



Guide To Choosing Your Executive Coach

You've been given the green light from your organization to choose an executive coach.

Chances are your Human Resources team will offer you a selection of screened, qualified coaches, chosen for their experience and credentials.

How do you choose which one is the perfect match for you?

Consider these "Top Ten" factors which will help you hone in on the right executive coach for you, your style and where you want to go.



Location

Do you want to be able to meet face-to-face regularly with your coach? Then their location should be reasonably close to yours. If you're happy to have mostly phone or video calls, then you can be more flexible.



Frequency and Mode of Contact

How often do your coach candidates suggest you connect for coaching—weekly, twice a month, monthly? And how long is each proposed session—an hour, 90 minutes, a day?

If you're new to coaching, preparing for additional responsibility or are in a period of real flux or change of direction, then you may need to work with a coach more intensely, at least initially.

If you're relatively settled in your role or are at a point in your coaching where you simply want to ensure you can sustain what you've learned, you may need much less time with your coach.

Will there be an opportunity for e-mail support in between verbal sessions? How often?



3 Experience

Looking to move into a specific role, position or area of expertise? Let's say you want to learn strategic problem-solving and decision-making, how to maneuver a merger or navigate in a complex organizational structure with savvy. Then you may want to choose a coach with that experience and knowledge.

Are you in the C-suite? You may prefer to work with someone who has been there and coached others in your position.



4 Credentials

What credentials has the coach earned? Are they accredited by a recognized professional coaching organization, such as ICF? The coaching credential guarantees that the individual has rigorous coach training, is continually learning, and meets a regulated written code of ethics.



5 Certifications

What assessment tools is the coach certified to use? You'll want a coach with multiple assessments in their toolkit, especially any that your organization uses regularly. The advantage? The coach's certification in those instruments allows you to hear your feedback in the "same language" that your organization uses.



6 Results

Does the coach deliver measurable results for their clients? How have they helped them to develop in their executive role? Are these the kind of results you want to achieve? How do they measure results? Do they supply a coaching feedback or mini-survey toward the end of the engagement to ensure they've met your goals and needs?



7 Coaching Style

Are they blunt, diplomatic, soft-natured, hard-hitting? Is their style direct and supportive? Do they listen? Do they tell you what to do or ask thought-provoking questions? Will they challenge you?

Are they frank with you? Do they tell you what they think you should do—or do they ask the questions that enable you to discover more about yourself and how you can achieve breakthroughs to reach your potential?

No one particular style is better than another—it's for you to decide who you mesh with best. With one caveat: it's essential to ensure that the coach will challenge you or there's no guarantee you'll keep developing as a leader.



8 Values

Do they uphold the same moral, ethical and business values that you do? It is good to ask about this right up front. Are they aligned with the pace of change you are ready for so that you stay motivated with the appropriate sense of urgency? Are they in tune with what is going on in your organization and what may or may not work in your environment?



9 Cost

Cost is inevitably significant, but it should not be the primary factor in choosing your coach. Look to the results you want to achieve and consider the investment required to get it. A highly experienced coach in what you're trying to accomplish may be your most effective partner.



10 Rapport

The fit you have with your potential coach is almost always the most crucial factor in making your choice. Do you communicate well together? Do you feel you can trust him or her?

If they have all the right attributes on paper, but you just don't have chemistry, keep looking.

However, do beware of choosing someone exactly like you. Because in addition to supporting you, *your coach's job is to challenge and stretch you*. You want to leverage your strengths while learning to think differently about your own development.

Bottom line: choose the executive coach that you feel has the experience, skills and credentials you need and resonates with you at the deepest level.