

## Coaching: how to get most out of it

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### Coaching is about performing at your peak

Coaching is a tool with a wide field of possible applications. Coaching allows the unleashing of one's potential and resources. It provides a way to find solutions and strategies which fit 100 per cent the needs of individuals – and as well for teams and entire economic units.

The personal coach with the right strategy and style for you can help you to perform at your peak. Executive and leadership coaching isn't therapy. It's product development, with you as the product.

***Here some suggestions that may help you to successfully use coaching to help you performing at your best:***

#### **Be ready to confront yourself**

Be ready to confront yourself with new insights about yourself and views from the outside. This may not always be flattering and ask for some toughness. Be open to learn about yourself – be open to feedback - negative and positive! Look for a coach who isn't afraid to criticize. Coaches should push you out of your comfort zone -- and don't let you back in. To acquire new competencies or style of behaviour asks for leaving the comfort zone! But your coach will also help you to discover new comfort zones enabling you to act more self-assured and comfortable because you better learn how to better fit the situation make the best use of your personal style.

#### **Trust is an essential means for Coaching**

Successful coaching relationship is always a partnership. To succeed, that partnership must be based on a solid foundation of trust. You have to find out if you feel that you can work with this coach. You may feel that you are more ensured when he or she has experience in your field – but this must not be the best way of coaching for you! Coaches are not consultants – they are not paid to give you advice – their competence is to ask the right questions, to provide you with new angles to assess a situation, to help you understand a problem differently, to discover your potential and relish it, to show you blind spots in self perceptions and sometimes to help you with an advice or little piece of training.

You need to trust a coach enough to take their suggestions and learn from her or him. Sometimes business habits or personal convictions are in the way. In business you often have to be seen or behave like a hero. Leaders don't have problems - only challenges, they decide and do not ask. But that heroic notion can get in the way of your partnership with a coach, making you competitive and defensive rather than receptive and open to suggestions and feedback. It takes two players for coaching to work.

#### **Coaching is about Results**

When taking a coach – make sure you know the why and the where to. Develop your objectives. Coaching is about results. It is a focused approach to help you reach defined results in a certain time space. To make your coaching successful develop measurable results: Tie everything to a business benefit. By itself, "improve time-management skills" has no measurable benefit. But it's a legitimate way to achieve a critical goal: "meet project deadlines."



Don't try for 100% improvement -- 15% improvement is the difference between a mediocre player and a star. You are not there where you are if you had not already shown much potential.

**Make sure to know what your Boss expects**

If it was your company that invited you to participate in a coaching and does pay for it, it makes sense to seriously take in account what your boss or other key person may want to see as a result from coaching. In most cases your coach will try to invite these persons to discuss with you and him/her what their expectations are. May be this will be one of the first feedbacks you receive in your coaching process. With the company inviting you there are always more “customers” in the game: The Company that holds in mind some results it wants to see and that may differ from what you feel is important to you. The coach will take into account that the company has some expectations and confront you with them – but it is your decision to try to meet them or not. And it's also you who is to live with the consequences. Your coach will ensure you about confidentiality of the coaching. Even if the company is paying – the coach will make sure that everything spoken between you and him will be confidential and not be reported back to anybody. He or she will as well make sure that coaching is NOT an assessment but really a means to help you perform at your best.

**“Off shore” Coaching may be an option**

If you feel you would like to progress but do not want to be “under observation” about your achievements, than off-site coaching may be your choice. You hire the coach outside your working environment. That makes it clear that you are the client, not your company. It allows you to avoid messy issues like what to do if your goals and the company's goals are in conflict.