executive has failed to invest in work relationships; has burned all interpersonal bridges; externalizes blame, or has already accepted failure as inevitable

Serious psychological issues related

- Severe depression or mood swings;
- Strong acting-out or self-harming behaviours including alcohol and drug abuse;
- Low level of frustration tolerance;
- Difficulty in dealing with reality

What is a chemistry meeting?

The coaching relationship is a working alliance based on collaboration and consensus. It is defined as the "alliance" in terms of three elements: goals, tasks, and bonds. The quality of the coaching relationship accounts for 30% of coaching success. High-impact coaching depends on a positive relationship between the executive and coach and therefore the connection between executive and coach needs to receive special attention to ensure the best fit. This process involves the coach sharing credentials, experience, and background information with the executive, who can ask questions about the nature of the engagement, the methods used or other operational concerns. The executive can use their personal criteria for selecting the coach which can include the coach's personality, credibility, approach, experience, professional credentials or level of rapport between them. A chemistry meeting is

usually an hour without any obligation from either party – both parties have the option to decide not to continue working together.

What is the coaching contracting phase about?

This process focuses on determining and agreeing on:

- The specific need for coaching,
- Establishing ground rules of the engagement (details as the scheduling of appointments, meeting venue, the handling of cancellations, and the amount of time that coach and client will spend together, content, frequency and process of giving feedback into the organisation and confidentiality related to it
- Identifying specific goals as well as measures of success for the coaching engagement. The objective of this is to focus on the strengths, development needs and experiences, or type of coaching that will help this person increase his / her effectiveness.

Setting the foundation, defining the context and establishing the contract with the executive is a three way contract which includes the executive's manager. This means:

- Setting goals of and plans for the engagement
- Putting in place clear markers in terms of all parties' roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- Identifying success factors for the executive's current and future roles
- These success criteria need to be conceptualized in such a way that they can be measured, so that both parties will know when they are (or are not) met.
- Making arrangements about confidentiality up front to reassures the client and lets the organisation know the limits of its intrusion.

How do the coaching sessions work?

The coaching process is defined during the contracting phase and includes the duration of sessions and the frequency of sessions.

The content focuses on the challenges that the coachee faces and the goals that have been identified. The intervention often involves discussions regarding options and effective implication strategies.

Generally an individual coaching session is structured around the following:

- An update on relevant work issues,
- A focus on what's most challenging/pressing for the client,
- Replays of work issues with specific behavioural interpretation and/or strategies for the future,

- A review of any self-work assignments and learning/applicability for behaviour change, specification of new assignment(s), and a recap/wrap-up.
- Subsequent coaching meetings focus on identifying additional insights and/or adaptive behaviours (generally outside of the participant's comfort zone) for each coaching issue. The primary objective is to expand the participant's versatility for handling a broad range of business and/or management situations in a more emotionally, interpersonally smart manner.
- Further, coaching meetings are often supplemented with role plays, case studies, films/DVDs, journaling, and targeted readings. This supplemental work is always chosen based on how participants learn best and can help to maintain coaching momentum and focus on specific goals.

How does feedback and measuring of coaching success work?

The content and process of feedback to the executive's manager are defined during the contracting phase. Example:

- The coach and executive check progress against the overarching, early-identified coaching goal and can review the effectiveness of the coaching process.
- Progress feedback meetings with the executive's manager during the coaching phase can be implemented.
- The coaching phase is concluded with a close out session by the fleshing out of an action plan by the executive in collaboration with his/her coach. This "living document" reflects what was learned during the coaching and the actions that will support continued behaviour change efforts.
- A three way wrap-up meeting with the executive's manager provides an opportunity to describe the impact coaching has had on his/ her growth as a leader and to receive feedback regarding others' awareness of behaviour change/ increased effectiveness or lack of the same. Other development needs may be discussed, as well as how the manager can help the individual to sustain gains in the absence of the structure of coaching meetings. This time also centres on assessing the successful completion of the stated, initial goals and places closure on the relationship.
- Approximately four months after the wrap-up meeting, the coach contacts the participant (can include the manager) for a follow up session to gauge progress and determine if any additional support is required. The relevant developmental manager also gets feedback during this time to measure the success of the coaching programme and to improve the quality of the coaching programme.

What ethical standards will my coach adhere to?

This is the International Coaches Federations code of ethics that all internal and external coaches are contracted to:

1. I will not knowingly make any public statement that is untrue or misleading about what I offer as a coach.
2. I will accurately identify my coaching qualifications, expertise and experience.
3. I will recognize and honor the efforts and contributions of others and not misrepresent them as my own
4. I will, at all times, strive to recognize personal issues that may impair, conflict, or interfere with my coaching performance or my professional coaching relationships. Whenever the facts and circumstances necessitate, I will promptly seek professional assistance and determine the action to be taken, including whether it is appropriate to suspend or terminate my coaching relationship(s).
5. I will maintain, store, and dispose of any records created during my coaching business in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with any applicable laws and agreements
6. I will seek to avoid conflicts of interest and potential conflicts of interest and openly disclose any such conflicts. I will offer to remove myself when such a conflict arises.
7. I will only barter for services, goods or other non-monetary remuneration when it will not impair the coaching relationship.
8. I will not knowingly take any personal, professional, or monetary advantage or benefit of the coach-client relationship, except by a form of compensation as agreed in the agreement or contract.
9. I will not knowingly mislead or make false claims about what my client or sponsor will receive from the coaching process or from me as the coach.
10. I will not give my prospective clients or sponsors information or advice I know or believe to be misleading or false.
11. I will have clear agreements or contracts with my clients and sponsor(s). I will honor all agreements or contracts made in the context of professional coaching relationships.
12. I will carefully explain and strive to ensure that, prior to or at the initial meeting, my coaching client and sponsor(s) understand the nature of coaching, the nature and limits of confidentiality, financial arrangements, and any other terms of the coaching agreement or contract.
13. I will be responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern any physical contact I may have with my clients or sponsors.
14. I will not become sexually intimate with any of my current clients or sponsors.
15. I will respect the client's right to terminate the coaching relationship at any point during the process, subject to the provisions of the agreement or contract. I will be alert to indications that the client is no longer benefiting from our coaching relationship.

16. I will encourage the client or sponsor to make a change if I believe the client or sponsor would be better served by another coach or by another resource.
17. I will suggest my client seek the services of other professionals when deemed necessary or appropriate.
18. I will maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information. I will have a clear agreement or contract before releasing information to another person, unless required by law.
19. I will have a clear agreement upon how coaching information will be exchanged among coach, client, and sponsor.

What makes a good coach?:

The core competencies of a coach as identified by the International Coaches Federation are:

A. SETTING THE FOUNDATION

1. **Meeting Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards** - Understanding of coaching ethics and standards and ability to apply them appropriately in all coaching situations
2. **Establishing the Coaching Agreement** - Ability to understand what is required in the specific coaching interaction and to come to agreement with the prospective and new client about the coaching process and relationship
 - a. Understands and effectively discusses with the client the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship (e.g., logistics, fees, scheduling, inclusion of others if appropriate),
 - b. Reaches agreement about what is appropriate in the relationship and what is not, what is and is not being offered, and about the client's and coach's responsibilities,
 - c. Determines whether there is an effective match between his/her coaching method and the needs of the prospective client.

B. CO-CREATING THE RELATIONSHIP

3. **Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client** - Ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust
 - a. Shows genuine concern for the client's welfare and future,
 - b. Continuously demonstrates personal integrity, honesty and sincerity,
 - c. Establishes clear agreements and keeps promises,
 - d. Demonstrates respect for client's perceptions, learning style, personal being,
 - e. Provides ongoing support for and champions new behaviours and actions, including those involving risk taking and fear of failure,
 - f. Asks permission to coach client in sensitive, new areas.

4. Coaching Presence - Ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationship with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident

- a. Is present and flexible during the coaching process, dancing in the moment,
- b. Accesses own intuition and trusts one's inner knowing - "goes with the gut",
- c. Is open to not knowing and takes risks,
- d. Sees many ways to work with the client, and chooses in the moment what is most effective,
- e. Uses humor effectively to create lightness and energy,
- f. Confidently shifts perspectives and experiments with new possibilities for own action,
- g. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong emotions, and can self-manage and not be overpowered or enmeshed by client's emotions.

C. COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

5. Active Listening - Ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support client self-expression

- a. Attends to the client and the client's agenda, and not to the coach's agenda for the client,
- b. Hears the client's concerns, goals, values and beliefs about what is and is not possible,
- c. Distinguishes between the words, the tone of voice, and the body language,
- d. Summarizes, paraphrases, reiterates, mirrors back what client has said to ensure clarity and understanding,
- e. Encourages, accepts, explores and reinforces the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, suggestions, etc.,
- f. Integrates and builds on client's ideas and suggestions,
- g. "Bottom-lines" or understands the essence of the client's communication and helps the client get there rather than engaging in long descriptive stories,
- h. Allows the client to vent or "clear" the situation without judgment or attachment in order to move on to next steps.

6. Powerful Questioning - Ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the client

- a. Asks questions that reflect active listening and an understanding of the client's perspective,
- b. Asks questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment or action (e.g., those that challenge the client's assumptions),
- c. Asks open-ended questions that create greater clarity, possibility or new learning

- d. Asks questions that move the client towards what they desire, not questions that ask for the client to justify or look backwards.

7. Direct Communication - Ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client

- a. Is clear, articulate and direct in sharing and providing feedback,
- b. Reframes and articulates to help the client understand from another perspective what he/she wants or is uncertain about,
- c. Clearly states coaching objectives, meeting agenda, purpose of techniques or exercises,
- d. Uses language appropriate and respectful to the client (e.g., non-sexist, non-racist, non-technical, non-jargon),
- e. Uses metaphor and analogy to help to illustrate a point or paint a verbal picture.

D. FACILITATING LEARNING AND RESULTS

8. Creating Awareness - Ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information, and to make interpretations that help the client to gain awareness and thereby achieve agreed-upon results

- a. Goes beyond what is said in assessing client's concerns, not getting hooked by the client's description,
- b. Invokes inquiry for greater understanding, awareness and clarity,
- c. Identifies for the client his/her underlying concerns, typical and fixed ways of perceiving himself/herself and the world, differences between the facts and the interpretation, disparities between thoughts, feelings and action
- d. Helps clients to discover for themselves the new thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, emotions, moods, etc. that strengthen their ability to take action and achieve what is important to them,
- e. Communicates broader perspectives to clients and inspires commitment to shift their viewpoints and find new possibilities for action,
- f. Helps clients to see the different, interrelated factors that affect them and their behaviours (e.g., thoughts, emotions, body, background),
- g. Expresses insights to clients in ways that are useful and meaningful for the client,
- h. Identifies major strengths vs. major areas for learning and growth, and what is most important to address during coaching,
- i. Asks the client to distinguish between trivial and significant issues, situational vs. recurring behaviours, when detecting a separation between what is being stated and what is being done.

9. Designing Actions - Ability to create with the client opportunities for ongoing learning, during coaching and in work/life situations, and for taking new actions that will most effectively lead to agreed-upon coaching results

- a. Brainstorms and assists the client to define actions that will enable the client to demonstrate, practice and deepen new learning,
- b. Helps the client to focus on and systematically explore specific concerns and opportunities that are central to agreed-upon coaching goals,
- c. Engages the client to explore alternative ideas and solutions, to evaluate options, and to make related decisions,
- d. Promotes active experimentation and self-discovery, where the client applies what has been discussed and learned during sessions immediately afterwards in his/her work or life setting,
- e. Celebrates client successes and capabilities for future growth,
- f. Challenges client's assumptions and perspectives to provoke new ideas and find new possibilities for action,
- g. Advocates or brings forward points of view that are aligned with client goals and, without attachment, engages the client to consider them,
- h. Helps the client "Do It Now" during the coaching session, providing immediate support,
- i. Encourages stretches and challenges but also a comfortable pace of learning.

10. Planning and Goal Setting - Ability to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan with the client

- a. Consolidates collected information and establishes a coaching plan and development goals with the client that address concerns and major areas for learning and development,
- b. Creates a plan with results that are attainable, measurable, specific and have target dates,
- c. Makes plan adjustments as warranted by the coaching process and by changes in the situation,
- d. Helps the client identify and access different resources for learning (e.g., books, other professionals),
- e. Identifies and targets early successes that are important to the client.

11. Managing Progress and Accountability - Ability to hold attention on what is important for the client, and to leave responsibility with the client to take action

- a. Clearly requests of the client actions that will move the client toward their stated goals,
- b. Demonstrates follow through by asking the client about those actions that the client committed to during the previous session(s),

- c. Acknowledges the client for what they have done, not done, learned or become aware of since the previous coaching session(s),
- d. Effectively prepares, organizes and reviews with client information obtained during sessions,
- e. Keeps the client on track between sessions by holding attention on the coaching plan and outcomes, agreed-upon courses of action, and topics for future session(s),
- f. Focuses on the coaching plan but is also open to adjusting behaviours and actions based on the coaching process and shifts in direction during sessions,
- g. Is able to move back and forth between the big picture of where the client is heading, setting a context for what is being discussed and where the client wishes to go,
- h. Promotes client's self-discipline and holds the client accountable for what they say they are going to do, for the results of an intended action, or for a specific plan with related time frames,
- i. Develops the client's ability to make decisions, address key concerns, and develop himself/herself (to get feedback, to determine priorities and set the pace of learning, to reflect on and learn from experiences),
- j. Positively confronts the client with the fact that he/she did not take agreed-upon actions.

