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### Is there a place for coaching in my organization?

Leadership development takes many forms including in-house training, professional seminars and performance management systems. The central premise of any development program is that, regardless of the format, it should yield improved skills and better performance which will lead to a healthy return on investment.

Inevitably, the results of training initiatives and leadership development often vary in their level of implementation from successful to downright dismal. Poor results may be due to a number of factors but even the very best development tools often lack two key aspects that are most needed to generate tangible results:

- Tailoring the concepts to the organization's culture, processes, and people and
- Providing on-going support to make new behaviors a way of life.

When used as a tool to support broader business initiatives, Coaching can become the anchor that helps provide context, purpose and momentum toward achieving the desired results. [Back to Top](#)

### What is coaching?

A clear definition of coaching sometimes seems elusive. Not because it is something that cannot be defined, but more likely because coaching outcomes are unique to each individual. The International Coach Federation defines coaching as “a partnering with clients in a thought provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” Coaching is also:

- focused on setting goals and achieving results
- an opportunity to experiment with new perspective and behaviors
- client focused
- effective with individuals or teams
- confidential

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Metaphorically speaking, coaching provides an opportunity to clear the intellectual clutter that can sometimes obscure the road ahead. The coaching process will allow you to rediscover what is most important and helps you to maintain your focus as you build a viable plan for moving forward. Working through the 'clutter' inevitably leads to greater clarity and renewed confidence in your ability to take decisive action in the right direction. [Back to Top](#)

## Who uses coaching?

There are no rules governing who can be coached. The only pre-requisite is a commitment to the coaching process and the motivation to seek the insight that will ultimately help you to make improvements in your personal or professional life. Coaches can be effective in all major industries including: financial services, technology, manufacturing, publishing, airlines, consulting, hospitality, professional services, hospitals, oil, and many more. Small business owners, managers, front line staff or executives can all benefit from coaching. [Back to Top](#)

## What can be achieved through coaching?

There are a wide variety of reasons why individuals and companies work with coaches. Coaching can help clients:

- Clarify their vision, mission and personal integrity
- Eliminate the blocks that constrain peak performance
- Clearly define vision and strategy to effectively achieve goals
- Improve leadership skills
- Live life with purpose, passion and integrity
- Maximize strengths and abilities
- Learn to make more money with less effort
- Cope with conflict in a healthy and beneficial way
- Create a business that complements and enhances one's quality of life
- Rapidly accelerates career growth
- Achieve a dynamic balance between one's personal and professional life
- Focus energy in the right direction
- Feel confident in making the right decisions for self, business and family
- Create sustainable change in one's life and work

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## What is the process?

Coaching, at its simplest, is a series of focused conversations. A client interacts with his/her Coach on mutually agreed upon schedule. A coaching relationship may begin with weekly sessions (usually no more than an hour in duration), or may be less frequent, depending on individual objectives. Coaching

can be conducted via phone, web conference or in person. Some clients also make use of other media including web-chat or email. For most clients, there is no decrease in coaching effectiveness between digital and in-person communications.

Clients are asked to bring a topic for each conversation. The Coach helps them examine their issues and perceived roadblocks and helps them create a plan to reach goal-oriented solutions. Since Coaches have ongoing personal contact with their client, they are capable of helping them continually set higher standards.

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## What should you look for when choosing a coach?

Formalized Coach training and credentialing is becoming more and more prevalent. Credentialing provides a minimum standard for training and experience and does provide some guidance to help provide clients with the confidence that they are working with a coach who brings at least some minimum level of expertise. That being said, there are many great coaches in the market place that do not hold formal credentials but have many years of experience in their field and provide exemplary coaching services. When hiring a coach discuss their training, credentials and experience. Are their qualifications and business experience in line your expectations? If you are seeking a business coach, is their practice focused on business and leadership, or are they more attuned to life or personal coaching? Is their style and presence something that you appreciate or is there an obvious lack of connection between you? Good coaches understand the need to create the right connection with their clients. The ability to fully trust and respect your coach is paramount to the success of your relationship with them. Coaches do not necessarily need to have direct experience working in your field. Some of the most effective coaching can take place with individuals who do not have pre-conceived ideas about your working environment. Bringing an objective, unfettered viewpoint into the conversation can have significant value when developing new approaches.

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## How long is the typical coaching engagement?

Coaching agreements vary widely and are based on the objectives of each client. In many cases, the initial phase of a Coaching relationship usually lasts at least 3 months. Meeting on a weekly or biweekly basis allows the opportunity to interact and accomplish meaningful goals. Extended coaching arrangements are not uncommon and coaches may work with clients weekly for an average of 6-8 months. Some engagements last as long as two years.

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## How is coaching different from consulting or counseling?

Coaching has become more and more common in the last several years. Now it seems like everyone is calling themselves a "Coach." Good Coaches, however, understand the differences between coaching, consulting and counseling.

**Counseling** is therapeutic, often working back in time to discover the source of your problems. Counseling helps you answer and resolve the question of “why.” Clients often seek counseling when they are struggling emotionally with an issue.

**Consultants** are typically hired to give you the answers. Their value resides with a specific expertise that is needed to fix a problem.

**Coaching** is utilized to help create a new, self-determined outcome by working with questions such as “what do you want to accomplish” and “what will it take to get there.” Coaching focuses on proactive language: “I choose to, I want to, I’m responsible,”. Coaches view you as the architect of your own life; therefore coaches are hired to guide you to your own answers. Although coaches pull from their experience and background to offer you insights, they challenge you to create results. These results are based on your own ideas and motivations, and the strategies you develop are described in your own words.

The power of the coaching process is that it offers you a model for action that can be used again and again. Because you have developed answers from your personal strengths, you are empowered to continue from a base of new understanding. [Back to Top](#)

## How do I get the best results?

There are a number of factors that will contribute to a successful coaching relationship:

- Establish clear goals you wish to achieve. Even goals that may be perceived as ‘small’ tasks can provide an exceptional return on investment.
- Be prepared to establish and follow through with realistic action plans.
- Commit the time and allow yourself to focus on your priorities. The coaching process provides the time, opportunity and laboratory environment to work through a variety of technical, organizational and people issues related to goal achievement.
- Be prepared to focus on your passion. Look for ways to recognize your growing success.
- Allow your coach to work with you on the personal growth skills that will define your success.

The very best coaching relationships lead to transformative change which may feel overwhelming. **Trust** that this change will ultimately result not only in improved performance, but a new perspective that will extend well beyond your workplace. [Back to Top](#)