



Choosing the best business coach for you

Let's face it. Choosing a good coach to work with you and your business is a potential nightmare!

After all, what makes a good coach?

How can you be sure you're getting a genuine professional?

How can you minimise the risks in choosing one and what should you expect from them?

Whilst none of these have straightforward answers, there are a few things you can do to minimise any potential risks, and dramatically improve how you find and select not only a good coach, but a great one.

To start with, remember this 'golden rule': always, always, always do your research before you choose your coach.

In doing that research here are a few simple steps to focus on:

1) Ask the 'coach', "What is "coaching"?"

Can they clearly and simply explain the key differences between coaching, mentoring, counselling, training, teaching and telling?

TIP: make sure you know what "coaching" actually is. If you're not sure, [click here](#) to ask me for a correct definition.

If the 'coach' cannot give a detailed and correct answer to this simple question, move on to your next candidate straightaway.

N.B.: most so-called 'coaches' cannot answer this question correctly!

2) Are they genuinely professionally qualified in coaching?

It is estimated that over 85% of so-called 'coaches' are not professionally qualified in coaching.

Alarming, isn't it?

So, beware! An unqualified 'coach' could do untold damage to your development and the success of your business.

Sadly, there are a vast number of flaky (to be diplomatic) 'coaching courses' out there, almost all of which are well below acceptable professional standards, let alone being robust enough to be genuine qualifications.

Establishing the credibility of any 'coach's' professional qualification can be tricky, but a few simple checks can make a big difference and bring much greater peace of mind to the selection process.

In my view, the best professional coaching qualifications in the UK are obtained from UK universities and management schools. Clarify whether the qualification was classroom-based (good) or distance learning (not so good).

There are also a small number of professional bodies and dedicated coaching qualification providers who deliver good quality qualifications. e.g.: the CIPD (predominantly HR focused, for delivering coaching within an organisational development programme), the International Coaching Federation (a dedicated coaching skills qualification provider who has improved the quality of their programmes considerably in recent years), Eurocoach (again another dedicated coaching skills qualification provider who is gaining in reputation for the quality of coaches they produce), to name but a few.

Note: many 'coaches' have completed in-house coaching skills programmes from when they were working within large organisations. Be careful! These are rarely genuine qualifications or aimed at developing coaching skills to a professional standard (of course, there are a few exceptions). These programmes are usually designed for the 'coach' to be working within the organisation, rather than being independent. If your preferred 'coach' has been trained in this way, establish how they have adapted to being a professional independent coach before going further.

3) Check-out their specific post-qualification coaching experience.

It may sound like a contradiction, but the professional qualification does not 'make' the coach in the fully rounded, competent professional sense.

It is their post-qualification experience that really defines a coach's credibility and expertise as a genuine coach.

When I qualified as a coach back in 2004, I completed around 150 hours of post-qualification coaching with a very wide range of business clients before I felt I had reached a level of professional competency and 'rounded' coaching ability required in a professional, independent coach.

All professional coaches will understand the need to continuously and pro-actively review and develop their skills and abilities throughout their careers, learning from every coaching session they deliver. As such, an experienced coach tends to work in specific areas of delivery that reflects their skills and experience (as this will provide greater empathy with the subject matter). In my case, for example, I concentrate on working with business clients around their leadership, business strategy and growth management requirements.

So, look for a genuinely qualified professional coach with a delivery focus in the areas you are seeking to change or develop.

Remember, it is not unusual to enlist the expertise of more than one coach in order to make sure their collective expertise is aligned with all of your requirements.

So, that's it!

Three, hopefully, simple steps to help you find the best coach for you.

Just remember to do your research first.

If you're unsure about anything here, or if you have any questions about coaching, please get in touch – I'm here to help.

t: 01242-672440

e: [click here](#)

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