

## Guide to Selecting a Coach

### Introduction

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The coaching marketplace is becoming increasingly complex with growing numbers of available coaches, who have varying skills, experience and offerings. Those buying coaching services want to ensure the best value and maximum impact of a coaching programme. How do you increase your chance of appointing the right coach(es) to meet the both the organisation's and the individual or team's needs?

At The Alliance we believe that coaching can have a significant impact in a business context and we recognise the value of bringing professional standards to coaching work. The questions below build on our values and have helped shape our coaching approach.

This guide is intended to be a practical tool for HR Directors / Heads of Learning & Development and others procuring coaching services. It sets out possible questions to ask the coaching provider (whether freelance or a coaching consultancy) to support understanding of their experience, approach, and potential fit with the organisation and its coaching requirements.

### Experience

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#### *Coaching Experience*

- Why did you become a coach?
- What is the nature of your coaching experience?
- What would be an example of a coaching success story?
- When has your coaching failed?
- Are there any individuals you would not coach, and how do you identify them?
- What did you do before you became a coach?

#### *Training*

- Where were you trained? How many of your associates have formal training in coaching? Where were you / they accredited?
- What other relevant formal qualifications do you / your associates have?
- What do you think are the key skills for a good coach?
- What professional memberships do you / your associates have?
- What is your experience / understanding of psychology related to business / executive coaching?

*Experience may not be enough. Formal training helps coaches to bring their past experiences and skills to the coaching arena in a more focused and professional manner, ensuring that they are better able to bring about successful outcomes for both the individual and the organisation.*

#### *References / Case Studies*

- Who may I speak to about your coaching?
- What case studies are you able to share?

### Approach

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#### *Style*

- What style of coaching do you use and why?
- How do you distinguish between business coaching, life coaching, counselling and mentoring?

*It is helpful to understand these distinctions and for you to be clear about what the needs are. Would mentoring be more appropriate? Is there a counselling need that business / executive coaching would not address?*

*Coaches offer coaching on a spectrum from directive (providing advice and suggested actions) to non-directive, and from a range of background approaches (eg business, psychology).*

### *Understanding the coaching context*

- What steps do you take to gain an understanding of the coaching / organisational context?
- What other steps would you typically take before beginning the actual coaching? (eg review of available performance information, 'chemistry' meeting)
- What tools might you use in the coaching process? (eg MBTI / FIRO B / 360 feedback, interviews, observations)

*The more clarity the coach has about the organisation and the context within which the coaching client works, the better able they are to provide a pertinent framework and to support a greater impact for the organisation and the individual.*

### *Measuring Impact*

- How do you monitor the individual and organisational impact of your coaching performance?
- How do you evaluate your coaching?
- What reporting methods do you use?
- What feedback do you give the organisation and how do you do that?

*It is important for the organisation to have a sense of the return it is getting from investment in coaching. A paper on the ROI of coaching is available from info@meylercampbell.co.uk*

## **Practicalities**

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### *Coaching practicalities*

- Where does your coaching take place?
- What is the typical length of a coaching session?
- How much of the coaching is done face-to-face?

*What is going to be best for you? On site? Off site? Is geography an issue?  
Coaching is usually most effective in person, but may be supported by telephone and email contact.*

### *Pricing and programme*

- How long is a typical coaching programme? What does it involve?
- What is the fee structure?
- Do you have a standard contract? What are its key components?

## **Professional Development / Quality**

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### *Continuing Professional Development*

- What ongoing professional development do you / your associates undertake?

*The Coaching profession is evolving rapidly and ongoing professional development is important to continuously refresh, update and expand knowledge and coaching capability.*

### *Coaching supervision*

- What support and monitoring systems do you have for yourself?
- Who coaches you?
- Who supervises you?

*Coaching supervision is an invaluable way for a coach to increase their impact for clients by ensuring that the coaching client's interests are protected and organisation systemic issues are recognised.  
The Alliance guide to Coaching Supervision is available from info@alliancecoaching.co.uk*

This guide has been produced by The Alliance, a group of experienced coaches. All Alliance coaches are graduates of The Business Coach™ programme from Meyler Campbell, accredited by the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches, and the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Additional guides are available: *Guide to Being Coached; Guide to Internal and External Coaching; Guide to Coaching Supervision*. For further information contact [info@alliancecoaching.co.uk](mailto:info@alliancecoaching.co.uk) or call 020 7794 5841 ([www.alliancecoaching.co.uk](http://www.alliancecoaching.co.uk)).