

How to Choose a Coach

Here are a few things to think about before hiring a coach.

Coaching format

There are many ways to participate in coaching.

- Coaching can occur by email, via messaging, over the phone or in person.
- Coaching can be at the same day and time each week or on retainer.
- Coaching can be weekly or monthly.
- Some coaches are available by email or telephone in between appointments.
- Some coaches require a contract, some don't.

Which format suites your style and your needs?

Coaching designations

Coaching is not a licensed profession: anybody can call themselves a coach. Yet, it seems that there are as many coaching certifications as there are coaching schools. How are you to know what any given certification means? And to complicate matters, there are excellent coaches who are not credentialed and there are coaches who are credentialed that aren't going to be the right coach for you.

So whether or not to choose a credentialed coach is up to you. If you do decide to go with a credentialed coach, I recommend one that received their designation from one of the coaching professional associations: the International Coach Federation (www.coachfederation.org) or the International Association of Coaches (www.certifiedcoach.org). The requirements for the designations are easily accessible at their websites.

What are your goals?

Are you clear on what you want to accomplish during your coaching? It could be:

- What do I want to do when I grow up?
- I want to prepare myself for a promotion. OR I just got promoted – now what!?!?
- I want to raise my sales by 15% over the next fiscal quarter.

If you're not sure what you'd like to achieve, there are coaches who specialize in helping you gain clarity!

Do you want an expert as well as a coach?

A coach is a specialist in helping you achieve your goals. A coach does not need to be an expert in your specific industry to bring value to the coaching partnership. That being said, there are many coaches who are experts and can share that expertise in their coaching. Do you have a preference?

Making the choice

Now that you've done your homework and know what you want, here are some guidelines to choose the right coach for you.

1. Gather the names of some coaches from your friends and colleagues or from a coaching referral site (see the professional association web pages mentioned above) and check out these coaches' websites.
2. Eliminate the names that don't match the criteria you identified above or that aren't a good fit for your budget.
3. Many coaches offer a complimentary coaching complimentary session. You're both entering into a partnership and you both want it to be a good fit.
4. If there's good chemistry with a coach, ask them about their experience, their philosophy of coaching and their qualifications.
5. Choose the best coach for you and let the other coaches know you chose someone else.

Getting started

Congratulations on making your choice! Finalize the details with your chosen coach and get read to reap the rewards of fruitful partnership!

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