



Coach work

What kind of coach do you need?

Coaching is an investment, says Alyson Garrido and, like any investment, it pays to be well informed. She takes a look at the options available, and what to consider when deciding which type of coach is best for you.

There are a multitude of coaches who can help with one's personal and professional performance. But how do you choose the best person to support you? And would you know where to begin this search?

I recently posed the following three true/false coaching questions at a networking event to help people learn about coaching.

1. Coaches must be registered with a governing body to use the title.
2. Coaches give advice.
3. Coaching can be done by friends and family.

Could you have answered these questions correctly? Many of those in the group could not. Let's explore the answers and why they are important in selecting the right coach for you.

Coaches must be registered with a governing body to use the title.

False. Those who call themselves coaches are not regulated like lawyers or therapists. Anyone can declare themselves a coach and offer a service. For this reason, among others, before hiring a coach it's a good idea to talk with a few coaches, check their online profiles and consider asking for references if their online footprint isn't enough to convince you of their credibility.

The International Coach Federation (ICF) is an organisation focused on the advancement of the coaching industry. ICF holds its coaches to a strict code of ethics, accredits training programmes and provides its own credentialing system. Many coaches are a member of, or hold credentialing with, ICF. Coaches who are trained by an ICF-accredited training programme hold titles such as 'Certified Professional Coach' or 'Associate Certified Coach.'

Coaches give advice.

False. The ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential. Notice the word 'inspires' not 'instructs.' Coaches who align with the ICF competencies do not give advice; they believe that their clients are the experts and they facilitate a process which includes powerful questioning, creating awareness and goal setting to help them discover answers on their own. As a coach, I believe that my clients have the answers and it's my job to help them discover those answers. This is a surprise to many people.

Coaching techniques can be used by anyone.

True. The techniques used in coaching can be adopted by anyone, although a trained professional is best suited for ongoing support. Often when we discuss a 'coaching approach' to managing a team, it means that a manager is asking their employee questions to help them find the answers, rather than telling them what to do. A friend or family member may also take this type of approach, but chances are they are too close to your situation to be as objective as a professional coach.

Remember, there is no regulatory or governing body, so there is no guarantee that every coach will avoid providing advice or pointing you in a certain direction. This is another great reason to talk with a few coaches before deciding who is right for you. Some may strictly provide coaching, while others may also offer consulting or mentorship in addition to, or in place of, coaching.

Consultants tend to be the expert in their fields. They will likely offer a great deal of advice and possibly a step-by-step formula for success. Mentors also provide advice, which is typically based on their personal experience. In my business, I provide coaching and consulting and draw clear distinctions when each is taking

place. Practices are highly individualised based on the coach.

Another consideration when looking for the support of a coach is which type of coach is right for you. First, consider what challenge you are facing and what you want to get out of the coaching engagement. Having this information will help you determine which niche of coaching will best serve you. There are many from which to choose and I have outlined a few here.

LIFE COACHES

Most accredited coaching programmes are based in the principals of life coaching. A life coach will typically focus their work around helping people break through a barrier or 'get unstuck,' as is often the verbiage. If you have a personal or professional goal, life coaching can help you reach it by providing a structure around setting goals and asking powerful open-ended questions to help you identify the appropriate steps to take.

The topics that you bring to a life coach could be around reaching your potential, creating balance, or working through a transition. Many say that all coaching turns into life coaching after the third session, as any one aspect of your life will inevitably impact others.

Common misconceptions: Life coaching is 'woo woo' and not for the average person. It is for people who can't reach goals on their own or those who need their hand held.

The truth: Life coaches come from the perspective that their client is a whole and capable person. Life coaches help create a structure around goal setting and partner with their clients to move forward in a way that is conducive to long-term success and often faster than tackling an issue without support. Life coaches serve a wide range of clients.

WELLNESS OR HEALTH COACHES

Wellness or health coaches focus on helping you reach a goal related to your physical or emotional health. Popular topics include weight loss, creating a healthy relationship with food or implementing an exercise regime. Health coaching does not replace working with a personal trainer, medical professional or nutritionist, but will often complement work done with those professionals.

Since coaching is typically done on a more regular basis, the support of a wellness or health coach can help you implement plans set by another professional. These coaches may provide activities and tools to stay motivated as you work toward your goals.

Common misconceptions: Wellness or health coaches will provide a meal and exercise plan to help you reach your goals.

The truth: A wellness or health coach will help you define and reach your wellness goals. They will ask you the right questions

to help you create a plan around what success looks like and actionable steps to achieve it. Health and wellness coaches can help you stay accountable through regular sessions.

CAREER COACHES

Career coaches work with those who are looking to change or advance their careers. Career coaches often employ assessments and exercises that can help you identify career paths that align with your goals, strengths and values. This type of coaching can be beneficial if you are unhappy in your current role, but not sure what role would best suit you.

Clients may be questioning whether they should change their job, company or career path. Some career coaches may stop once a client's path is determined, while others then adopt a consultative role in providing CV support, interview preparation or networking and negotiation advice when necessary.

Common misconceptions: A career coach will tell me what I should do for work. A career coach will get me a job.

The truth: Career coaches will help you to discover new career

options that align with your goals, strengths and values. Together, you will explore and weigh the benefits and drawbacks of your discoveries. You will be equipped to search for a new role, or advance in your current role, with more clarity and focus.

LEADERSHIP COACHES

Leadership coaches usually work with new and emerging leaders when they are adjusting to a new role or defining their leadership style. They will work with you as you shape your leadership voice through new challenges and interactions. This work will usually provide support not only around leading others, but also leading yourself and creating sustainable habits that strengthen teams and relationships.

Common misconceptions: Leadership coaches deliver workshops to large groups.

The truth: Some coaches facilitate training sessions and workshops, but this is different work than one-to-one coaching. Leadership coaching puts you in the driver's seat to shape your personal leadership style.

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EXECUTIVE COACHES

Executive coaches typically support established leaders and those looking to enter the C-suite. They can help you polish your presence and communication styles to ensure that you appear ready for the next step in your career. You may also be facing a new challenge in your organisation and need support in navigating the change.

Common misconceptions: Executive coaches are former executives who are now supporting others. Executive coaches are only engaged by the wealthy.

The truth: Executive coaches come from all walks of life. They are often paid for by a company, rather than an individual.

BUSINESS COACHES

Business coaches help new or established businesses create and meet their objectives, which often includes gaining market share and increasing profits. In my experience, this group is the most likely to take a directive approach and provide advice on effective marketing and other business building techniques. Many believe

it would be more accurate to call these professionals business advisors or consultants since they often lead the conversation. There are business coaches, however, who take a coaching approach and help you define your business goals and objectives.

Common misconceptions: Business coaches are only for new businesses.

The truth: Business coaches can help any business reach new heights by providing accountability and helping you reflect on past successes and future ambitions.

Coaching is an investment and, like any investment, it is important to be well informed as you decide how to proceed. In deciding the best coach for you, consider the coach's specialty and style as well as your compatibility. They will act as your partner in reaching your goals, after all.



Career coach ALYSON GARRIDO works with her clients to identify their ideal career path and present themselves in the best possible light for job search and career advancement. Visit www.alysongarrido.com



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